

# millenniumpost



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PREZ MACRON NAMES ÉDOUARD PHILIPPE AS FRENCH PM **PG10**



'CAN'T BE AN ACTOR IF YOU'RE LAZY' **PG16**

## CBI busts foreign remittance scam of over ₹2,200 cr

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The CBI has claimed to have busted a major scam of over Rs 2,200 crore where 13 companies allegedly remitted the amount to foreign entities against bill payments of imports of only Rs 24.64 crore. The CBI has registered a case against Stelkon Infratel Limited (SIPL) and 12 other companies for allegedly making these remittances. SIPL allegedly indulged in large-scale illegal foreign remittances under fraudulent imports of the goods during 2015-16. Many of these transactions were effected through the company's account at Punjab National Bank, the CBI alleged.

The agency alleged that in total Rs 680.12 crore was remitted by the company using six accounts for imports but actually they filed only 25 bills of entry during this period with a declared value of Rs 3.14 crore with the customs.

Thus, an excess of Rs 676.98 crore was "illegitimately" remitted abroad by SIPL, the CBI alleged in the FIR. Similar modus operandi was also used by 12 other companies who remitted Rs 1,572.7 crore abroad by allegedly submitting non-existing or forged import documents to the banks, it alleged.



To celebrate the exciting five-year journey of millennium post, we come out with a special 20-page pull-out. We thank our readers, advertisers and well-wishers for being a part of this wonderful journey. It was scheduled to come out with our edition dated May 2, but due to unforeseen circumstances it had to be delayed.

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## Over 50 pc population lives in disaster-prone areas: Rajnath

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday described India as one of the most disaster-prone nations, saying more than 50 per cent population of the country lives in areas that are vulnerable to calamities.

Singh said the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction has been set up by the government to finalise a national strategy to deal with all kinds of disasters in coordination with state governments and other stakeholders.

"India is one of the most disaster-prone nations in the world. More than 50 per cent population in the country lives in areas which are prone to earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts and tsunamis," he said while inaugurating a meeting organised by the National Disaster Management Authority.

The meeting was attended by ministers from state governments, officials of the state disaster management authorities, top civil and police officials dealing with various disasters and representatives of non-government organisations.

On the occasion, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said that the Centre had amended the 50 per cent crop damage param-



eter to 33 per cent for claiming crop insurance due to natural calamities. "The national platform was set up so that it can work effectively for disaster risk

mitigation along with various stakeholders," Singh said.

The home minister said India has learnt lessons from the 1999 super cyclone in Odisha where 10,000 people had lost their lives, the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat and the 2004 tsunami and brought a paradigm change in its approach towards disaster risk mitigation.

"We have been working in a planned manner for disaster risk mitigation that includes adopting the Disaster Management Act in 2005, disaster management policy in 2009, raising national disaster response force besides others," he said.

## India seeks suspension of Jadhav sentence at ICJ



Delegations of India, left, and Pakistan, right, wait for judges to enter the World Court in Hague

MPOST BUREAU

THE HAGUE: India on Monday demanded the immediate suspension of Kulbhushan Jadhav's death sentence, expressing fears that Pakistan could execute him even before the hearing at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was over.

India's forceful submission was made as the ICJ began hearing the case of the 46-year-old former Navy officer who was arrested on March 3 last year and sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and subversive activities.

Battling Pakistan in the UN's highest judicial body, India said the situation was grave and urgent, prompting it to approach the court "at such short notice".

"Jadhav has not got the right to get proper legal assistance and the right to consular access. There is an immediate threat to him to be executed even before a decision is passed," joint secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs Deepak Mittal told the court in opening remarks.

Eighteen years after the two neighbours last faced off at the ICJ -- when Islamabad sought its intervention over the shooting down of

its naval aircraft -- India took up the issue of consular rights to its national and accused Pakistan of violating the Vienna convention and conducting a "farical trial" without a "shred of evidence".

"The execution of the death sentence cannot be done while this court is hearing the appeal. Else, it will be a violation of the Vienna Convention," lead attorney Harish Salve said.

The urgent hearing comes after the ICJ last week stayed Jadhav's execution. While India presented its argument over 90 minutes, Pakistan, which claims that Jadhav is an

agent of India's external intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), gets its turn later in the day.

Pakistan had denied India its 16 requests for consular access, Salve said. "The graver the charges, the greater the need for continued adherence to the Vienna Convention. Jadhav has been in judicial custody without any communication with his family," he said.

The rights of Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations are sacrosanct, Salve said, citing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that recognises that no one can be arbitrarily deprived of their lives.

India wants ICJ to annul Jadhav's death sentence and for Pakistan to ensure that no action is taken that may prejudice the rights of India or of Jadhav.

Pakistan on Monday told the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that the Vienna Convention provisions on consular access were not intended for a "spy" involved in terror activities.

India's application on Jadhav, who was arrested in March last year and sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and subversive activities, was "unnecessary and misconceived" and must be dismissed, Pakistan told the ICJ. See PG11

## Mamata to meet Sonia today



SIMONTINI BHATTACHARJEE

NEW DELHI: West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee will meet the Congress party president Sonia Gandhi this afternoon to firm up the Opposition strategy on a common Presidential candidate.

After arriving in the national capital on Monday evening, Banerjee asserted that her visit was on Sonia's invitation and she had come to meet the Congress president. "We will discuss various possibilities," but did not go into details.

While talking to the media Banerjee said, "I share a long relationship with the

Gandhi family. I will favour a political decision only keeping national interest in mind." "Let's us discuss first, I will then comment," the West Bengal CM said when asked about the decision of the "united opposition."

According to sources, she might be meeting with the current incumbent President Pranab Mukherjee after her meeting with Sonia Gandhi.

Meanwhile, Banerjee also alleged that the BJP, Congress and CPI (M) had ganged up against the TMC in Bengal, but she was still open to any positive discussion in the "national interest."

The Bengal Chief Minister is expected to return to Kolkata on Thursday.

## India relatively unscathed, but stays on high alert

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Indian computer systems largely escaped a global ransomware attack as the government and companies installed security patches to gain an upper hand against the first wave of an unrivalled global cyber attack.

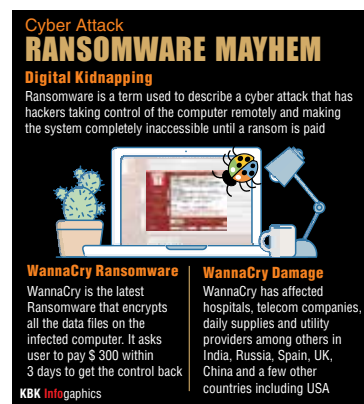
Over two lakh computers in at least 150 countries are said to have been infected, according to Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency. In India, only a few isolated incidents in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were reported.

National Informatics Centre, which manages government websites, and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing installed security patches issued by Microsoft to immunise their Windows systems.

Also, guidelines were issued to enable large IT networks to tackle the threat.

"There is no major impact in India, unlike other countries. We are keeping a close watch. As per the information received so far, there have been isolated incidents in limited areas in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh," Information and Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters here.

He said a cyber coordination centre will start operating from next month to take precautions against such attacks. India's cyber security unit CERT-In said it has received formal reports of just five "incidents" across locations like Delhi and Tamil Nadu.



"It is nothing major, but we are still watching. The next couple of days, we will be on alert on this," Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), director general, Sanjay Bahl said.

India is on high alert, monitoring critical networks across sectors like banking, telecom, power and aviation to ensure that systems are protected against the attack that has claimed victims in more than 150 countries over the weekend.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) asked banks to follow the instructions issued by CERT-In to prevent the attack. A few ATMs running on old Microsoft Operating System remained non-operational as part of precautionary measures.

CERT-In has issued a list of dos and don'ts and webcast on how to protect networks from the global ransomware attack.

## SEC orders re-poll in 6 booths

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The West Bengal State Election Commission ordered a re-poll in six polling booths under three municipalities on Tuesday.

The six booths where re-election will be held on Tuesday are Pujali in South 24 Parganas and Domkal in Murshidabad district and Raigunge in North Dinajpur. The re-poll would be conducted at booth num-

bers 11, 12 of ward 5 and 19 of ward 9 in Pujali Municipality, booth numbers 95 and 96 in ward 20 under Domkal Municipality and booth number 22 of ward 7 in Raigunge Municipality. The re-poll has been ordered as there were incidents of malfunctioning and ransacking of EVM machines. In some places, the miscreants had reportedly snatched the EVM machine from the polling station.

Since elections had taken place in six municipalities in the state on Sunday, the opposition parties had demanded re-poll in various polling booths in Pujali, Domkal and Raigunge. They alleged that miscreants removed the control panel of an EVM machine brandishing arms at polling officers.

The opposition parties have alleged intimidation of voters in Raigunge. The re-poll was ordered following huge pro-

tests by opposition parties. The final turnout in Sunday's poll stood at 75.52% with the highest polling being recorded at Pujali with 89.3%. The lowest turnout was in Darjeeling where the polling percentage remained at 59.9%. According to a source in the state election commission, the decision on re-poll in the six booths was taken on the basis of reports sent by the DMs and SPs of the districts concerned.

## 'Will come out with a law if triple talaq struck down'

NEW DELHI: The government on Monday told the Supreme Court that it will come out with a law to regulate marriage and divorce among Muslims if triple talaq is held invalid and unconstitutional by the court.

Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi told a five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar "If the practice of instant divorce (triple talaq) is struck down by the court, then Centre will bring a law to regulate marriage and divorce among the Muslim community."

Rohatgi's submission came when the court asked him what are the remedies for a Muslim man to come out of a marriage if such practices are struck down.

Earlier in the day, the apex court bench also comprising Justices Kurian Joseph, R F Nariman, U U Lalit and Abdul Nazeer, said it was keeping open the issues of practice of polygamy and 'nikah halala' among Muslims for adjudication in future, as the Centre insisted on judicial deliberations on these aspects as well.

"It may not be possible to deal with all the three issues in the limited time we have. We will keep them pending for future," the bench said. The significant observation was made when Rohatgi, appearing for the Centre, said the issues of polygamy and 'nikah halala' were also part of the order of a two-judge bench, which had referred to the Constitution bench the three issues including the practice of triple talaq among Muslims. MPOST

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# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

*With their CSR initiatives in effect, 'Titagarh Wagons' is doing everything possible to empower the poor and make the world a better place for them*

**SHAYANI MUKHERJEE**

Businesses are powerful constituents of society and it is imperative for them to do much more than just acquire money. The new Corporate Social Responsibility enables businesses to use their power to address social and environmental issues and eliminate unemployment and social precarity. In the contemporary business world, CSR happens to be one of the biggest buzzes showing that a company care and that it's big enough to ally its profit with principle. Speaking of CSR programs, 'Titagarh Wagons', which is one of the leading private sector wagon manufacturers in India and also an industry partner to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), took up its Corporate Social Responsibility long before it became mandatory by law and continues to make significant contributions to its social footprints.

Here, Rashmi Chowdhary, who is the director of Titagarh's CSR committee and also one of the board members, speaks on how the company through various CSR initiatives empower the poor, the impact that it makes in their lives and her personal satisfaction derived from the work done.

**What does CSR mean to Titagarh?**

It is an initiative through which we can make a difference in the world we live in. CSR initiatives undertaken by the company focus on Healthcare and Education, particularly of children and women. I'm very particular about them because they are weakest and the most vulnerable section of our society. Although the impetus was given by the Companies Act, 'Titagarh' was always involved in various philanthropic activities. Starting off in 2015, we have tried to reach out to as many people as possible and the essence of it lies in giving back to the society. Through CSR we try to establish a relationship between 'Titagarh' and the local society in which it operates.

**Tell us about the projects that Titagarh have implemented...**

We have implemented four basic projects until now. However, for any project to be classified as a CSR project, it has to run for a minimum of three years. Otherwise, it's considered to be a donation and not a project.

**Gyanjyoti** - This project supports the education of over 75 underprivileged children in Dhanket



Manovikas Kendra School in Sonarpur. We provide material as well academic necessities. 'Titagarh' also looks after the hygiene issues faced by these children because of lack of infrastructural support and provide mid-day meals to over 500 children residing in Diamond Harbour daily.

We provide 100 percent scholarship for five students from Jadavpur University every year and absorb them as Titagarh employees if they do well in a test and secure a certain percentage of marks.

Under Gyanjyoti, one of the initiatives is com-

mitted to help the children of the sex workers of sonagachi. We are working with 'South Kolkata Hamari Muskaan', which is an anti-trafficking organisation operating in Kolkata since 2009. 'Titagarh' has adopted all the 130 children of Sonagachi and is providing them with all the material support. From books to uniforms, nutrients to food, games to study apparatuses, we readily provide them with each and everything they need for I believe that the right to education is fundamental and their present situation should not limit their

chances of future achievements. We also provide psychological counselling to them. Education is important and it is the only mean through which they can come out of it and the whole idea is to not let them fall back into the trade.

**Jeevan Nirog** - We took up healthcare outreach initiatives concentrating its resources on its pilot health care project. It began by strengthening the Community Healthcare in such areas around Titagarh, which included preventive and curative services ensuring that these services are physically accessible free of cost at the health camps organised by us. We have conducted nearly 8 of such health care camps and the next one is coming up soon.

We provide funds for underprivileged children admitted to Tata Medical Center. Over a thousand children and women have been benefited by this scheme.

**Shail Ganga** - This project is my pilot project where we aim to improve the health of children coming from the underprivileged background by providing better access to clean drinking water and improved hygiene practices under a series of activities.

Through Shail Ganga, we brought water to six schools. About 2000 children are now drinking clean water every day and they are even allowed to carry back water to their home. 'Titagarh' has tied up with Splash as a part of its CSR Initiative for providing safe water to more than 2000 enrolled

children of six schools under Sarva Shiksha Mission in Kolkata. Although direct beneficiaries are about 2000, indirect beneficiaries are more than double.

**Parvaah** - It is one of a kind project. It encompasses everything that's been left out. Parvaah tries to include every living being under its banner. The motto is: 'Titagarh is there for all'. Last year we collaborated with Ashari - an animal shelter, where the entire shelter was refurbished and is regularly provided with financial assistance that is needed to take care of the animals. Apart for Ashari, we are soon going to start working with Mother's Heart.

**How does it feel to work with people at such grass-roots level?**  
It's fantastic but also heart-rending. Nonetheless, I derive immense pleasure once I complete the work. It is something that cannot be measured by words and more so because of the happiness that reflects on their faces. My reward is when these children come and bless me. It is about my soul, which feels a sense of satisfaction after helping out them.

I keep visiting them to feel good as well as to keep a check on whether they are looked after properly. I believe unless you have passion, you cannot sustain in a field. There's nothing to drive you and this is what drives me.

**What are some of the future plans?**

Currently, we are tying up with 'Society for Indian Children's Welfare' which is about forty years old now. This organisation provides shelter to those children who have been abandoned by their parents on the streets or left to die on the road. Although normal children are adopted very quickly, ones with some physical or mental disabilities aren't; rather they stay there for their entire lives. So here, we are adopting 10 extremely crippled children who can't even move and providing everything for them to survive peacefully.

For this fiscal year, I'm targeting four more schools under Shail Ganga Initiative. We are also trying to reach the Sundarbans and rid the area of arsenic contamination.

**Message for future generation**

Education is the key to success. It actually has the power to address all the issues in today's society and shape up children for a better and brighter future. I really feel one stands nowhere without it. However, preparing all children for school remains a problem which needs to be addressed through these initiatives first.



## DAY IN DAY OUT

### What's on Around Town

#### JOURNEY BACK TO THE ORIENT

Chef Oliver's Kitchen, a 10-day long festival celebrates the authentic delicacies and flavours from the Northern province of China through an extensive menu showcasing his culinary repertoire. During the festival, Chef Oliver will dish up his signature dishes such as Cong You Jun (Assorted Mushroom Salad), Zhu Tong Fan (Bamboo Rice), Yu Xiang Ji Pian among others from the daily rotational menu.

**WHEN:** May 11 - 21  
**WHERE:** K3, JW Marriott, Aerocity  
**TIMING:** 7:30 am - 11 pm

#### SEEDS OF IDENTITY

Hundreds of plants, flowers and fruits from Mesoamerica form the basis of Mexican gastronomy today. This exhibition describes the flora of Mexico through the voices of the first chroniclers and of curious, astonished travellers providing an introductory guide to those who wonder where certain foods come from.

**WHEN:** May 17 - 23  
**WHERE:** Annexe art gallery, IIC  
**TIMING:** 11 am - 7 pm

#### GLOBALISING INDIAN ART

With the mission and vision to bring back the focus on Indian art and culture, Delhi college of art has come up with its annual Art collage Carnival. Conceptualized by Ashwani Kumar Prithviwasi, the carnival helps artists and art students to demonstrate their masterpiece. It also builds their capacities to preserve Indian traditions and cultures with old classical unique art forms which are also called the interactive art that may be understood even by a layman. It disseminates art intelligence to spread the beauty of it across different cultures and countries.

**WHEN:** May 19 - 25  
**WHERE:** Lalit Kala Academy  
**TIMING:** 11 am - 6:30 pm



## Your hands decide what you buy!

**THE THINGS** we hold while shopping can affect what we buy, according to a new study which found that people are significantly more likely to choose a product that is similar to the shape of whatever they are holding.

Researchers, including those at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, showed that grasping an object can facilitate visual processing and choice of other seen products of the same shape and size.

They showed that blindfolded people induced to grasp familiar products under the guise of a weight



judgement task were quicker in recognising the brand name of the product when it slowly appears

on a screen, and choose more often that product among others as a reward for having participated in the experiment.

"For instance, when you are holding your mobile phone in your hand, you may be more likely to choose a KitKat than a Snickers, because the KitKat is shaped more like your phone," said Zachary Estes from Bocconi University in Italy. "Consumers tend to choose products that are shaped like the things they often hold, like a mobile phone, a wallet, or a computer mouse when shopping online." IANS

## GOD'S OWN FLAVOURS

**UMA NAIR**

**H**ow does one define a regional cuisine chef in the capital city of Delhi? In a city inundated with eateries and restaurants - Delhi has paved into a city with the possibility of nearly infinite new flavours and techniques, as well as young first- and second-generation chefs with different perspectives on what deliciousness might entail.

In the kingdom of South Indian cuisine, Kerala cuisine has its own cove and there are very few chefs in Delhi who can give you the authentic Dravidian flavor with ingredients and seasoning and the amalgam of roasted spices. One Chef however holds his own and judging by the tables filled with gaiety at ITC Sheraton's Dakshin you can be sure Chef Velu is one who can carry you into flashes culinary epiphany.

You are shown to your table, in the splendid lamp filled room, and you can begin with a glass of cold coconut water to cool down as the basket of papadums can be enjoyed with four different chutneys-tomatoes, coconut, tamarind tinged and herb flavoured mint. Chutneys which your grandmother may have served you with dosas or idlis in yesterday - is not a bad way to start. Save your space for a feast with Chef Velu. He begins with a globular lentil fried Kuzhi Panniyaram which can be swiped with the coconut chutney to give you a sensory idea of granular flavours on the tongue. Is the starter something you want



**Chef Velu Muruganof Dakshin**

to dip in a seafood sojourn? Sure, why not - the presence of Prawn Varathatha and the tamarind ginger chutney read into distinct designs in ingredients. Ever heard of the Fish Pollichatha, a grandmother's recipe off the backwaters of Kerala? In case you haven't, it's tangy, spicy and flaky in all the right ways as you unravel the banana leaf inside which it has been steamed on a pan. The spicy, slightly - roasted fish schools you into

the mysteries of the fish recipes. Velu is equally at ease with Syrian Christian, and Moplah recipes as he is with traditional Nair Hindu fare.

While you are relishing the fish, Chef sends in a dark chewy, slivers of coconut chunked lamb known as Erachi Olathiya, the piece de resistance of the menu. Robust hints of roasted coriander, chillies and the ingenious Kerala *garam masala* tantalize the tongue.

Savour slowly - you have to save space for just a spoonful of Kerala par boiled rice with a mélange of prawn curry, a spicy fish curry and roasted spiced chicken curry that goes best with fluffy appams.

"We get spices as whole and then create the *masalas* according to the recipes," says Chef Velu who has won numerous awards for the ITC chain and wears his pedigree of two decades of fine regional cuisine, with modesty. His balance of spice and the smoothness of the gravies is what makes the curries splendid.

What remain in memory are not just the flavour and the experience of authenticity that leaves you in a state of familial



reverie, but the perfection of the curries and the seafood succulence can also be read as a statement of food principles: handpicked authentic ingredients, fascinating flavours, careful and experienced execution and a subtle signature of chilly.

Does it mean anything in particular when a chef is identified with the most relished dishes in the South Indian repertoire? Chef VeluMurugan comes from the Mudaliar community, and Mudaliar cuisine is a culinary tradition developed by an intrinsically vegetarian community which started out as pioneering agriculturists during the time of the early Cholas. His Pineapple Pachadi, an amalgam of tempered yoghurt and cubed pineapple as well as his seamless pumpkin Elicherry stand testimony to his vegan roots. While Velu specializes in the cuisine of sub-communities of south India such as Nadar, Udiipi, and Syrian Christians, his best memory is that of fish curry and

Kerala rice relished on a banana leaf in the style of his ancestors.

Velu is joyous in his hours in the Dakshin kitchen. He swirls even the desserts - an addapayasam into a delight served in a modest-sized brass bowl. Dakshin, a south Indian cuisine restaurant does that magical thing where it is impossible to tell where the perfection of its service and food ends and the satiety of the experience begin. There are strong, succinct signatures of hard work, research and multiple journeys into Kerala's waterways and wood fire burning kitchens with a quaint touch of history. In an age of obsessive fusion in cuisine, authenticity is obviously a relative construct - cuisines change all the time all over the world - but it becomes valuable as kind of a benchmark; a point of reference when you stick to the original. This is the hallmark of the ever smiling Dravidian genius Chef Velu Muruganof Dakshin.

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# KMC mulls setting up more English medium schools

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has proposed to set up more English medium primary schools in phases, Abhijit Mukherjee, member, Mayor-in-Council (Education) said on Monday.

KMC proposes to introduce English medium in the primary schools housed on the premises where the civic authorities own lands and the buildings are not rented ones. There are 17 English medium primary schools under KMC.

Mukherjee said that English as medium of instruction would be introduced in phases. "We are working on the proposal. Now, plans are being made to implement the proposal," Mukherjee said.

The KMC has 256 primary schools having over 25,000 students. Of the total number of students, 13,338 students are enrolled in Bengali medium schools while there are 6,899 students in Urdu and 5,611 students in Hindi medium schools. There are 154 Ben-



gali medium schools followed by 46 Hindi and Urdu medium schools and another 56 Bengali and Urdu medium schools. Education is given free to the students. They are given school uniform and shoes for free. The student are also given com-

puter coaching. The KMC holds annual sports in its primary schools. It may be mentioned that after coming to power in 2011, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had instructed Mayor Sovan Chatterjee to take steps to upgrade the KMC schools.

The KMC schools had become dens of political activities between 1985 and 2010. All the teachers had CPI(M) affiliation and they preferred not to take classes. Following the then state government's policy, English, which was earlier taught in the KMC

schools was dropped out.

This resulted in a sharp fall in the number of students. Political meetings were regularly held in KMC schools. Moreover, KMC schools were regularly let out to hold social functions like marriage parties and other functions. The situation was so pathetic that the schools where social functions had taken place on the previous evening had to remain shut as those who had taken the premises on rent did not clean them.

After becoming the Mayor in 2010, Sovan Chatterjee first abolished the age old system of letting out KMC schools to hold social functions. He then took steps to upgrade the schools. The schools had regained their past glory when Dr Sashi Panja became the Mayor-in-Council (Education) between 2010-15.

The KMC schools were set up when Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was the Mayor and Subhas Chandra Bose, a fellow of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) was the chief executive officer of the KMC in mid 1920s.

## Centre's apathy stalling projects in state

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Step-motherly attitude of the Centre towards Bengal in terms of releasing funds has once again come up as a barrier for projects like Alohree and rooftop solar power generation. The Centre has stopped giving their share of money to the state from November 2016 to implement the projects. This comes at the time when the state government has taken up steps to ensure round-the-clock uninterrupted power supply with no voltage drop.

For the two projects — Alohree and rooftop solar power generation — the state used to give 70 percent of the total project cost while the Centre used to bear the rest 30 percent.

It may be recalled that the Chief Minister had over and again protested against reduction in fund that the Centre allots for different projects. There were many projects for which earlier the Centre used to give 75 percent of the project cost and the state government had to give the remaining 25 per cent. At present, the scenario has completely changed as for many projects, the Centre gives only 25 to 30 percent of the project cost while the remaining investment has to be done by the state government. With the Centre

**Minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay wrote to the Centre in this regard and even took up the issue during a summit in Delhi**

not releasing even 30 percent of the project costs, the future of both Alohree and rooftop solar power project is hanging in balance. The state Power minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay wrote to the Centre in this regard and even took up the issue during the national-level summit on power in Delhi. But the Centre is yet to take any step in this connection. It may be mentioned that Bengal had received the Centre's acclaim for the implementation of rural electrification project.

The project is on the verge of completion with four villages to get electricity connections. The Alohree project has seen a great success as the state Power department is installing solar plants on the roof tops of government buildings and schools for creating an alternative source of power.

## Govt to provide space to set up banks in rural Bengal

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The state government will help by providing basic infrastructure like space to set up banks in villages where they are yet to be established, the state Finance minister Amit Mitra has said.

Mitra held a meeting with the top brass of all banks and chambers of commerce at Nabanna on Monday. Senior officials of the state government were also present at the meeting in which district magistrates gave their views on the matter through a video conference.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had expressed her concerns over the issue of villages in Bengal without banks while presiding over an administrative review meeting in Howrah on Friday. She had also expressed her wish to be present at the Finance minister's meeting but couldn't as she had to leave for Delhi before it was conducted.

Mitra said that it was decided in the meeting that the state government will be providing basic infrastructure to set up banks.

The government will provide space of around 300 to 400 square feet in panchayats and other office buildings where branches of nationalised banks could be set up.

The first issue that came up at the meeting was that there are around 706 gram panchayats and 359 villages with a population exceeding 5,000 that do

not have any bank.

The district magistrates have been asked to file a report stating the availability of space in such villages that can be given to banks to set up their branches. A detailed report on this issue has to be submitted within the next 15 days.

The Chief Minister had recently also expressed concerns that farmers were not getting loans despite having Kisan Credit Cards (KCC).

Both the issues came up during the meeting held at the state Secretariat on Monday. A decision has been taken to take the necessary steps to ensure that loans are sanctioned to KCC card holders. At present, farmers having KCC are entitled to loans of Rs 37,091 and a new target has been set to give them a loan of Rs 50,000.

Each of the SHGs gets loans of Rs 1.48 lakh. In 2016-17, a target was set to give a loan of Rs 3,263 crore to SHGs but Rs 3,417 crore was instead given as loan to the SHGs. The amount was a meagre Rs 600 crore in 2011-12.

At the same time, the target of sanctioning loans to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) was Rs 26,000 crore while Rs 29,031 crore has been actually disbursed among the MSMEs.

In Monday's meeting, issues like the Artisan Credit Card and the setting up of more micro ATMs and ATMs in rural areas have also been discussed.

## Chandrima Bhattacharya, Ujjal Biswas sworn in



Chandrima Bhattacharya (left) and Ujjal Biswas were sworn in at Raj Bhawan by Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi on Monday

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Making a comeback in the Cabinet of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Ujjal Biswas and Chandrima Bhattacharya were sworn in as minister in-charge and minister of state (independent charge) respectively in Raj Bhawan on Monday.

Biswas has become the

new Correctional Administration minister replacing Abani Mohan Joardar, who is ill and Bhattacharya has got the charge of the newly-formed e-governance department that was with the Chief Minister. She has also been given back the Health department of which she was minister-of-state in the first term of the Trinamool Congress government.



PIC/PTI

**Biswas has become the new Correctional Administration minister replacing Abani Mohan Joardar, who is ill and Bhattacharya has got the charge of the newly-formed e-governance department that was with the CM**

stituency that was held in April 2017 after its MLA Dibendu Adhikary was elected as an MP. She won the election by a margin of 42,536 votes. The Chief Minister had over and again praised Bhattacharya for her work as a minister in the first term of her government and she was made the chairperson of West Bengal Medical Services Corporation in the rank of a minister of state after she had failed to retain her seat in the 2016 Assembly polls. Soon after Bhattacharya's victory in the by-election, Banerjee had announced that she would be made minister again.

Biswas, MLA from South Krishnagar Assembly constituency, was the Technical Education minister in the first term of the government and now he has been given the charge of

the Correctional Administration department that was with Abani Mohan Joardar.

A few months after Trinamool Congress came to power for a second time, Joardar fell seriously ill and the state Irrigation minister Rajib Banerjee was given the additional charge of the Correctional Administration department. Now, Biswas has been made the minister of the department and Joardar will be continuing as a minister without any portfolio.

With Biswas and Bhattacharya getting inducted to the Cabinet once again, the total number of ministers has gone up to 44.

The Chief Minister has left for Delhi soon after the swearing in ceremony and it is learnt that there will be a small reshuffle in the Cabinet soon after she returns.

## State to showcase success stories to woo investors

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** There are many such examples in Bengal where a small business was started from the state which grew up to be a successful brand in the country.

The Bengal government will showcase these success stories among the probable investors in India and abroad.

The industrialists will speak about their own success and path of growth in the documentations which will be prepared by the government before the run up to Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) 2018.

"In Monday's meeting, we discussed a lot of success stories in industry, which were started from Bengal. We felt that it is really important from the listeners' point of view that people get to hear from the industry captains, rather than listening from us. So, these success stories are likely to be documented," said state Commerce and Industry as well as Finance minister Amit Mitra. Mitra discussed the pre-BGBS scenario with several businessmen in the state.

It may be mentioned that the last BGBS recorded Rs 61,765.70 crore as investment proposals in the manufac-

turing and infrastructure sector. Mitra indicated that the documentation would not be restricted to the stories of private companies. The achievement of various departments on infrastructure development across the state is also likely to be documented for probable investors.

How would the documentation be created? The minister hinted that short films or books may be made from which investors would get a fair idea about the business scenario of the state.

Earlier, it was decided that a team from Bengal government would visit capital cities of different states across the

nation to promote Bengal as a favoured destination for investment. Road shows and business seminars will be conducted by senior officers of the state government as preparatory measures before next the edition of BGBS. Based on the suggestions made by industrialists in the state, the government decided to set up a core committee of industries to help in adopting cutting-edge technologies.

The minister, however, said that the government will concentrate on MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) to promote tourism in the state.

## New circuit house to come up in Salt Lake

PRITESH BASU

**KOLKATA:** Incessant drizzling with intermittent lightning, a building set in a deep jungle and an unmistakable stench of mystery! Bloodshed, crime and more is engulfing the entire place when enters Pradosh C Mitter or lovingly known as Feluda with his hawk's eye to solve the long-standing mystery.

Well, at least this is what any average Bengali thinks of when the words 'government circuit house' appear before them, courtesy Satyajit Ray and his books and flicks on the adventures of Bengal's favourite detective Feluda and his company.

Trying to sniff mystery already? Well, sorry to mar your enthusiasm but the state government is coming up with a new circuit house in Salt Lake, not to house mysteries though but to address the issue of accommodation.

The state Public Works Department (PWD) has taken up the project to construct the circuit house. According to an official of the state PWD, the land in Salt Lake has already been identified and the plan is

**Instead of addressing the issue, the Left Front government used to accommodate government officials from other states in hotels**

being prepared.

The step to construct the circuit house has been taken to increase facilities of accommodation near Kolkata. Senior government officials from districts and other states put up in the circuit houses. At present, there are two circuit houses in the city. One is at Golpark and the another one is on Hungerford Street. Thus, with setting up of the circuit house at Salt Lake there will no more be problems in accommodating senior officials from other states near Kolkata. Britishers had constructed circuit houses in the districts to

create a proper space for accommodation of divisional commissioners when they visited the districts for inspection.

During the Left Front regime, accommodation of government officials had come up as a major problem. Instead of addressing the issue, the then government used to accommodate government officials from other states in hotels.

Now, the state government has taken up the step to construct circuit houses at required places so that the officials from other states can be put up there where they can enjoy five-star facilities instead of spending a huge amount of money for their accommodation in hotels.

The state PWD is also constructing a circuit house in Durgapur and the work there has already started. Steps have been taken to ensure timely completion of the construction of the circuit house, the official said adding: "Often senior officials from the city visit Durgapur to monitor the ongoing development work. But their accommodation had been a major problem. Thus, it was decided to construct a circuit house there."

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The computer systems at the offices of the West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (WBSEDCL) in West Midnapore on Monday came under the attack of WannaCry, a crypto ransomware.

It was learnt that the bug has been detected at its four offices in Belda, Datan, Keshiyari and Narayangarh affecting the computers at these blocks. There is a risk of witnessing large number of computer systems getting affected as this ransomware can affect other computers in any network.

WBSEDCL, however, maintained that the services remained unaffected from the global ransomware attack that has put the cyber security across the world in jeopardy. A senior official of the WBSEDCL said that it would have no impact in the customer services and normal functions will remain unaffected. He assured that there is no reason to panic as the data are all safe.

A cyber expert has said that



**'Some of the systems of our Customer Care Centres were initially attacked which had no impact on our overall business operations'**

the WannaCrypt bug encrypts data on a computer within few seconds displaying a message asking the computer user to pay a ransom to restore the service. It was learnt that on Monday morning when the employees started the systems of the electricity offices in these

four sub-divisions, they found a message popping up on the screens of the computers that asks for a ransom of USD 300 in Bitcoins to restore access to the computer.

The expert said that WannaCry has so far affected over 100 countries including India

## DEO files 1st charge-sheet against chit fund company

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The Directorate of Economic Offences (DEO) of Bengal filed its first charge-sheet against a chit fund company in Barasat Court on Monday.

The DEO, that exercises its power under the West Bengal Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act (WBPIDFEA), 2013 has filed a charge-sheet against Equinox Group mentioning four of its directors, including Prasanta Chakraborty, by name.

The DEO has registered cases against seven financial companies including Alchemist Group, Rose Valley Group, Icore Jewellery, Gems and Equinox Infratech for not returning money to people as promised by them while collecting funds through various chit fund schemes.

Within 90 days of registering a case to probe into the scam committed by Equinox Group, the DEO has filed the charge-sheet before the Additional District Sessions Judge, Third Court, Barasat. At the same time, the requisite legal steps are also being taken to return the money to investors in accordance with the provisions of the WBPIDFEA, 2013.

Investigation revealed that the Equinox Group with its registered office at Naihati in North 24 Parganas and 13 sister companies had come into existence in 2009. The group had collected around Rs 155 crore from around 1,38,981 depositors in Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand.

The group had stopped paying returns on investment from 2013 onwards and a complaint was lodged against it.

## After CM's promise, 14 new buses connect RBU

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Within three days of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's commitment to Rabindra Bharati University (RBU) students, the state Transport department has introduced 14 more buses including eight in a newly-formulated route connecting Howrah to Dunlop via the university campus on BT Road near Cossipore in North Kolkata.

During the administrative review meeting at Sarat Sadan in Howrah on Friday, students of RBU had requested the Chief Minister to introduce a few more buses so that they could easily travel from Howrah station to their campus. It was the first administrative review meeting where students were allowed to observe the proceedings.

One of the students told the Chief Minister that they do not face any problem in reaching their campus from Dunlop. But they face a lot of trouble while attempting the same from Howrah and sought her intervention so that some more buses are introduced in that route.

Alopan Bandyopadhyay,



Principal Secretary of the Transport department, was present in the administrative review meeting and the Chief Minister had asked him to take necessary steps in this regard. She had also assured the students that their requests would be looked into and necessary steps would also be taken to solve the problem at its earliest. Within three days, as many as eight buses have been introduced in the newly formulated route of West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC) from Howrah to Dunlop.

At the same time, six more

buses have been added to the three existing WBTC routes in the same sector. With introduction of eight new buses on the new route and six more in the existing routes, a total of 14 more state-run buses will be plying via the university campus now.

Bandyopadhyay said: "The Chief Minister had wanted us to look into the points raised by the students and we have complied with her directives."

Hundreds of students from different parts of the city and its adjoining districts travel to the university every day.

## Advanced training for medical staff of state-run hospitals

The Bengal government has decided to impart high-level training of advanced critical care in large scale to doctors, nurses and paramedical staff of the state-run hospitals

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** To provide better health-care facilities to patients visiting various state-run hospitals, the Bengal government has decided to impart high-level training of advanced critical care in a large scale to doctors, nurses and paramedical staff of the hospitals.

This was a part of the move to better equip all the state-run hospitals in Bengal in handling patients. The state Health department will impart knowledge on critical care among the doctors and paramedical staff working at different Critical Care Units (CCU), Intensive Care Units (ICU) and High Dependency Units (HDU) of the state-run hospitals.

A senior Health department official in the state believes that the training programme will immensely benefit the doctors, nurses and technicians who take care of ICUs, CCUs and HDUs at different hospitals. The main purpose of the new initiative was to train doctors, nurses and paramedical staff discharging their duties at the CCUs, ICUs and HDUs of the state-run hospitals so that patients can get better and effective treatment. It was found that many of the



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

paramedical staff do not have adequate knowledge on how a critical patient can be given a better facility. This initiative will help the doctors and technical staff to gain the best of knowledge in their respective fields to treat the patients in

a better way.

It may be mentioned that the Bengal government has already tied up with Singapore government to impart knowledge of advanced critical care among doctors. The programme that had been

started in Bijoigarh has started giving results. But the government is trying to start more such courses through which critical care training could be provided to more number of people.

The concept was the brainchild of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who urged the senior officials of the Singapore government to conduct training here in Bengal to make the doctors and paramedical staff learn on how to handle a critical patient in a better way.

The Singapore government also responded to Chief Minister's appeal had agreed to hold training camps here in Kolkata. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had been signed between the state and Singapore government. According to a senior official in the state Health department, Singapore has the one of the best expertise in critical care management.

An official in the Health department said that the department was planning to introduce more such training through various modules. Medical officers from various hospitals will be trained in rotational shifts. The training will be imparted separately among the medical officers, nurses and technicians.

## Bengal fulfills target LPG connections three months before deadline

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** As Bengal ranked second among all states in the number of LPG connections provided to women belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna (PMUY), the contribution of the fuel companies to fulfill the desired target within nine months is commendable.

The PMUY started its journey in Bengal on August 14, 2016 and the target for the state was to achieve 30 lakh connections within one year from the date of the launch. The target was successfully achieved within nine months, Ranjan Kumar Mohapatra, Executive Director, Marketing Division, West Bengal State Office and state level co-ordinator for oil PSUs said.

Bengal was chosen as the



coverage of LPG in the state was less than the all India average and thus was identified as a priority state. "We are happy to share that the milestone of 30 lakh PMUY connections in Bengal has been achieved within only nine months. Along with other normal connections released during the period, the LPG coverage of the state has improved from 51.5 percent to 66.98 percent, which is a great landmark for the state," said

Mohapatra. "Majority of the beneficiaries in this programme are rural women belonging to the below poverty line category. It may be important to note that the women who benefitted under this scheme are from the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) data of 2011, who also had Aadhaar cards and bank accounts in their name. This in turn has brought a strong sense of individual identity among the

women," he added.

Out of 30 lakh connections issued, 11.3 lakh (which is 37 percent) connections have been issued to SC, ST and other economically underprivileged sections of society. Mohapatra, however, said they have a bit of worry about refilling issues. "In Bengal, we are facing 10-12 percent filling-related problems. It will definitely be solved by the time. Sometime villagers tend to buy wood or other options of fuelling and it costs around Rs 800 per month. LPG comes at much cheaper than that," Mohapatra further added.

Mohapatra also informed Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited will complete their factory at 250 TMT-capacity in Panagarh by March 2018 and Indian Oil Corporation will complete their 120-TMT factory in Kharagpur by March 2019.

## University publishes list of fake degree holders

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University has published the list of candidates who received fake B.Ed mark-sheets and registration cards. The university authorities have also published the registration cards along with their guardians name.

Some candidates approached the university authorities recently to find out the status of their candidature. The students filed a Right to Information (RTI), after which the university cleared their doubts.

The university authorities said in a statement: "The aforementioned applicants approached the university to verify the authenticity of their mark-sheets and registration cards. Consequently, the university has scrupulously verified

and checked all the records with respect to the testimonials provided by the applicant."

"After verification, the university authorities have confirmed that the testimonials were fake and never issued by the university," a university official said.

The authorities have informed all levels of the government and police about the incident. "The appropriate authorities have already been informed and a thorough investigation is underway. Strong penal measures will be taken against the perpetrators once they have been found and apprehended."

All prospective employers have also been requested to verify the authenticity of Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University mark-sheets and certificates before issuing appointment

letters to the students of the university.

On the website of Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, the authorities published the names of candidates along with the names of their guardians and their registration and roll numbers. On a separate remark column in the list, the word 'fake' had been written against all the relevant names.

The School Service Commission (SSC) has also taken several steps to identify fake B.Ed certificates. The Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University recently wrote a letter to the Commission to inform them about the incident.

"We are aware that such an incident has happened at the Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University. We are always careful about such things," said a Commission source.

## Café Ekante celebrates two year's anniv in unique way

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Café Ekante, the well-known restaurant in Eco Park, New Town, on Monday celebrated its second anniversary in a unique way.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had renamed the restaurant as Café Ekante and inaugurated it two years ago.

Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO) has decided that those who will 'like' the Facebook page of Café Ekante will be given a 10 percent discount on the bill at the restaurant between May 16 and 19. Senior officials of HIDCO on Monday cut a cake to celebrate the occasion.

Café Ekante is another dream project of Mamata Banerjee which has shown that state-run restaurants can function properly if there is a will to work. The employees of Café Ekante are given training on how to deal with customers and listen to their complaints with patience and a smiling face. The restaurant has become very popular among foodies in Kolkata and getting a table on the weekends is a real problem. On occasions like Mother's Day, special lunch and dinner were served to customers and they were given two free tickets to Mother's Wax Museum.

During Durga Puja and Bengali New Year's Day, special menus are served. There is a house boat restaurant at Eco Park too and this has become equally popular. Café Ekante has become very popular among the Eco Park visitors. New Town's slogan is: "There is no dull moment in New Town. Here you can keep expecting the unexpected."

## Two state govt officials injured in accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Two state government employees received injuries in a road accident at Salt Lake on Monday, when a police car allegedly hit another car on the road. A Bidhannagar City Police source said that the car of Soumen Mitra, Additional Director General of Police (Training) allegedly hit another car near Salt Lake's Netaji Statue Island on Monday.

"Two staff members from the office of Commissioner for persons with disabilities were sitting in that car. Ranu Bhattacharjee, the Commissioner and Uma Sen, the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) were injured. They were taken to a private hospital," said the source.

"Mitra was not inside the car when it met with the accident. His driver Rahul Banerjee and his security guard received injuries. They were also taken to

**Eyewitnesses informed the police that it was the police car which had hit the other car**

the same private hospital," the source said.

Kolkata Police later took Mitra's car from the spot. Bidhannagar City Police will investigate how the incident happened. The officers indicated that one car had disobeyed traffic rules just before the accident took place.

Some eyewitnesses informed the police that it was the police car which had hit the other car. The police car then hit a rickshaw standing on the side of the road as well as a security barricade. The claims made by the eyewitnesses are currently being verified by authorities.

## Arms dealer held from Judges Ghat

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Police have arrested a 40-year-old man from Central Kolkata on Monday when he was trying to sell improvised guns and ammunition to some people.

According to the police, the accused, Pramod Yadav was originally from Banka district in Bihar. He was intercepted by the police when he assembled with the buyers at Gwalior Ghat or the Judges Ghat. Police said that the accused was involved in arms trading and his job was to bring arms from Bihar and sell them to criminal groups.

A senior officer of the Anti Rowdy Squad of the Kolkata Police said that two improvised 8 mm pistols and 10 rounds of cartridges were seized from his possession. According to the

police, the buyers who came to meet Yadav to buy the arms fled from the spot apprehending arrest. Acting on a tip-off, the police came to know that the accused, an arms dealer from Bihar, would be visiting the area to hand over a consignment of arms. Police are also investigating if the accused is a part of any international arms smuggling racket.

Police are also trying to know whom the accused used to sell these weapons to. A detailed probe has been initiated in the connection. Police are interrogating Yadav to know who were the other persons involved in the arms smuggling racket. Police are also investigating if Yadav had any connection with the accused who were arrested from various parts of Hooghly on Sunday.

## Major fire at jute godown in Domjur, no casualties

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** A fire broke out at a jute godown in Howrah's Domjur triggering panic among the local residents.

The local residents found smoke billowing out of the jute godown situated in the congested area and tried to douse the flame. The incident took place at around 1 am on Sunday night. They failed to enter the room of the godown that had caught fire as the area was soon covered by thick black smoke.

Five fire tenders were pressed into action to douse the flame. The fire spread to the adjacent building as the godown is situated in a congested area. However, there was no report of any damage to the adjacent two buildings. People



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

living in the adjacent buildings panicked after they found that the jute godown had caught fire. Some of the local residents from the adjacent building fled from their houses when the fire started spreading from the godown.

The local residents alleged that fire tenders reached the spot late. They alleged that the fire would not have spread to the adjacent buildings if the fire engines would have arrived on time. The fire tenders had faced difficulties in reaching the

spot as the godown was situated in the congested area. The fire fighters brought the situation under control at around 5 am. There was no report of any casualty in the incident, however. The godown was, however, completely damaged in the fire. The materials and goods that were stocked inside the godown were completely gutted in the fire. Police said that the godown was shut at the time of the incident. The employees had left their workplace at around 10 pm on Sunday. The locals spotted the blaze a little while after midnight.

According to the preliminary investigation, the fire officials suspect that an electrical short circuit might have caused the fire. The exact cause of the fire and the extent of the dam-

age are yet to be ascertained by the fire officials. The fire officials and police are investigating if there was any firefighting equipment fitted in the godown and a proper license. Police said that one Azizul Hoque is the owner of the godown. Police are also verifying the documents to ascertain if the godown was running with valid papers. Police will interrogate the owner of the godown in this connection.

In a separate incident, a godown of a tea garden in Jalpaiguri caught fire late on Sunday night creating panic among the local residents. Three fire tenders brought the fire under control. No casualty was reported. The cause of the fire and the extent of the damage are yet to be ascertained.

## Nor'westers likely to hit 7 districts of South Bengal

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) alerted the state government on Monday that nor'westers are likely to hit seven South Bengal districts — Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram, West Midnapore, East and West Burdwan and Birbhum — between Monday to Wednesday.

In a warning, RMC said: "The latest Radar Observation indicates thunder-shower accompanied with squalls and hail with the maximum wind speed ranging between 60 and 70 km per hour likely to affect some parts of the districts of Purulia and Bankura and with squalls with maximum wind speed ranging between 50 and 60 km per hour likely to affect some parts of the districts of Jhargram, West Midnapur, West and East Burdwan and Birbhum."

The RMC also stated that South-west Monsoon has reached some parts of South-east Bay of Bengal, Nicobar Islands, entire South Andaman Sea and some parts of North Andaman Sea.

With the arrival of South-west Monsoon over Andaman and Nico-



bar Islands, it is getting nearer as a cyclonic circulation over Andaman Sea has moved Northwestwards.

The meteorologists alerted the gov-

ernment that this arrival of South-west Monsoon over Andaman and Nicobar Islands would create a low-pressure area soon. As a result, nor'westers

would be originated and will lash the districts. "We have alerted the state government about the possible threat of

**Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram, West Midnapore, East and West Burdwan and Birbhum are likely to be hit by nor'westers between Monday and Wednesday**

nor'westers and we have specifically mentioned about Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram, and West Midnapore, East and West Burdwan and Birbhum," said Ganesh Kumar Das, Director in-charge, RMC.

Skymet weather, a private fore-caster, however, indicated another reason of nor'wester in Bengal. "A cyclonic circulation persists over North Bihar and adjoining West Bengal. A trough is also extending up to Assam. With this, rain and thundershowers are likely over Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha. North-East India including Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh may also witness moderate to heavy rains," Skymet said.

# 200 special ops carried out after Sukma ambush: CRPF

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The CRPF has conducted about 200 special operations with a "re-worked" strategy, apprehending 26 Maoists and seizing a huge cache of munitions, since the April ambush in Sukma where Naxals had massacred 25 of its personnel.

Of the 26 Maoists apprehended, 15 were involved in the deadly ambush in Sukma district in Chhattisgarh on April 24.

The force has also seized a huge assortment of arms and ammunition as part of these operations, an operations dossier revealed.

Newly appointed Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Director General R R Bhatnagar said on Monday that a special focus was being laid on result-oriented operations in the south Bastar region of Chhattisgarh to curtail the strength and resources of Maoist cadres.

"Post the Burkapal incident



in Sukma, we have reworked our operational strategy in south Bastar and the focus is now to conduct joint intelligence-based operations.

"Despite the harsh summers and sweltering heat, we have intensified our operations in those areas where there is a security vacuum. A number of special operations have been launched by us," the DG told PTI.

He said that the road construction work being done by the force in large parts of Chhattisgarh and a few other states will not suffer and that the CRPF will ensure their completion.

Bhatnagar, appointed as the force chief by the government two days after the April 24 ambush, recently travelled to Sukma and analysed the ambush spot, besides the site

near Bheji where a dozen CRPF men were similarly killed by Naxals when they were out to conduct a road sanitisation exercise on March 11.

The operations dossier prepared by the security headquarters of anti-Naxal operations stated that after April 24, when 25 CRPF men were fatally ambushed by Naxals in Sukma, 98 such special operations were conducted in the worst Left Wing Extremism-affected district of the state.

All such tasks, the dossier accessed by PTI said, are either led by the CRPF or its special jungle warfare guerrilla force -- the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA).

The areas where these operations were launched in Sukma include villages of Karigundem, Minapa, Kasalpara, Milampalli, Tokenpalli, Phulampad, Bedapad, Gauraram, Palodi, Barmor, Potakpalli, Tumulapad, Aliguda and Regargatta.

In order to further step up offensive along the borders of Sukma, 36 such operations

have been conducted till now in the neighbouring district of Dantewada while 55 have been launched in the villages and deep forest areas of Bijapur district.

"As part of these operations, it is being ensured that a good number of state police personnel form an essential part of the patrol party along with the CRPF.

"While the target is to have at least one-third strength of the squad from that of the state police, it will take some more time before these numbers are achieved for all the operations to be conducted in the future," a senior officer said.

The force, the dossier said, has also apprehended 26 Naxals as part of these post-Sukma operations, out of which 15 were involved in the Burkapal attack.

"Out of the 26, six Naxals had police warrants issued against them for various acts of violence and killing in the south Bastar area," the senior officer said.

## Govt focusing on quality education for all: Javadekar

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**VADODARA:** Union HRD minister Prakash Javadekar has emphasised on the need of providing quality education to all across the country to build a strong future for its citizens.

"After providing access to education for all, now the focus is to ensure quality education to students across the country. The government is working actively on it as it believes that only quality education has the potential of developing a good citizen with a strong character. Quality education is a must for all-round development of the country," he said.

Javadekar was here to attend an international youth convention at Sokhada village last night.

The minister also hinted on formulating a law on regulating fee structure of private schools in the country.

The Gujarat government has already framed a law on regulating fees charged by private schools in the state. We will discuss its provisions while formulating a law at the national level, he said.

## Modi voices concern over condition of rivers in India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during the concluding ceremony of the Narmada Sewa Yatra and launch of the Narmada Sewa Mission at Amarkantak on Monday

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**AMARKANTAK:** Voicing concern over the condition of rivers in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said there are many which have no water.

"Many rivers in the country are on the map but do not have any water in them," Modi said at an event to mark the conclusion of 'Namami Devi Narmada Sewa Yatra' here in Madhya Pradesh's Annooppur district.

Lauding the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government for taking up the campaign to conserve one of the country's major lifelines, Modi said the Narmada conservation road-map prepared by the state is a "perfect document for future vision".

He asked the Madhya Pradesh government to share it with other states.

"The document was sent to me in advance and I had gone through it. It has the details of what is to be done, by whom, and at what time. In my opinion,

it is perfect document for future vision," he said.

Congratulating people, and especially Chouhan, for launching the yatra that lasted nearly 150 days, the prime minister, who hails from Gujarat, said, "I, on behalf of people of Gujarat, for whom every drop of Narmada is important, Rajasthan and Maharashtra congratulate Madhya Pradesh for this great initiative."

Earlier, Modi performed puja at the point of origin of the river in Amarkantak.

The Namami Devi Narmada Sewa Yatra, which was launched on December 11, 2016 from Amarkantak, concluded today after covering a distance of 3,344 km, traversing over 1,100 villages and towns.

The prime minister has evinced keen interest in the conservation campaign.

"Narmada Sewa Yatra is an excellent mass movement to protect the Narmada & conveys a larger message of saving the environment as well," Modi had tweeted on Sunday.

## HC seeks Centre, CBSE reply on plea over textbooks in schools

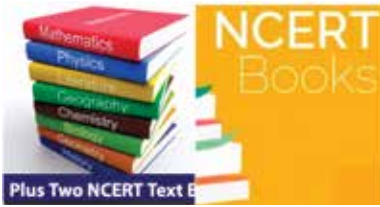
OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court has sought response of the Centre on a plea seeking quashing of a CBSE circular allegedly forcing schools to prescribe text books printed by printers empanelled with the NCERT only.

Justice A K Pathak issued notice to the Ministry of Human Resource and Development and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and sought their replies on the petition filed by Independent Schools Federation of India.

The plea alleged that certain printers in the panel of NCERT had "conspired" to create a monopoly in matters of publication of books.

The petition filed by advocate Ravi Prakash Gupta said the CBSE had in a April 1 circular, issued direction to the



affiliated schools to prescribe books only of those publishers which were in the panel of NCERT.

The plea said this would "jeopardise innovation" in the making of the textbooks.

"Giving sole responsibility to NCERT textbooks for its prescriptions in schools, will not only monopolise textbook preparation in the country but shall also jeopardise the innovation associated in the making of textbooks.

"Recently, through a circular issued by CBSE, schools are forced to prescribe text

books printed only by printers empanelled with the NCERT. This is totally against Rule 15(1) (d) of Affiliation Bye-laws as per which the schools will follow the text books published by NCERT for the Middle Classes as far as practical," it said.

It further said that NCERT neither has the mandate of publishing school textbooks, nor can it manage ensuring timely preparation and publication or textbooks in all subjects in the entire spectrum of school education, adding that the NCERT has more focused role in research and training. The plea also claimed that the "text books prepared and published by private schools from other publishers are composed by renowned writers having vast experience in the field of teaching. These writers are far-far better than those recruited by NCERT for composing text books," it said.

## CBI registers case against Lt Colonel

MPOST BUREAU

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case against a Lieutenant Colonel and a private person and other unknown officials of DRDO, Ministry of Defence, under sections of 120-B r/w 420 of IPC and Section 13 (2) r/w 13 (1) (d) of PC Act, 1988.

The allegation is related to criminal conspiracy between accused during the year 2004-2006, pursuant to which the public servants abused their

official position and cheated the Union of India through transfer of 12 Acres 1 Gunta of land in favour of a private person against the decision taken by the Ministry of Defence.

Searches are being conducted on Monday at seven places including the residential & official premises of accused persons at Bangalore, Hyderabad & District Kodagu which led to recovery of incriminating documents. The name of the accused are M G Thimmaya, Lieutenant Colonel, and N H Rustomji.

## House panel may review clearance for GM mustard's commercial cultivation

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** A parliamentary panel headed by Congress leader Renuka Chowdhury is likely to review the clearance given for the commercial cultivation of the genetically-modified mustard by the central biotech regulator GEAC.

Last week, the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), under the Environment Ministry, recommended the GM mustard (brassica juncea) hybrid DMH-11.

The environment ministry had received over 700 comments from various stakeholders, including farmers and researchers, on the Assessment of Food and Environmental Safety (AFES) report on GM mustard which it had earlier posted on the ministry

website.

The application was submitted in 2015 after which several rounds of meeting were held by the GEAC. The sub-committee also convened meetings with experts.

The GEAC had also heard the views of various NGOs which are not in favour of giving an approval to GM crops. Among the opponents were organisations affiliated to the RSS. GM mustard is the second genetically modified food crop after Bt Brinjal that has obtained all required regulatory approvals and reached the Environment Minister's table for clearance.

Former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh had refused clearance to Bt Brinjal and put an indefinite moratorium on the decision.

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Former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh had refused clearance to Bt Brinjal and put an indefinite moratorium on the decision.

The Centre is tackling this by rapidly increasing the capacity for training undergraduates and postgraduates in existing medical colleges and also by establishing new ones, he said.

"The need for specialist doctors is most acutely felt today. The ministry is exploring all options to increase the number of under-graduate and post-graduate seats in the country," Nadda said.

The minister also said the government has introduced the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test to ensure transparency and reduce corruption in the field of medical education.

"We have introduced NEET as a uniform, single entrance test for all students across the country, ushering in an era of transparency and leading to drastic reduction in corruption," he said.

Suitable amendments have also been carried out in the graduate and post-graduate medical education regulations for making common counselling for admission in medical colleges mandatory, Nadda added.

"Food items wrapped in newspapers is also hazardous to health. It should be stopped. The people also have the right to clean potable water. We are also telling the states to earmark specific places, where street food can be served. These are some of the issues we continue to pursue," the minister said.

According to a senior official, the Centre has also asked states to relax the stock limits for state recognised agencies which would help in the procurement of pulses. However, the official said that ban on exports and restriction on stockings by private agencies in a bumper crop year has also contributed to drop in pulses prices.

On the issue of dual MRP, the minister called it illegal and said the consumers have the option of approaching consumer courts. Service charge is also illegal, he reiterated, adding that it is not mandatory.

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## Centre exploring all options to increase medical seats: Nadda

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Union minister J P Nadda on Monday said the Centre was exploring all possibilities to increase medical seats in colleges to overcome the shortage of doctors, particularly specialists, in the country.

Delivering the convocation address at Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) here, he said the ministry would look into all options to increase the number of under graduate and post graduate seats.

The goal of the BJP-led NDA government was to reduce the inequality in availability and accessibility of health services, said the health and family welfare minister.

"The country faces a crippling shortage of doctors," he said.

The Centre is tackling this by rapidly increasing the capacity for training undergraduates and postgraduates in existing medical colleges and also by establishing new ones, he said.

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## Won't import pulses as we have enough stocks: Paswan

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** With the country witnessing a bumper production of pulses, the government has decided not to import the politically sensitive lentils from overseas.

"We have enough pulses in our buffer stock to control the prices of the essential items. What-ever agreement was signed with foreign countries could not be worked out for this year as there is a bumper domestic production, so we have to procure a major share from domestic farmers," Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Ramvilas Paswan said on Monday.

"We are more worried about distributing the pulses already in buffer stock than procuring it from Mozambique. Instead of targeted procurement of 10 lakh tonnes from foreign countries, we procured only 3-4 lakh tonnes, and rest was procured from domestic farmers," Paswan said, adding the move initiated by the government to control the prices of lentils have become a problem due to the price crash.

"We have also asked states to procure pulses at minimum support price (MSP) so that farmers won't be forced to sell their produce at distress prices due to a huge harvest of the produce," Paswan said. He added that the government is mulling to include nutritious food items as part of rations and is in talks with the Woman and Child Ministry on the issue.



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Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Department, Government of West Bengal and Chairman, KMDA

The programme will be presided over by

**Shri Arjun Singh**  
Hon'ble MLA and Chairman, Bhatpara Municipality

Glorious presence

**Shri Somnath Talukdar**  
Hon'ble Vice Chairman, Bhatpara Municipality

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## Pathankot martyr's family beaten up, CM orders action

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**GURDASPUR/CHANDIGARH:** Pathankot terror attack martyr Kulwant Singh's younger brother and his wife were allegedly thrashed by a travel agent and his accomplices over a monetary dispute, prompting Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to order strict action against the culprits.

Hardip Singh and his wife, Kulwinder Kaur, were thrashed in an area falling under Bhaini Mian Khan police station on May 13 with a video of the incident going viral on social media.

Punjab police on Monday submitted a detailed report to the chief minister on the incident and said a manhunt has been launched to arrest the absconding culprits.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the incident, Amarinder directed the DGP to initiate a thorough probe and ensure that the family of the martyred Hawaldar was provided full protection, said an official release here.

Acting on the chief minis-

ter's directives, the DGP has ordered a thorough investigation in the matter.

According to the police report sent to the chief minister, the dispute arose after Hardip gave Rs 9 lakh to travel agent, Gurnam Singh of Chak Sharif, to send the former to the USA in 2015.

After Gurnam failed to send him abroad, Hardip's family demanded that the money be returned.

"The agent returned Rs 3.4 lakh while deducting Rs 1.6 lakh for expenses. For the balance amount, an affidavit was signed by the agent promising refund of Rs 4 lakh in due course," police said.

However, the agent allegedly made excuses for not returning the money, following which Hardip threatened him with a police complaint.

The police said the Chak Sharif village sarpanch had intervened in a bid to resolve the issue but failed, leading to a heated argument between the parties. The sarpanch then advised Hardip to report the matter to the police.

# Rohtak gangrape-murder case to be heard by fast-track court

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**CHANDIGARH:** The hearing of the brutal gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old Dalit woman in Sonipat will be conducted in a fast-track court, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said on Monday.

"Such kind of heinous crimes would not be tolerated at any cost in a civilised society and the guilty would be punished," he said.

Meanwhile, a court in Sonipat on Monday sent the two accused to seven days in police remand. The accused will be produced before the Sonipat district court on May 22.

The decomposed and mutilated body of the woman, who went missing from Sonipat on May 9 and was gang-raped and brutally murdered, was found near the Industrial Model Township in Urban Estate, Rohtak, on May 11. Stray dogs had bitten off the face and lower portion of her body.

Two persons, including the main accused Sumit, who is also a Dalit, were arrested by the Haryana Police which has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the case.

The sheer brutality of the crime, reminiscent of the 'Nirbhaya' incident in Delhi which triggered nation-wide outrage, occurred barely a month after the BJP-led Haryana government launched 'Operation Durga' to stop harassment of women. An autopsy of the victim had stated that



Police take the accused to the scene of the crime where the mutilated body of a woman was dumped after her abduction, gangrape and murder in Rohtak on Sunday

the bones of the woman's skull were shattered into pieces and "some sharp-edged objects may have been inserted in her private parts".

"The findings suggest that this was a case of brutal rape and murder," said S K Dhatwarwal, head of the department of forensic medicine at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS) in Rohtak, who conducted the post-mortem examination.

Police said the family of the victim had suspected the involvement of six more persons, out of whom five are related to the

main accused.

The kin of the victim have also alleged that they had approached the Sonipat police about a month back with a complaint that Sumit was harassing their daughter, but there was no action.

The chief minister also promised strict action against those involved in the alleged rape of a 22-year-old woman at Gurgaon in the state.

The woman from Sikkim was allegedly raped by three men in a moving car and thrown out on a road in Delhi.

## 10-yr-old pregnant girl's mother wants abortion

**ROHTAK:** The mother of 10-year-old girl, who was found to be five months pregnant after being raped repeatedly allegedly by her stepfather, has moved a city court seeking permission to abort the foetus.

The district court will on Tuesday take a call on the matter, police said today.

"The mother of the victim has moved the court and she wanted an abortion," Rohtak Police (Women police station) Inspector Garima said.

The police said the mother of the victim in her plea has stated that the family was not financially well off therefore, it could not bring up the child. She said she already has four children.

"The court will now decide on the matter tomorrow," the Inspector said.

In a shocking incident, a 10-year-old girl here was

found to be five months pregnant after being raped repeatedly allegedly by her stepfather.

The girl's pregnancy was confirmed by the doctors when her mother took her to a hospital.

The accused has been arrested under section 506 (Criminal intimidation) of the IPC and relevant section of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) 2012.

The family, originally hailing from Bihar, was residing at Durga Colony here.

The mother, in her complaint with the police, had alleged that the girl's stepfather had been raping her for a long time and threatened the victim of dire consequences if she dared to disclose it to anyone.

The girl was admitted to PGIMS. MPOST

## I'm not in race for PM's post in 2019 poll: Nitish

Prez nominee: Kumar backs Pranab for 2nd term

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**PATNA:** Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) national president Nitish Kumar on Monday emphatically said that he was not in the race for the prime minister's post in 2019.

"I am unnecessarily being targeted. We are a small party. I am not a fool... If I become the national president of my party, it does not mean that I harbour national aspiration (of becoming the PM)," Kumar told reporters on the sidelines of 'Lok Samvad' programme here.

Stating that he believed in working for the people, Kumar said he has served the people throughout his political career - be it as MP, Union minister and now as the chief minister.

At present, the people of Bihar have given the mandate to grand alliance and he was doing his work in a positive manner, he said.

Asked whether he has the capability to lead a non-BJP alternative, Kumar said that "I



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar addresses a Press conference along with Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav in Patna on Monday

neither have any aspiration nor the ability to become the PM."

The JD(U) president, who was flanked by ministers and party leaders during interaction with the media, said that it was difficult to say as to who will emerge as the PM candidate in 2019. "It sounds weird... I am not the claimant for the prime minister's post in 2019 (general elections)," he said.

"The person in whom people will see potential will become the prime minister. People saw potential in Narendra Modi during last elections,

## Not joining BJP: Vaghela after unfollowing Rahul

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**AHMEDABAD:** A day after he 'unfollowed' Rahul Gandhi and other party colleagues on Twitter, Congress leader Shankersinh Vaghela on Monday scotched speculation about returning to the BJP.

Vaghela said that his decision to 'unfollow' the Congress vice-president was not personal and that he will remain inactive on social media till the Gujarat assembly polls, due later this year, to stop "spreading of false messages and speculations" about him.

There has been a demand by a section of state Congress leaders to declare Vaghela as the chief ministerial candidate but the party has made it clear that it will not name anyone for the post before the polls.

Vaghela also skipped an event organised by the party's IT cell on Sunday and his actions were seen as an indication of a possible rift in the party. Addressing the media in Gandhinagar on Monday, Vaghela, however, said that he was not in the chief-ministerial race.

He also clarified that he does not have any plans to retire at this stage.

"Though I have already clarified earlier that I am not in the race to be the next chief minister, messages like 'Bapu as CM' were being circulated in the social media. Thus, to avoid any confusion and misunderstanding, I have decided to unfollow everyone," Vaghela known popularly as 'Bapu', told reporters.

"There is nothing personal, as I have unfollowed everyone. I have decided to remain inactive on social media to stop spreading of false messages and speculations about me. I took that decision because it was adversely affecting our poll related planning," the former chief minister of Gujarat said.

Apart from unfollowing Rahul Gandhi and others from his twitter account, 77-year-old Vaghela, who is the Leader of Opposition in Gujarat Assembly, also deleted all the anti-BJP posts from his account, which fuelled speculations that he may leave the Congress and join the saffron party, which he had quit in 1996.

## Mayurbhanj BJP chief sent to jail for assaulting govt official

**BARIPADA (Odisha):** A Baripada court on Monday remanded BJP Mayurbhanj district president and three other leaders to judicial custody in connection with a case of assault on a government official.

Mayurbhanj district sessions judge Pramod Kumar Jena rejected the bail petition of district BJP chief Krushna Chandra Mohapatra and the three other leaders and remanded them to jail till May 29.

The four were asked to appear before the court today. Mohapatra, BJP state executive committee members Chhotelal Mohanta and Nihar Ranjan Modi and another party leader Prakash Agarwalla were facing trial in a case of demanding ransom and assaulting public servant.

They were charged with barging into the office of assistant commercial tax officer Kulamani Bhoi at Jamsola in the inter-state check post under Jharpokharia Police Station on May 23, 2016. AGENCIES

## Tamil Nadu commuters hit hard as buses go off roads

**CHENNAI:** With as many as ten state transport corporations affiliated to various opposition parties resorting to indefinite strike to press for their demands, the commuters across Tamil Nadu were hit hard on Monday.

The unions linked to opposition DMK and the Left parties resorted to the strike amid some reports of shattering of the window panes of buses and assaulting of a driver in Tiruchirappalli allegedly by employees favouring the strikes. Amid the ongoing strike, the state government appealed to the employees to end the strike, while blaming the opposition-backed trade unions for "politicising the issue and misleading the employees." The striking unions, on the other hand, demanded that the state fulfil their "legitimate demands" and objected to the hiring of the drivers on ad hoc basis to

cripple the strike.

They said they were ready to resolve various contentious issues through talks. The ten trade unions resorted to the strike after several rounds of their talks with the government on various issues including that for the upward wage revision to bring it on par with that of the employees of other PSUs, failed. Some buses had gone off the roads yesterday itself as a section of employees went on strike. Claiming that 75 per cent of the government buses were operated, Transport Minister M R Vijayabaskar blamed the DMK-affiliated LPF and trade unions CITU and AITUC linked to the Left parties for "having the strike as their only goal."

He said the talks did not fructify due to the rigid stance of the unions despite the government offering a staggered pay out plan. AGENCIES

## Sidhu accuses Badals of siphoning off funds

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab Cabinet Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu on Monday accused former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal and his son Sukhbir Badal of siphoning off over Rs 2,000 crore of funds under Smart City project and Amrut scheme. He also alleged that the Badal duo have "put the money into their accounts by diverting state funds".

With the money meant for urban development being "misused" by the previous SAD-BJP government, Sidhu said the Centre has now refused to give a single penny to Punjab for the Smart City project.

Asking them to tell the people where they had spent the funds, he said Badals, who used to boast about the state's development, carried out the same "only in newspapers".

"...the money meant for some purpose directly went to the (Badal) family. Money which used to come in the state for some purpose, Badal and his son diverted it and put it into their accounts," Sidhu alleged.

The Local Body minister in the Amarinder Singh government also alleged that the previous dispensation contributed only Rs 32 crore as the state's share for Smart City project for Ludhiana as against Rs 200 crore. The Centre had sent Rs 200 crore.

## Stone-pelting students injure 2 cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**SRINAGAR:** Two policemen were injured on Monday when stone-pelting students of a college clashed with the police after their attempt to take out a march in the heart of the city was thwarted. According to the police, the students of the Sri Pratap College were protesting against the alleged "high handedness" of security forces in the April 17 incident in Degree College in Pulwama.

The students tried to march towards the Maulana Azad Road but were stopped by the police, leading to clashes between the two sides, a police official said.

The students threw stones at the police personnel, injuring two of them, including sta-



Students throw stones on police during a clash in Srinagar on Monday

tion house officer (SHO) of police station Kralkhud, Suhail Mushtaq, the official said.

He said a few of the protesting students later entered the nearby Women's College and pelted stones at the forces from there. The clashes went on for a while after which the protesters dispersed.

Police fired tear gas shells to disperse the stone-pelting stu-

## Ayurvedic drug in 'top 20'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The government's move to revive traditional medicines has started yielding results. In a major shot in the arms of Ayush Ministry, an ayurvedic drug developed by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has been adjudged as top 20 best medicines in the country. Notably, the Ayush Ministry was carved out from Health Ministry as a separate ministry to promote traditional medicines by PM Narendra Modi.

"It's for the time that an ayurvedic drug formulation has been included in the list of top 20 medicines which is mainly dominated by modern medicines. The development establishes that patients

are switching towards traditional healthcare system when it comes to treating diabetes," an Ayush Ministry official said, adding that the BGR-34 medicine, which was developed by the CSIR, has been proving a better alternative to cure the non-communicable disease.

The ayurvedic drug BGR-34 is at 14th position in the list which is dominated by the allopathic medicine of multinational companies such as Sanofi, Zydus, Lupin, etc. The ayurvedic formulation, which has been developed by CSIR -National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) Lucknow is ranked at 33rd position in terms of MAT (moving annual total) value of the drug. The MAT value of a drug is declared after study its efficacy.

## Improve quality of Parliamentary debates: Prez

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**JAIPUR:** President Pranab Mukherjee on Monday asked lawmakers to improve the quality of debates in legislatures, saying India cannot remain a role model to the world simply because of the size of its electorate.

Delivering the first Bhairon Singh Shekhawat Memorial Lecture here, President Mukherjee lauded the parliamentary democracy in India and said Parliament's functioning is based on 3Ds - Debate, Dissension and Decision.

The president asked members of Parliament and state Assemblies to improve the quality of deliberations, dis-

cussions and debates in the House, saying people have vested immense power and privileges in them.

He said every issue should be debated and members may express their disagreements but finally a decision has to be taken by the House.

"Once the decision is there, it's not the decision of the majority party or the ruling party, it's the decision of the House and so the decision of the state or the decision of India," the president said, adding that this is the tradition of the parliamentary democracy.

"You cannot remain the role model to the world simply because of the size of your electorate," he said.



President Pranab Mukherjee delivers the first Bhairon Singh Shekhawat Memorial Lecture in Jaipur on Monday

He said what is applicable to Parliament is applicable to legislative Assemblies in all 29 states as well.

"There is huge power and responsibilities vested in MPs and MLAs of all 29 states by 800 million people. If we do

## NATION BRIEFS

### CM KHATTAR TO LEAD HARYANA DELEGATION TO SINGAPORE, HK



**CHANDIGARH:** Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar will lead a delegation to Singapore and Hong Kong from May 21 to 25 to promote the state as an investment destination. Speaking at a meeting here, Khattar said the visit is aimed at attracting investors. Developing Haryana as a preferred investment destination was among the top priorities of the state government, he said. The visit would accelerate the pace of investment in the state, he said, according to an official release here. During discussions with the entrepreneurs held in Delhi on Monday, the Chief Minister referred to his visits to the USA, Canada, China and Japan and said that investors there had evinced keen interest regarding investing in Haryana.

### JITENDRA SINGH LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF J&K BIOTECH PARK

**JAMMU:** Union minister Jitendra Singh on Monday laid the foundation stone for north India's second Biotech park in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, saying it would be a "game changer". The park is expected to benefit farmers and entrepreneurs by using biotechnology to cultivate crops and would provide facilities to startups for incubation and development of biobusinesses. The Biotechnology Park in Lucknow, set up in 2002, is the only other such park in the northern part of the country and this would be the second, he said after laying the foundation stone for it in Ghatti belt of Kathua district. The Union minister of state in the prime minister's office said the proposed biotech park would be a "game changer" not only for Jammu and Kashmir but for the entire north India. The Centre last year accorded approval to the biotech park which is being built on 80 kanal of land with a budget of around Rs 100 crore in the first phase. "The Park will be completed within a period of 18 month," he said.

# Rough start to UP session; paper balls thrown at Guv

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW: The maiden session of the newly elected UP Assembly began on a tempestuous note today with opposition members throwing paper balls at Governor Ram Naik during his address and marshals trying to dodge them with files.

This is the first assembly session after the BJP government led by Yogi Adityanath came to power last month after a landslide victory in assembly elections.

The customary address of the governor to the joint sitting of the two Houses of the state legislature was drowned in the uproar created by the opposition.

Throughout the governor's 35-minute address, SP legislator Rajesh Yadav blew a whistle to ensure that the address is not heard. All the while, others threw paper balls, some of which hit the governor despite marshals trying their best to shield him.

Slogan-shouting opposition members trooped into the Well with banners, placards, donning caps and raising anti-government slogans.

When the governor started reading out his address, the entire opposition comprising members of Samajwadi Party, Congress and BSP started slogan shouting against the government over the issue of law and order.

A BSP placard read "police pit rahi thano me, Yogi tere zamane me" (police getting beaten up in Yogi's regime, "goraksha ke naam par gundai band karo" (stop hooliganism in the name of cow protection)).

SP legislators also sought to corner the government on law and order issue.

Congress too joined the opposition with slogans like - "Kanoon vyastha dhwash hai, sarkar bucharkhane, teen



Marshals protecting UP Governor Ram Naik from paper balls thrown by agitating Opposition MLAs during his address at the first sitting of the 17th Uttar Pradesh Assembly in Lucknow on Monday

talaq me vyast hai" (law and order is in a shambles, government is busy in issues like slaughter house and triple talaq).

On their part, BJP members thumped their desks loudly whenever the governor lauded the government, adding to the prevailing chaos in the House. The governor was flanked by Dixit and Chairman of the Legislative Council Ramesh Yadav.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was present when the governor read the 84-page address despite the bedlam.

The address is a note prepared by the government highlighting its achievements.

Indirectly blaming the previous governments for the prevailing state of

affairs in Uttar Pradesh, the governor lauded the Yogi Adityanath government for its resolve to transform UP into a frontline state.

Naik said Uttar Pradesh was once a leading state, but in the past many years it has lagged behind other states.

For the first time, the proceedings were telecast live by Doordarshan.

After the BJP came to power in the state, a decision was taken to telecast live the proceedings of the House so that people could benefit.

"Sara Uttar Pradesh dekh raha hai aap ko (the entire Uttar Pradesh is watching you)," a visibly annoyed governor told the shouting members, who kept throwing papers at the podium.

## Governor blames past govts for state lagging behind others

LUCKNOW: Governor Ram Naik today lauded the Yogi Adityanath dispensation for its "resolve" to transform Uttar Pradesh into a developed state, while indirectly blaming previous governments for the state lagging behind others.

In his 35-minute address, marred by uproar, to the joint sitting of the state legislature on the opening day of the first session of the new government, Naik said Uttar Pradesh was once a leading state, but for the past several years it has lagged behind other states. The chief minister was present when the governor read the 84-page address, which is a note prepared by the government highlighting its achievements.

"UP was once a leading state of the country, but in the past many years it has lagged, if compared to other states. It is the government's resolve to transform UP into a developed state with emphasis on 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas,' Naik said.

He said the government would not follow the policy of appeasement but will commit towards the protection of interests of the people, while highlighting its initiatives in the past two months.

On law and order, Naik said, "We pledge to ensure rule of law completely and a fearless and peaceful atmosphere. Anti-land mafia and anti-Romeo squads have been introduced to ensure safe society." MP05T

# SP feud: Akhilesh avoids uncle Shivpal in UP Assembly

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW: Strained relations in the Yadav family once again came to the fore when Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav today avoided his uncle Shivpal Yadav in the Uttar Pradesh assembly.

Shivpal, an MLA, reached the House and occupied the last bench with SP members, while Akhilesh, an MLC, sat in the front seat during the Governor's address to the joint sitting of the UP legislature on the first day of the session.

After some SP members saw Shivpal, he was escorted to the seat behind Akhilesh, but even after seeing him he avoided greeting him and did not exchange pleasantries.

When a member gave him SP's red cap, Shivpal readily donned it and kept standing while SP members along with other opposition members raised slogans during the joint address of the Governor.

Fissures in the Samajwadi Party resurfaced recently with Shivpal declaring that his brother Mulayam Singh Yadav will head a secular front to be formed by him.

The Shivpal, who retained the Jashwantnagar seat in the just-concluded Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, had recently given an ultimatum that a "secular front" would be formed if Akhilesh did not hand over the reins of the SP back to his father Mulayam within three months.

The SP had witnessed a bitter feud between uncle Shivpal and nephew Akhilesh in the

## Shivpal had earlier replaced Akhilesh as the SP's Uttar Pradesh unit chief following which the then chief minister, Akhilesh, had removed Shivpal from his cabinet

run-up to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.

Shivpal had earlier replaced Akhilesh as the SP's Uttar Pradesh unit chief following which, the then chief minister Akhilesh had removed Shivpal from his cabinet.

Following a bitter feud between the father and the son, Akhilesh had snatched the reins of the SP from Mulayam. Their fight had also reached the Election Commission over which faction would retain control over the party symbol, 'bicycle'.

Many in the SP had blamed the power struggle between Akhilesh and Shivpal as the reason behind the party's dismal performance in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election.

The SP under Akhilesh's leadership, suffered a humiliating defeat in the polls at the hands of the BJP. The SP-Congress alliance managed to win only 54 seats (SP 47, Congress seven) as opposed to the BJP-led NDA's 325 in the 403-member House.

# CBI questions Hooda in Manesar land deal case



OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The CBI on Monday questioned former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda in connection with Manesar land deal scam.

A CBI spokesperson said that he was being questioned.

Hooda was recently quizzed by the agency in connection with alleged irregularities in the allotment of industrial plots in Panchkula.

The agency had registered the case in September 2015 on allegations that private builders in conspiracy with unknown public servants of the Haryana government had purchased around 400 acres of land from farmers and land owners of village Manesar, Naurangpur and Gurgaon at throwaway prices.

The land was allegedly purchased showing the threat of acquisition by the government, during the period August 27, 2004 to August 24, 2007.

It is alleged that in this process, initially, the Haryana government had issued a notification under the Land Acquisition Act for acquisition of land measuring about 912 acres for setting up an industrial model township at villages in Manesar, Naurangpur and Lakhnoul in Gurgaon.

After that, all the land had allegedly been grabbed from the land owners by private builders under the threat of acquisition at meagre rates, the CBI had said after registration of the case.

**Government of West Bengal**  
 NIG. No. 12 of EE /NTKMD of 2017-18.  
 Sealed quotations are invited by the Executive Engineer, New Town Kolkata Mechanical Division, P. H. E. Dte. for Operation & guarding of different Fountains & cleaning of screen chamber of different sites (For Sl.No. 1 to 15) under NTK Project. (i) Estimated Cost — Rate to be quoted, (ii) Last date of application : 25.05.17 (iii) Date of Opening quotation — 30.05.17 at 2.30 P.M. (iv) Intending Bidders are requested to visit the website www.wbphed.gov.in  
 Sd/-  
 Executive Engineer  
 New Town Kolkata Mech. Divn.  
 P. H. Engineering Dte.

# 'Saddam Hussain' tries to get Aadhaar for 'Osama'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR: Osama bin Laden is dead and gone but a Saddam Hussain operating an E-Mitra kiosk centre in Rajasthan's Bhilwara district tried to make an Aadhaar card for the slain Al Qaeda terrorist.

However, officials of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) got a whiff of the matter and reported the matter to police.

Police have arrested Saddam Hussain Mansuri, 25, who runs an Aadhaar card registration centre in Mandal town. The accused had allegedly uploaded a blurred picture of Laden along with other details.

UIDAI officials found discrepancies in the application and forwarded the matter for



investigation, SP, Bhilwara, Pradeep Mohan Sharma said.

He said the state IT department had forwarded the complaint to him and a case was filed against Mansuri with the Mandal Police Station on Friday evening, Sharma said.

Mandal Circle officer, Chanchal Mishra, said that the accused will be produced before a court today and will be taken on remand for further interrogation into the matter.

# Computers in two panchayat offices in Kerala hit by ransomware

OUR CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Computers in two panchayat offices in Kerala were on Monday disabled by the global ransomware cyberattack but no major damage was caused, the police said.

Four computers at Thariyathodu panchayat in Wayanad and two computers at Aruvapulam panchayat in Pathanamthitta district were hit by the cyberattack, Manoj Abraham, IG, Cyberdome said here.

However, no major damage was caused or critical data lost. The computers got "locked", he said.

The Cyberdome, a technological research and development centre of Kerala Police, has issued an advisory on preventive steps to be taken to avert such attacks.

The official said the Cyberdome had anticipated such an attack and had taken various precautionary steps. A ransomware school and a special team were set up to monitor the situation, he said.

The Cyberdome has also alerted individuals and organisations about the crippling global ransomware 'WannaCry'.

The agency also issued certain guidelines for computer and internet users to prevent the cyberattack.

The Cyberdome experts have directed users to maintain updated antivirus software on all systems and check regularly for the integrity of the information stored in databases.

# New guidelines on treatment of juvenile convicts

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The government has come up with a handbook detailing ways to deal with children in conflict with the law, emphasising on launching a database and a tracking system for their effective rehabilitation post incarceration, after procedural flaws were exposed in the aftermath of the 'Nirbhaya' case.

The standard operating procedure (SOP), prepared by the women and child development (WCD) ministry based on the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015, aims at eliminating maltreatment of such children while protecting them from violence, abuse and exploitation.

The objective of all the

stakeholders should be to rehabilitate and reintegrate children in conflict with the law into the mainstream, the SOP states.

The ministry has recommended a slew of activities as part of the rehabilitation process which include yoga, physical training, meditation, skill training, computer education, art and craft therapy, training in spoken English, dance and drama and sports.

It also enumerates individual care plans to be drafted for each child which is mandated in by the JJ Act.

The SOP has laid down a provision for professional course for a child in order to make him/her financially independent and recommended that child care institutions tie up with universities for such

courses. It has also advised that there should be a follow-up plan in place for all children in conflict with the law who are in institutional care.

"Institutions should conduct regular follow-up programmes for all released children to ensure the child does not get back to a difficult situation. Institution should maintain regular contact with the children and their families.

"Regular follow-up activities help to reduce the rate of recidivism. Institutions should conduct half-yearly meets to get a feedback from the juveniles about their current situation and to ascertain the further interventions required for their successful rehabilitation," the SOP said.

Flaws were exposed in the procedural aspects of the JJ Act in the aftermath of the release of the juvenile convict in the 'Nirbhaya' gangrape case, prompting the government to work on a comprehensive plan for such children so that they do not become repeat offenders.

The juvenile convict in the gangrape and murder of a 23-year-old physiotherapy intern in Delhi in December 2012 was released in December 2015 and is believed to be working at a roadside eatery in South India.

Ministry officials say that there was no follow-up plan devised for his release.

The officials also say that while he was taught how to stitch and cook, it was a south India-based non-for-

profit organisation which later trained him and presently monitoring him.

The ministry's SOP also has a provision for after-care whereby a tracking system is to be created by state governments through which children, once they leave child care institutions, will be tracked for minimum three years to analyse the transition.

The government may also set up a database of children leaving child care homes upon turning 18 every year and also create helpline numbers for those who are out of institutional care, where they can contact to seek guidance or counselling, whenever required, and can find solutions for their concerns.

# Bringing Justice Karnan to justice proves elusive

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI: How hard can it be to find a judge? Very hard if the judge in question is CS Karnan.

Desperate police teams from West Bengal to Tamil Nadu are at their wits end as they hunt for the Calcutta High Court judge, hoping to capture him and bring him to justice. But the 61-year-old has proved to be as elusive as he has been brash, defying the Supreme Court and passing his own judgements against his peers.

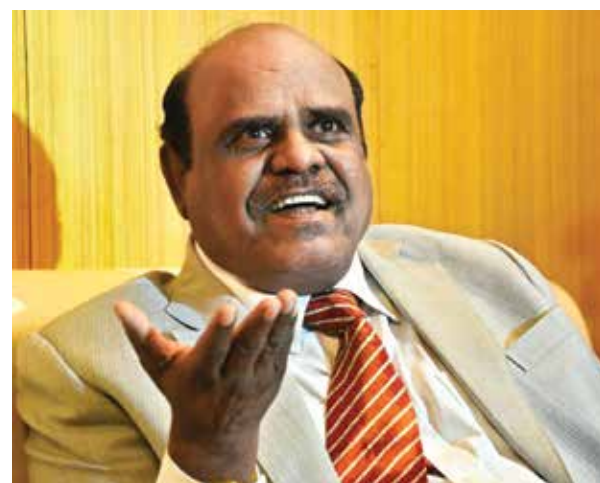
Clues that he could be in a temple town in Andhra Pradesh or a holiday resort in Tamil Nadu have proved to be dead ends.

Police are now staring at the possibility that Karnan, who was last seen in Chennai, may have fled the country, perhaps to Sri Lanka.

A senior police officer in Chennai said on Monday: "The whereabouts of Justice Karnan are not known yet. A West Bengal police team continues its search for him." He said the role of Tamil Nadu police was limited to providing logistics and technical support to the visiting team.

Karnan's flight from justice—the Supreme Court ordered him arrested six days ago on contempt of court charges—has provided endless fodder for mirth and ridicule by netizens, not only against the country's security apparatus but also against the judiciary itself.

"And in the end top police officers of two states of India are not able to locate a High



Court judge - are we joking or is this the state of affairs of police and judiciary?" asked Dinesh Jain, contributing his comments to a chorus of readers reaction to a news article on a national newspaper's website.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sentenced Karnan, a native of Chennai, to six months imprisonment, and directed his immediate arrest in an unprecedented order against a sitting high court judge. The court ordered West Bengal's Director General of Police to carry out the arrest and lodge him in a jail.

"If the Intelligence (apparatus) cannot keep an eye on persons like Karnan, who has been in the news in the last 6 months if not more, can they be relied upon for other important duties?" said another netizen in the readers comments section.

Targeting the judiciary, another reader posted: "a judge doesn't believe in law and they claim they have the right to

pass judgement." The West Bengal police team has already questioned several persons, including Karnan's kin. Karnan left Kolkata for Chennai by an early morning flight on Tuesday, hours before the apex court ordered his arrest.

Until a couple of hours after the court order, Karnan, who was staying at the Tamil Nadu government state guest house in Chennai, was meeting and discussing nonchalantly with journalists and visitors. He then went incommunicado when the full impact of the apex court ruling dawned on everyone.

A posse of policemen, headed by an assistant commissioner of police-cadre officer from Kolkata, landed in Chennai the next day.

When the police team arrived at the guest house, it did not find either the judge or the two lawyers who had accompanied him.

Government of West Bengal  
 Office Of The Superintending Engineer South Western Electrical Circle, P.W.Dte, P.W.D Complex, Midnapur-721 101

**Abridged NIT**  
 Notice Inviting e-Quotation No.- WBPWD/SE/SWEC/NIT2/2017-18 Tender ID: 2017\_WBPWD\_112035\_1  
 Last date of submission of bid :- 29/05/2017 upto 15 : 00 Hrs.  
 Further details can be seen in the above mentioned office during working hours or in Official Website [www.pwdwb.in](http://www.pwdwb.in)  
 For all details and online tender submission visit <https://wbtdenders.gov.in>

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited  
 (A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)  
 Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154  
 Santaldih Thermal Power Station  
 P.O. Santaldih Thermal Plant, Dist. Purulia, Pin 723146

**Notice Inviting E-Tender**  
 Ref. No.: WBPDDL/Tend-Adv/CC/17-18/66/STPS Date: 16.05.2017  
 NIT No.: WBPDDL/STPS/NIT/E1298/17-18

E-tenders in prescribed format are invited at <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> by the General Manager, STPS, WBPDDL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 02 (two) part bid system for 'Transportation of conservancy materials, rubbish, plastic bags from STPS (T)'. Tender Document Download Start Date: 17.05.2017 at 10.00 hrs. Bid Submission End Date: 30.05.2017 at 10.00 hrs. Contact Person: D.Bhattacharya, DGM (M&C), Tel.No.: 8336903677. For details please visit: <https://wbtdenders.gov.in>

KOLKATA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
**Abridged 'e'-NIT No.: 04/SE/TTC-I/TT/KMDA of 2017-2018**  
 Superintending Engineer, TTC-II, T&T Sector, KMDA, Situated at Unnayan Bhavan, Block-A, 7th floor, Bidhan Nagar, Kolkata-700091 invites online bids from bonafide, reliable, experienced & resourceful firms/individual contractors/Joint ventures/Consortium for the following work. **Name of work:** Civil maintenance works of repairing and renovation for building, road including sanitary & plumbing items and other allied works around Howrah station area under HSRD. **Value of the work:** Rs. 10,00,000/- **Earnest money:** Rs. 20,000/- **Time of completion:** 365 days. **Online bid submission last date and time:** 24.05.2017 up to 13.00 hrs. For details contact the above office or visit KMDA/Govt. of West Bengal websites. [www.wbtdenders.gov.in](http://www.wbtdenders.gov.in) or [www.kmdaonline.org](http://www.kmdaonline.org)

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited  
 (A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)  
 Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154  
 Registered & Corporate Office : Bidyut Unnayan Bhavan  
 Plot No.: 3/C, LA - Block, Sector- III, Bidhannagar, Kol-700098

**Notice Inviting E-Tender**  
 Ref. No.: WBPDDL/Tend-Adv/CC/17-18/63/Corp Dated: 26.04.2017  
 NIT No.: WBPDDL/CORP/NIT/E1108/17-18

E-tenders in prescribed format are invited at <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> WBPDDL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 02 (two) part bid system for 'Design, Engineering, Supply, Transport, Storage, Insurance, Erection of Utility Services for Hydrogen Generation Plant Package (SGHNU2) at Sagardighi Thermal Power Extension Project Phase-II Units [2x500 MW] Units 3 & 4'. Tender Document Download Start Date: 16.05.2017 at 16.00 hrs. Bid Submission End Date: 14.06.2017 at 16.00 hrs. Contact Person: D. Chowdhury, Sr. Manager (PS-M&C), Tel. No.: 033 23393625. E-mail: [dchowdhury@wbpdcl.co.in](mailto:dchowdhury@wbpdcl.co.in) For details please visit: <https://wbtdenders.gov.in>

KOLKATA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
**Abridged e-NIT No. 14/SE(EC)/WS/KMDA of 2017-2018**  
 Suptd. Engr., East Circle, WS Sector, KMDA, 'C'-Block, 2nd floor, Unnayan Bhavan, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700091 invites e-tender from eligible and resourceful contractors for the work. **Name of work:** Construction of boundary walls at different ESR in Bhatpara Municipality under AMRUT. **Estimated Amount:** ₹56,07,404. **Earnest Money:** ₹1,32,148. **Time of Completion:** 90 Days. **Last date & time of submission of bids online is** 26.05.2017 at 6.50 P.M. For details please contact the above office or visit KMDA/Govt. of West Bengal Websites. [www.wbtdenders.gov.in](http://www.wbtdenders.gov.in) or [www.kmdaonline.org](http://www.kmdaonline.org)

**Abridge Notice Inviting Quotation**  
 Sealed quotations are invited for N.I.Q. No: 01 to 13 / Mtn. / 2017-18 of Executive Engineer (A-M) Bankura (A-M) Division on behalf of Govt. of West Bengal for supply of different materials for maintenance of Govt. Owned Major R.L.L.S among the manufactures/ their Authorized Distributors / Authorized Dealers / Authorized stockists and other reputed Resourceful suppliers in the Trade. No Quotation will be considered for a lesser quantity than that of specified. Other details are available at the office of the undersigned.

Sl. No.	Particular	Date & Time
1	Last Date of receiving application for Token	18.05.2017 upto 2.00 P.M.
2	Last Date of issuing Token	19.05.2017 upto 2.00 P.M.
3	Receiving date of Bid documents	23.05.2017 upto 1.30 P.M.
4	Opening date of Quotation	23.05.2017 at 2.00 P.M.

Sd/- A. Guha  
 Executive Engineer (A.M)  
 Bankura (Agri-Mech.) Division

KOLKATA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
**NIT No.: 01/EE/SCD-I/TT/KMDA of 2017-2018**  
 Sealed tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer, SCD-II, T & T Sector, KMDA, Block-D, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Unnayan Bhavan, Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700091 from bonafide, reliable, experienced and resourceful firms/individual Contractors, joint ventures/consortium for the following works SI. No., **Name of work, Estimated Value put to tender, Earnest Money, Time of Completion, Cost of Bid Documents** (1) Estimate prepared for cleaning sludge, liquid earth, mud etc from road side masonry drain at natural channel of the eastern side of EM Bypass at Baghajatin railway crossing to Ajay Nagar, Rs 4,80,924/-, Rs 9,618/-, 150 days, Rs 850/- (2) Same as SI No. 1 and natural channel from Ghosh Para to Baghajatin railway station of EM Bye pass, Rs 4,81,800/-, Rs 9,636/-, 150 days, Rs 850/- (3) Cleaning of gully pits, sewer line, manholes, removing sludge, silts from road side kerb channels by manual and mechanical means such as jetting cum suction machine in different location on EM Bye pass from Bengal Chemical More to Kadapara More, Rs 4,03,986/-, Rs 8,080/-, 150 days, Rs 850/- **Last date & time of receiving of application:** 25.05.2017 upto 3:00 PM. For details please contact the above office or visit KMDA website. [www.kmdaonline.org](http://www.kmdaonline.org)

## EDITORIAL

## On the question of Guv's rule

There seems to be a growing clamour for the imposition of Governor's rule in the state of Jammu and Kashmir among certain sections of the political class and the media. Last month, National Conference patriarch and former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah advocated Governor's rule moments after he secured a win in the stormy Srinagar Lok Sabha by-bolls, which saw a dismal 7.14% voter turnout and violent clashes between protesters and the security forces. This unfortunate development was soon followed by the Election Commission's decision to call off by-elections for the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat because of the "scary" ground situation. Days later, the Valley witnessed the murder of a young army officer from South Kashmir at the hands of militant groups. Ummer Fayaz Parray had come home on a holiday to attend a relative's wedding when he was picked up by gunmen. His body was later found riddled with bullet holes. Is it any surprise that the clamour for Governor's rule has only grown louder? As argued in these columns, the situation in Kashmir has deteriorated to levels not seen in a very long time. Other opposition parties, including the Congress, have also reiterated the demand for Governor's rule. Former officers of the Indian armed forces have warned that unrest in the region is spiralling out of control. "What is worrisome is that it now seems to have become a direct fight between the security forces and the civilian population. This goes against our whole approach to counter-insurgency that people are the centre of gravity of all our actions. What has happened is that the political healing touch is missing. If it carries on any longer, it will end up brutalising both the security forces and the civilians," said Lt Gen DS Hooda (ret'd), who headed the Udhampur-headquartered Northern Command till last November. Evidently, the people of Kashmir Valley have lost patience with mainstream political parties, especially the ruling BJP-PDP alliance.

For the uninitiated, Governor's rule can be imposed for a period up to six months if there is a complete breakdown of the constitutional machinery. During this six months, the State Assembly is either dissolved or left in suspended animation. If the political class is unable to prop up the constitutional machinery within this stipulated period, then one witnesses the imposition of President's rule. Security officials in the Valley have reportedly argued that Governor's rule would bring stability to the security situation in the Valley, and aid the process of containing extremist elements. Officials also believe that the PDP-BJP alliance has grown very unpopular in the Valley, and governor's rule might help calm tempers. In the past fortnight, leaders from both parties have stated that the imposition of Governor's rule is a serious possibility. There is seemingly growing political consensus on the idea. With the capacity of the current State government to tackle the current unrest in serious doubt and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's assertion earlier this month that only Prime Minister Narendra Modi could resolve the ongoing crisis in Kashmir, the political process is only driving in one direction. Admittedly, there was some resentment against the PDP-BJP alliance in many parts of the Valley. The PDP had fought the 2014 Assembly elections on the promise that it would keep the BJP and its parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak

Sangh out of the Valley. With the voters in Jammu uniting behind the BJP, and Ladakh split, the state was heading to a hung Assembly when the PDP reneged on its promise and entered into an alliance with the BJP. The PDP's decision to break its promise did leave behind a trail of resentment. However, what has further added to the resentment is the inability of the ruling coalition to engage with the people productively while riding on a military strategy which is useless against alienated masses, post the killing of former militant commander Burhan Wani.

This is not a problem relegated to the current ruling dispensation in Kashmir or the Centre, but a legacy of past attitudes. In fact, what we see today is more of the same. The much publicised 'Agenda of Alliance' document, which reportedly contained provisions that would bridge the extreme ideological difference of the PDP and BJP, is on the verge of irrelevance. No piece of paper can apparently bridge the gap between the PDP's 'soft separatist' leanings and the BJP's marked Hindu nationalism. Both parties are unable to see eye to eye on a whole host of issues, including talks with separatists and the phased withdrawal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. The phased withdrawal of AFSPA, for example, had found a place in the Agenda of Alliance document. However, nothing has come of it. Ideological differences between the two sides have come to the fore on many hot-button issues, leaving the economic development of the state in the lurch. In fact, on Sunday, BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav conceded that if the alliance indeed fell apart, governor's rule is a real possibility.

On the ground, there seems to be little opposition to the idea of Governor's rule. For those sections of the Valley involved in the current spate of unrest, there is apparently little difference between an elected state government and an administration run by an appointee of the Centre. With governance in a state marked by gross incompetence and poor communication between alliance partners, Governor's rule begins to look like a desirable alternative for certain sections. Kashmir's experience with Governor's rule remains mixed in the six times it has been imposed since 1977. One some occasions, Governor's rule led to unprecedented state repression, while others were marked by better delivery of welfare services and efficient governance. In the aftermath of former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's death, Governor NN Vohra's rule saw the faster clearance of files, better distribution of funds for flood relief, and the implementation of the food security act, among other initiatives. Which way will the Centre move? Only time will tell, but it is apparent that the current ruling dispensation in the State has shown little signs of revival in the face of unrest that has taken an increasingly communal turn. What is exceedingly worrying is the precedence of a particular ideological bent behind the recent spurt in violence. In a recent video published online earlier this year by a Hizbul Mujahideen commander, Kashmiri youth were urged to fight for Islam's supremacy rather than a new nation-state. It is a sentiment more prevalent among the disillusioned youth of the state. This completely disregards the spirit of Kashmiriyat, which speaks for religious harmony and brotherhood. The nature of militancy has indeed changed. Some have called it the "ISIS-isation" or the arrival of a profoundly reactionary strain of Sunni Islam in the Kashmir Valley. The origin of the clamour for "azaadi" (freedom) was indeed secular and trans-religious. However, the movement has seemingly morphed into the desire for an Islamic state. Will Governor's rule turn the tide? In isolation, it seems unlikely, but at least with that, there will be some semblance of the state, which has often gone missing in the past.



NANTOO BANERJEE

**According to the Airports Authority of India, the country's airports handled a total of over 254 million passengers in 2016, an increase of 20 per cent over 2015. This made India move into fifth place in the global air traffic rankings, overtaking Germany, and behind only the US, China, Japan, and the UK**

## Quote martial

**If you must break the law, do it to seize power: in all other cases observe it.**

JULIUS CAESAR

## In the line of fire



PINAKI BHATTACHARYA

**Policymakers will understand how facetious is the 'sovereignty' issue considering the country is not mobilised to march into Gilgit-Baltistan right away waving a Parliamentary resolution and the flag**

## Indian skies on sale

Foreign carriers controlling passenger traffic

Every major international airline from almost every part of the world wants to expand operation in India. The country is witnessing the world's biggest air traffic growth at over 23 per cent since the end of 2015. In January, this year, the domestic air traffic grew to a record of 25 per cent. Some of the Gulf countries are even lobbying the government for permission to operate on India's domestic space making such unusual demand as allowing operational rights in highly security sensitive north-eastern parts of the country. Unfortunately, airlines from India are struck with limited routes and limited passenger ferries to and from the country. And, the domestic air traffic business is being increasingly cornered by foreign-linked airlines operating in and out of India on the sly mostly through joint equity ventures with local private promoters.

India's so-called local airlines such as Jet Airways, Indigo, Vistara, and Air Asia are effectively foreign controlled irrespective of their official equity holding structure. Some are even operating out of international hubs. Vested interest groups are always lobbying the government for privatisation of India's own national flag carrier, Air India, which, thanks to the government's civil aviation policy, has long lost its dominant market position to other foreign-linked locally-registered airlines such as Indigo and Jet Airways.

It seems India is systematically surrendering its space and bilateral air traffic rights to foreign carriers, under every government since 1992. Official data shows India's domestic airlines such as Air India, Jet Airways, SpiceJet and IndiGo offer almost 50 per cent fewer seats than foreign airlines operating in India. On most international routes, capacity



Representational Image

utilisation of Indian carriers ranges between 30 and 40 per cent. Yet, foreign airlines are not happy.

They want more. Indian airlines have been complaining that Gulf airlines are flying more seats into the country than allowed under the bilateral treaty between the two nations. Indian airlines accuse Gulf carriers of flying 5,000 extra seats per week in each direction, in a gross violation of the bilateral agreement. A majority of international travel between India and abroad happens through nearby hubs in the Gulf and south-east Asia. While this is only one part of the story, on the other, the state-owned Air India's share of the lucrative Gulf trade also shrank under the pressure of effectively foreign controlled Indian airlines. Air India has been on the receiving end in both local as well as overseas air traffic trade.

The AI carried only some 18 million passengers in 2015-16, showing a modest 6.6 per cent passenger traffic growth. Yet, its total revenue stood marginally lower at Rs. 20,526 crores in 2015-16 against Rs.20,613 crore in

the previous year. The company's net loss, though, shrank by over Rs.2,000 crore to Rs. 3,837 crore. Paradoxically, the earlier UPA government and its flamboyant civil aviation minister Praful Patel, who presided over the controversial merger of Indian Airlines with Air India and went for a big acquisition of aircraft from foreign manufacturers at huge cost putting a massive debt liability on the airline, are seen as primarily responsible for the poor performance of the public sector airline and loss of its share of the air traffic business at home and abroad.

Indian carriers flew some 100 million passengers, last year, with an average seat occupancy rate of 84 per cent. The figures are based on passengers carried by 11 airlines -- Air India, Jet Airways, IndiGo, JetLite, SpiceJet, GoAir, Air Asia, Vistara, Air Costa, Air Pegasus, and Trujet. The so-called low-fare airline, Indigo's passenger share was around 40 per cent, more than the combined share of Jet Airways and Air India. According to the Airports Authority of India, the country's airports handled a total of over 254 mil-

lion passengers in 2016, an increase of 20 per cent over 2015. This made India move into fifth place in the global air traffic rankings, overtaking Germany, and behind only the US, China, Japan, and the UK. While the US and China are well out of reach, it is possible that India could overtake the UK, which handled over 270 million passengers last year, this year or next year and possibly catch Japan by 2020.

Indian airlines are buying aircraft like never before to deal with the massive spurt in air travel within India and abroad. The country has close to 450 planes in service and almost double the number are now placed in order, making the ratio of orders to in-service aircraft the highest of any major market in the world. Several new services and direct flights by Indian airlines, including Air India, to foreign destinations such as Los Angeles, Tel Aviv are being added. However, the seat allocation between India and Gulf countries remains a contentious matter. Ironically, some of the West Asian hubs transport a vast number of air travellers from India to Europe

and the USA and Canada and vice versa without any issue. Foreign carriers have a two-third share in all the international travel to and from India as of now, and previous governments gave foreign airlines access to a large number of cities in India.

The country is investing billions of dollars in upgrading its airports without having a strategic policy that would allow primary status to national carriers such as Air India to take a leading role in transporting traffic to and from India the way Lufthansa enjoys in Germany, British Airways in London, Singapore Airlines in Singapore, Thai Airways in Thailand, Qantas in Australia, Emirates in Dubai, Air France in France, KLM in The Netherlands, China Air in China, Alitalia in Italy and Air Canada in Canada, to name a few. It is time that the Narendra Modi government takes a fresh look at the country's civil aviation policy that allows a fair share of India's sky and passenger traffic to India's own airlines and develops India as a major hub for international travel. **IPA**

(The views expressed are strictly personal.)

## LET THE LAW PREVAIL

*The rate of increase in crime against women is so dismal that it has virtually desensitised people to the horrendousness of it. The unfortunate and infamous incident of December 2012 was one that caused immense public outrage but did nothing of consequence. An incident of crime against women is nothing more than a news report. Pointless discussions over why others are not treated as seriously as Nirbhaya will do nothing to help matters. What we need terribly is not just laws, but serious deterrent laws against crime against women and sensitisation to it.*

DHEERAJ KHOSLA Via email

dear EDITOR

## millenniumpost.in

Log on to write letters to the editor or send them to [letters.mp@gmail.com](mailto:letters.mp@gmail.com). You can also send your comments to The Editor, Millennium Post, Pratap Bhawan, 5 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi 110 002

## The week ahead

Donald Trump must have allowed Xi Jinping win the golf games they played

Two developments. Seven days. By the end of this week, the foreign and security policy elite of the country will find the world a vastly different place. Now, this seems a little like a riddle. Winston Churchill, the wartime Prime Minister of the United Kingdom has been paraphrased here, only to point that either a nation-state is a realist in the classical sense or in the sense Kenneth Waltz used the political philosophy of realism to call it neo-realism.

Let me clarify. On Friday (12 May), the so-called fire-breathing Trumpeteering USA concluded a trade agreement with China. It was so under the radar that if the Washington embassy of New Delhi had not given a heads-up to South Block, a Sino-Pak centric Narendra Modi government would have missed the potentially far-reaching development. Of course, the agreement was not so big: it was about removing a non-tariff barrier for American beef to be sold in Chinese markets and cooked Chinese fowl to be sold in US supermarkets.

Those in India who believed that US and China would be at each other's throats following the scripts of Trump during the poll season, and they would play out the Chankyan principles and get to have the middle ground for themselves, truly sold a lemon to the country's people.

New Delhi clearly did not follow the dictum that former Guyanese President and a Marxist, Forbes Burnham had imparted during the 1982 NAM summit. He had said when one owes a million dollars, one is a creditor; when



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

one owes a billion dollars, one is a partner. With \$ 3 trillion dollars worth of T-bonds in Chinese custody, the USA is clearly a partner!

As if to rub salt on the wound that had opened up for the Indian policy elite, the trade agreement has provisions that the Chinese have chosen to receive liquefied natural gas – possibly obtained from the extremely environmentally harmful process of fracking – from the US while Beijing even has accepted to remove some market regulations for US investors.

Clearly, Donald Trump must have allowed Xi Jinping win the golf games they played at Mar-a-Lago resort that was Trump's playground for long. Not for him the salubrious Camp David to do business!

For the Indian policymakers, Sunday (14 May) and Monday (15 May) must have fast disappearing fingernails; and potentially on Monday, when 110 nation-states con-

gregate in Beijing to sign on to the BRI (Belt-Road Initiative), the policymakers will understand how facetious is the 'sovereignty' issue considering the country is not mobilised to march into Gilgit-Baltistan right away waving a Parliamentary resolution and the flag.

Just in Pakistan, Beijing would be investing \$48 billion for the BRI project, which included the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, (CPEC). Astonishingly, a young representative of the Pakistan government told the global audience on CGTN –p the new English language television channel – that they would ensure 18 per cent return on investment (RoI) annually on that largest single tranche spending bill China has promised our Western neighbour. A question seems moot for now: has the Sharif Family Inc decided to be less kleptocratic than before? Or have the 'Pindi folks con-

trolled their appetite for new 'toys for boys.'

An informed friend was of help to this writer who is far away from the boiling pot of New Delhi, which the bureaucracy barely notices, considering they are not sure whether the country extends east of the Ganges.

He talked about three sets of facts: (a) Foreign Secretary (FS) S Jaishankar, though serving on an extension of service, is setting policies on his own despite having a Foreign Minister in Sushma Swaraj (though she is recuperating from a kidney ailment) and having the Prime Minister's National Security Adviser, Ajit Kumar Doval who could have loomed over him. Only Pakistan policy is with the PMO.

Fact (b): On internal security issues portfolio, Kashmir policy has been detached from the first floor office of Doval – a lifelong senior intelligence official who dealt with Kash-

mir at an operational level for long, and theorised about it for even longer since he headed, currently the think-tank of think-tanks, Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) that has an RSS affiliation. The PM is running the Kashmir policy directly, albeit in a collegial manner.

Fact (c): No one knows who is running the China policy for if it is Jaishankar, this major gaffe by which India by the end of this week will find itself totally isolated, would not have happened. For a highly skilled diplomat, the sophistication of thought the FS brought to South Block, should have accounted for an understanding of the geopolitical target board. He would have surely got the geoeconomics of the Chinese dollar reserve, the inclusion of the Yuan as a reserve currency by the IMF, and its reach.

Meanwhile, the new army chief, General Bipin Rawat has clearly been told that he is the chief of army staff (COAS) of the third largest force in the world. He is all fire and brimstone now. He appeared looking askance when two brave soldiers were killed and their heads severed by the Pakistan armed forces in a manner that does not find support any statute of the laws of War.

Instead, he has told us we would choose the time and place for our riposte. What should differentiate us from Pakistan – as a regional main power who has civilisational values to maintain – if we follow the various Conventions signed at Geneva in the period soon after the WW II upholding laws of war.

(The views expressed are strictly personal.)

# Opposition unity imperative

*Congress must be accommodative to smaller parties in taking on the BJP*



NITYA CHAKRABORTY

**Congress has to rejuvenate itself. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has hijacked the pro-poor agenda of the Congress. It will require extraordinary statesmanship and ingenuity for the present Congress leadership to prove their pro-poor credentials before the common masses**

In the last few days, the Congress President Sonia Gandhi has been very active talking to a whole host of opposition leaders about the need for a joint opposition candidate ahead of the Presidential elections. The vote for the new President is due in July this year, and the BJP has already contacted and garnered support from some non-National Democratic Alliance parties including YSR Congress. Sonia Gandhi, as the leader of the largest opposition party, has to take immediate measures to consolidate the unity of the anti-BJP parties who are already supporting her move. Simultaneously, she has to initiate steps to ensure that some of the non-BJP parties who have maintained a distance from the Congress-led opposition are persuaded to join them to defeat the BJP led NDA's candidate.

The task is complicated and requires an accommodative approach on the part of the Congress leadership. Sonia Gandhi has to take full help of the Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee, CPI-M leader Sitaram Yechury and CPI MP D Raja in making a success of the opposition efforts. As of now, the BJP led NDA is not entirely assured of the electoral majority in the Presidential elections if there is a contest. The incumbent President Pranab Mukherjee may be agreeable for a second term only if he is a consensus candidate. If that happens, the contest will not be there, and all focus will be on the elections for the Vice-President in August this year, and the BJP is determined to have its candidate as the next Vice-President.

The opposition has to be fully prepared to secure victory for its candidate in the Presidential elections if there is a contest and it can be made possible only by making every effort to bring together the parties which are still outside the present opposition camp. The opposition camp needs to convince the likes of Biju Janata Dal and AIADMK since their electoral numbers will contribute to the opposition strength against BJP. Apart, efforts will have to be made to garner the support of a few parties like Shiv Sena which are looking for ways to come out of the BJP orbit.

The trial of strength between the BJP led NDA, and the Congress-led opposition over the elections for the President and the Vice-President will be followed immediately by the state assembly elections in Himachal



Congress President Sonia Gandhi

Pradesh and Gujarat by the end of 2017. Irrespective of the outcome of the Presidential elections, the opposition parties have to gear up fully to take on the BJP in both the states. In Himachal Pradesh, the Congress is in power, and the Virbhadra Singh Government is under attack from all sides by the BJP, and the saffron party is determined to take over the reins of this hill state from the Congress taking advantage of the CBI proceedings against the Congress Chief Minister.

A beleaguered Congress has to reinvent its poll strategy by arriving at an understanding with the smaller

parties in the state because in many seats, the small support base of the parties like BSP, CPI and CPI-M counts. The BJP has effectively made use of this strategy in some states including Uttar Pradesh with success. The Congress has to widen its appeal among the non-BJP masses, and a broad front has to be formed including the members of the civic society. For the secular forces, the fight in full earnest should start with all vigour from the next round of state assembly elections in Himachal and Gujarat. If the Congress takes a domineering attitude in Himachal and Gujarat and

does not agree to broaden the alliance against the BJP, the party has little chance to improve its position. An active association with the pro-active anti-BJP forces will help the Congress electorally also.

In Gujarat, there are signs of resentment against BJP rule. The state BJP is riven with factional battles. But still, the Congress has not been able to organise its workers to take on the BJP. The Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi in his recent visit has tried to galvanise the base level workers, but the BJP base is quite strong, and the RSS shakhas are giv-

ing booth-wise support to BJP candidates. The Congress has to widen its reach to the other forces opposed to the BJP rule. Sonia Gandhi has to see that the Congress reaches some understanding with the smaller anti-BJP parties in Gujarat. The Congress victory in Gujarat assembly elections is a tough task, but this is not impossible provided the Congress leadership unites the anti-BJP forces in the state and takes steps to widen the fissures within the state BJP leadership.

The success of the Congress and its supporting allies in Himachal and Gujarat in this year's assembly elec-

tions can only set the pace for the Congress and opposition resurgence in the next round of state assembly elections in 2018. The ground reality is that in the coming round of state assembly elections, excepting Tripura, the Congress is a major player. If the Congress loses, the BJP gains and that is a further cause of demoralisation for the opposition and buoyancy for the Saffrons. This makes it necessary for the Congress to be accommodative and take into battle all forces who are opposed to the BJP.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is most vehement these days in favour of a Congress-led opposition front to fight the BJP both in the presidential elections and in the 2019 general elections. She is meeting Sonia Gandhi on May 16 for discussions on the road map of the opposition. Mamata has to be a critical component of the anti-BJP front at the national level. CPI-M may fight Mamata in West Bengal, but on the national plane, Trinamool and the Left have to collaborate to build a solid anti-BJP front along with other parties. At the last meeting of the central committee, the CPI-M avoided taking a definite position on aligning with the Congress to form an anti-BJP alliance. In fact, the CC communiqué issued on April 20 did not mention the need for such a front. It is high time, the CPI-M leadership gives up its ambivalence and take a firm position for a national anti-BJP alliance with both the Congress and the Trinamool. Maintaining equidistance from the BJP and the Congress at this juncture as per the 2015 Party Congress document will only help the BJP juggernaut. The Left can persuade the Congress to work for a common programme of action, and the Congress should work out this in consultations with other parties.

Congress has to rejuvenate itself. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has hijacked the pro-poor agenda of the Congress. It will require extraordinary statesmanship and ingenuity for the present Congress leadership to prove their pro-poor credentials before the common masses. Only a programmatic vibrant Congress tuned to the demands of the new century can deal with the BJP challenge along with other non-BJP opposition parties. For the GOP of the country, the moment of truth has arrived. *(The views expressed are strictly personal.)*

## Record national harvest & TN farm crisis

*TN reported 29% year-on-year drop in overall crop sowing, informs Vipul Vivek*



Representational Image

**Water levels in three of six major Tamil Nadu reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission dropped 25-70 per cent between January 5 and May 11, 2017. There are no official data on what percentage of Tamil Nadu farms are irrigated using water from the state's 78 reservoirs**

As the impact of the worst northeast monsoon in 140 years unfolds across Tamil Nadu, farmers sowed a third less land than they did in 2015-16, water levels in six major reservoirs continued to plunge, and suicides in the farm sector increased over five years.

In the midst of this agrarian turmoil in a state that produced 5.6 per cent of India's rice in 2014-15, the agriculture ministry has predicted a record national harvest. The agriculture ministry's third advance estimate forecast India's foodgrain production to be the highest ever, increasing by about 9 per cent to 273.4 million tonnes (mt) in the crop year 2016-17 ending June from 251.57 mt in 2015-16.

Tamil Nadu has reported a 29 per cent year-on-year drop in overall crop sowing till February 2, 2017, according to the latest situation report from the agriculture ministry.

The retreating northeast monsoon -- usually unnoticed in India owing to the singular importance of the larger southwest monsoon -- in 2016 was the worst ever over the last

140 years, according to Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) records, since 1876, as IndiaSpend reported in January 2017. Record-keeping began in 1871, but a worse northeast monsoon, which sweeps across Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh, south interior Karnataka and Kerala, between October and December, was recorded in 1876, making 2016 the year of the second-worst monsoon in 145 years.

Water levels in three of six major Tamil Nadu reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission dropped 25-70 per cent between January 5 and May 11, 2017, according to the commission data, even as the average across the six reservoirs was 82 per cent less than normal for the week ending May 11, 2017. There are no official data on what percentage of Tamil Nadu farms are irrigated using water from the state's 78 reservoirs. As the drought -- officially declared as such on January 10, 2017 -- rolls on, the state government has told the Supreme Court it is not linked to suicides by farmers, a contention disputed by a representative of farmers in New Delhi, where a protest is draw-

ing international attention, as protesters display what they say are the skulls of dead farmers.

**Farm suicides not because of drought: State government**

The Tamil Nadu government's claim that only 82 farmers have committed suicide since October 2016 is wrong, P. Ayyakannu -- one of the representatives of Tamil Nadu farmers in Delhi and Tamil Nadu president of Desiya-Thennindhya Nathigal Inaippu Vivasayigal Sangam (National South Indian Rivers Interlinking Farmers Association) -- told IndiaSpend. He claimed that over 400 farmers had killed themselves because of reasons attributable to the drought and police reports about these suicides had been filed. IndiaSpend could not independently verify this claim.

As many as 106 farmers died in January 2017 alone, according to Tamil media reports, following which the National Human Rights Commission issued a notice to the state government asking for a detailed report about the steps proposed to be taken by the state government.

Suicides in the farm sec-

tor in Tamil Nadu -- including landless farmers and agricultural labourers -- increased 12 per cent between 2010 and 2015, according to the latest available data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

The police wrongly register many suicides related to drought or crop loss as those due to family problems, old age and other reasons, Ayyakannu told IndiaSpend. Besides, NCRB's new classification of farm-related suicides under two categories--farmers and agricultural labourers--has also led to an apparent drop in farmer suicides over six years to 2014, as IndiaSpend reported in July 2015. The Supreme Court, in a hearing on May 8, 2017, refused to intervene in the matter of compensation to the families of farmers who died in the wake of drought following the state's worst monsoon in 140 years, the farmers' counsel, N. Rajaraman, told IndiaSpend.

Ayyakannu has challenged the state government's submission to the Supreme Court that farmer suicides were not because of drought. The Supreme Court bench, com-

prising Justices Dipak Misra and A.M. Khanwilkar, on being informed that 20 cases of farmer suicides in the past year or so have been reported to district collectors, advised Rajaraman to bring those to the notice of the high court instead of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court had said on May 3, 2017, that it was interested in the structural aspects of minimum support prices and mandis (local markets). The Supreme Court seemed reluctant to get involved in the more pressing issue of compensation, Rajaraman told IndiaSpend.

S. Panneerselvam, Professor and Head, Agro Climate Research Centre, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore, told IndiaSpend that they would be issuing an advisory based on the first forecast in April 2017 by the India Meteorological Department of the south-west monsoon as normal. The forecast will be updated in June.

*(In an arrangement with IndiaSpend.org, a data-driven, non-profit, public interest journalism platform, with whom Vipul Vivek is an analyst. Views are those of*



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India's solar installed capacity has grown by 370% in the last 3 years & will continue to rise in the years to come.

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Wondering if #KulbhushanJadhav will be safe inside Pak jail. Remember, how Sarabjit Singh was brutally attacked in Jail by fellow inmates.

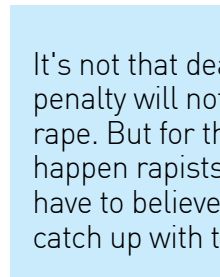


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Horrifying! Delhi NCR really unsafe for women. Unless swift and certain death penalty in all cases of rapes, nothing will change.

RAHUL PANDITA @rahulpandita



It's not that death penalty will not deter rape. But for that to happen rapists will first have to believe law will catch up with them.



## Putin warns against 'intimidating' N Korea after missile launch



**BEIJING:** Russian President Vladimir Putin has condemned North Korea's latest missile launch as "dangerous" but warned against "intimidating" Pyongyang. Speaking in China, Putin called for a peaceful solution to the ongoing tensions on the Korean peninsula, Russia's *Sputnik news agency* reported. "I would like to confirm that we are categorically against the expansion of the club of nuclear states, including through the Korean Peninsula," Putin told reporters. "We are against it and consider it counterproductive, damaging, dangerous," he said. But in comments that appeared aimed at the US, he said that "intimidating (North Korea) is unacceptable."

For its part, North Korea said the missile test was in response to the nuclear dangers and threats posed by the US and its followers. "We will conduct ICBM tests anytime and anywhere in accordance with the decisions made by our central leadership," North Korea's ambassador to China Ji Jae Ryong said at an impromptu press conference at the country's embassy in Beijing Monday.

North Korea tested a Hwasong-12 missile Sunday which reached an altitude of 2,111.5 kilometers (1,312 miles) and flew 787 kilometers (489 miles), according to state news agency KCNA. Analysts estimated its range as 4,500 kilometers which would put the US territory of Guam within its reach. A small island in the Pacific,

# Prez Macron names Édouard Philippe as French PM

**PARIS:** France's newly-elected President Emmanuel Macron has named Édouard Philippe as Prime Minister, according to a statement from the Élysée Palace.

The 46-year-old lawmaker and mayor of Le Havre is from the conservative Les Républicains party. He had been tipped as a favourite for the role as Macron attempts to gain support from both the left and right ahead of June's Parliamentary elections. The move by centrist Macron will be seen as a strategic one as France's youngest leader tries to broaden his appeal.

It is the first time in modern French political history that a president has appointed a prime minister from outside his camp without being forced to by a defeat in parliamentary elections. The former banker's presidential win itself represented a seismic shift in a political landscape dominated for decades by the two main left-wing and right-wing parties.

One of his key campaign pledges was to dismantle the political divide between left



A photo from 2016 shows Emmanuel Macron (right) shaking hands with Édouard Philippe

and right.

French presidents are able to appoint their own choice for prime minister, but only if they hold a majority in the National Assembly. The outcome of next month's legislative elections

will determine whether he will be forced to replace Philippe.

Macron is expected to move quickly on both domestic and foreign issues, just a day into his presidency. He will meet with German Chancellor

Angela Merkel on Monday in a bid to affirm his commitment to the European project, one of his aides said. He is also expected to announce his cabinet appointments on Tuesday. In his new role, Philippe

will be responsible for presiding over the government and carrying out the president's political programme. A close working relationship between both men will be key although Philippe has not always been conciliatory towards his new boss.

Like Macron, Philippe is pro-European. He graduated from secondary school in Bonn, in Germany, and speaks fluent German. A trained lawyer, he worked as public affairs director for the French state nuclear group Areva between 2007 and 2010. "For many people, who are intimidated by his powers of seduction and reformist rhetoric, Macron is the natural heir of Kennedy and Mendès-France [a former Socialist prime minister of France]. But that's unlikely. The former was more charismatic, and the latter more principled," he wrote in a newspaper article in January.

Philippe is married and has three children. He loves boxing and cold-water swimming and has written political fiction. AGENCIES

## Sharif likely to meet Donald Trump in Saudi Arabia



**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is likely to meet Donald Trump for the first time on the sidelines of the US-Arab Islamic summit in Saudi Arabia this month during which he can brief the US president about the ongoing tension with India, a media report said on Monday.

Efforts are underway to arrange a maiden bilateral meeting between Trump and Sharif on the sidelines of the summit on May 21, *The Express Tribune* reported.

The meeting, if takes place, will provide an opportunity to both the sides to listen to each other's perspective as well as concerns on a range of issues covering bilateral cooperation and current regional and international issues, the report said.

A senior Pakistani official, who preferred to remain anonymous, said the prime minister was already preparing a 'brief' for a possible interaction with the US president.

The official said the 'brief' includes the country's position on the current situation in Afghanistan and the way forward and the ongoing tension with India.

On both the issues, officials here believe that the US administration could play a more proactive role in order to prevent regional countries pitting against each other for their strategic interests.

Some of Trump's aides have openly expressed concern over the deteriorating Indo-Pak ties.

There are strains in ties between India and Pakistan over a number of issues including the cross-border terror attacks in India and sentencing of Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav to death on charges of spying. AGENCIES

## Macron seeks close ties with Germany to shore up EU

**BERLIN:** Chancellor Angela Merkel hosts new French President Emmanuel Macron in Berlin on Monday for talks in which they will seek to reinvigorate the Franco-German relationship and the troubled European project that it underpins.

Macron, who was inaugurated on Sunday, will ram home the message that the European Union is resilient despite Britain's vote to leave and a spate of financial and migration crises that have boosted the far-right across the bloc. The 39-year-old former investment banker met Merkel a day after her conservatives won a regional vote in Germany's most populous state, boosting her quest for a fourth term in office after a national election due on Sept. 24. With Germany's economy, Europe's largest,



Angela Merkel with Emmanuel Macron

outperforming that of France, the traditional Franco-German motor at the heart of the EU project has begun to misfire. Merkel and Macron want to kick-start ties with an alliance some German media have dubbed "Merkron".

Merkel said at the weekend she wanted close cooperation with Macron and that their two countries would do everything to shape European policy. But her ruling coalition is at odds

over how to respond to his calls for closer EU integration.

"Demands like a euro zone finance minister are really dreams," European Commissioner Guenther Oettinger, a German conservative, said before a meeting of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Berlin.

But he added: "The euro zone must be strengthened. The euro zone needs a more coherent, common approach." AGENCIES

## 'India can't stop others from joining Belt and Road'

**BEIJING:** A "nervous" India cannot stop its neighbours from joining China's Belt and Road project even if it wants to stay out of it, a commentary in a Chinese daily said. The article in the *Global Times*, which came after India skipped the Belt and Road summit on Sunday, said New Delhi's opposition to the project was "regrettable".

It also said India could still change its mind and join the initiative before it is too late. "China would never force any country to participate in the Belt and Road if it was too sceptical and nervous to do so," the *Global Times* said. "It is regrettable but not a problem that India still maintains its strong opposition, even though China has repeatedly said its position on the Kashmir dispute would not change because of the China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC)," said the article written by *Global Times* reporter Wang Jiamei. "India also cited the potential debt burden as one of its other concerns, saying that connectivity initiatives must follow the principles of financial responsibility to avoid projects that would create an unsustainable debt burden for communities."

"It is strange that the onlooker is more anxious than the players. While India cares about its neighbours' debt burden, the neighbours appear willing to take on more," it said. "On Saturday, Pakistan and China inked new deals worth nearly \$500 million, covering airport, sea port and highway construction. As regards to the potential debt burden, Pakistan's repayments will peak at around \$5 billion in 2022, but this will be offset by transit fees charged in the CPEC." AGENCIES

## Snowden, Chomsky urge Trump to drop case against Assange

**NEW YORK:** Edward Snowden and Noam Chomsky are among those calling on Donald Trump to drop the US government's investigation into Julian Assange and WikiLeaks.

The pair - along with more than 100 other activists, journalists and government workers - have signed an open letter to the president that calls prosecuting WikiLeaks "a threat to all free journalism". The letter asks the Department of Justice to drop plans to charge Assange and other WikiLeaks staff members.

"If the DOJ is able to convict a publisher for its journalistic work, all free journalism can be criminalised," says the open letter, released on Monday by the Courage Foundation, a trust that raises funds for the legal defenses of whistleblowers, including Snowden. The group launched a campaign in support of WikiLeaks last month.

Trump praised WikiLeaks on the campaign trail, telling a Pennsylvania rally in October 2016: "I love WikiLeaks." The organization had leaked Hill-



Edward Snowden

ary Clinton's emails.

Others in his administration, however, have not expressed the same enthusiasm. The US attorney general, Jeff Sessions, said last month that Assange's arrest was a "priority" for the US. Sessions' words prompted the open letter.

The letter to Trump reads: "It was a free and robust press that provided you with a platform on which to run for president."

Defending a truly free press requires freedom from fear and favour and the support of journalists and citizens everywhere; for the kind of threat now facing WikiLeaks

- and all publishers and journalists - is a step into the darkness."

The signatories also include musician PJ Harvey, former British intelligence officer Annie Machon, Australian senator Lee Rhiannon and philosopher Slavoj Žižek.

US prosecutors have been investigating WikiLeaks since at least 2010, when it released more than 250m classified cables from US embassies around the world.

The cables were passed to WikiLeaks by Chelsea Manning - a former US army intelligence analyst who is also backed by the Courage Foundation - and were published in cooperation with news organizations including the Guardian.

In April, Sessions was asked at a press conference in Texas whether it was a priority for the DOJ to arrest Assange "once and for all".

He said: "We are going to step up our effort, and already are stepping up our efforts on all leaks. This is a matter that's gone beyond anything I'm aware of." AGENCIES

## B'desh top court upholds life term for cleric over war crimes

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh's apex court on Monday upheld the life sentence given to a Islamist preacher for committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War by siding with Pakistani troops. The Supreme Court dismissed both the pleas filed by the state and defence and stood by its earlier judgement to jail war criminal and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Sayeede, 77, until his death, *bdnews24.com* reported. A five-member bench led by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha delivered the verdict today after a two-day hearing, the report said. Both the state and the defence had filed petitions seeking a review of the Supreme Court's verdict in 2014. The state wanted a death sentence while the defence pushed for an acquittal. The trial of Sayeede began at the International Crimes Tribunal-1 in 2011 and a verdict was pronounced in 2013. Of the 20 charges against him, Sayeede was given the death sentence for two - the murders of Ibrahim Kutti and Bisabali, and for setting fire to Hindu households in Pirojpur in 1971. The Supreme Court verdict, delivered in 2014, sentenced Sayeede on five charges of the 20 that were framed against him. The verdict reduced Sayeede's death sentence for Ibrahim Kutti's murder to imprisonment for 12 years. In its second appeal verdict in a war crimes case, the apex court sentenced Sayeede to prison until death for three charges. AGENCIES

## Hunger pangs: Pilot lands chopper next to McD

**MELBOURNE:** Fly-Thru! A hungry pilot in Australia landed a helicopter near a McDonald's takeaway window to grab a bite.

The green chopper set down on a grassy patch outside the fast food giant's branch in Sydney with locals left stunned by the incident.

The pilot was seen exiting the aircraft and collecting his order from the nearby McDonald's, before getting back into the chopper and flying away, *Nine News Australia* reported.

The pilot, who identified himself as 'Dan', later told a radio station that he got per-

mission to land at premises. "Every now and then we do that sort of stuff," he said.

"Kyle (a radio show host) if you ever need a cheeseburger give us your coordinates of where you live and we'll drop in with it," he said. Dan called into the show after radio show hosts Kyle and Jackie O promised the pilot of the helicopter USD 1,000 if he got in touch.

The eyewitnesses present at the spot said, "I thought it was an emergency". The incident reportedly took place on Saturday evening.

Dan asked for the money to be donated to Ronald



McDonald House. The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) said the

landing was not technically illegal if the pilot had permission from the owner of

the land. The official said, "Was it unusual? Yes. Was it unsafe? We're not in a position to say until we've looked at the footage."

CASA, however, said investigations into the safety of the chopper's landing and take-off were ongoing.

The concerned authorities said that the pilot's landing and take-off is under investigation along with the phone recorded video.

Video that went viral shows the pilot with a cup clicking pictures of his chopper with a brown bag in his hands. Later, the man gets into the chopper and flies away. AGENCIES

**NIRA JSPAT INDUSTRIES LIMITED**  
Regd. Office: 5140-4154, FIF Chaudhary  
Market Gali Peti Wali, Rai Mandi, Sadar  
Bazar, North Delhi-110006  
(E) nraajspatindustries@gmail.com,  
(W) www.nraajspat.in  
CIN: L27106DL1985PLC021811,  
Phone: 011-23551821, 0120-8526390

**NOTICE**  
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 at 2:00 P.M. at the Regd. Office of the Company, interalia, to consider and take on record the Audited Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 and any other businesses as may be considered necessary.

By order of the Board  
For M/s Niraj Spat Industries Limited  
Sd/-  
(Haryant Kumar Chaudhary)  
Director  
Date: 15.05.2017  
DIN: 00021795  
KD-46, Kavi Nagar, Ghazababad-201002

**Sadhna Broadcast Limited**  
(Formerly known as Chitra Broadcast Network Ltd)  
Regd. Office: 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Rani  
Jhansi Road, Malviya Nagar, Patparganj,  
Delhi-110055  
(E) cbnl.delhi@gmail.com,  
(W) www.sadhnabroadcast.com  
CIN: L92100DL1994PLC059093,  
Phone: 91-11-23552627

**NOTICE**  
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 at 2:00 P.M. at the Regd. Office of the Company, interalia, to consider and take on record the Audited Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 and any other businesses as may be considered necessary.

By order of the Board  
For M/s Sadhna Broadcast Limited  
Sd/-  
(Tajinder Kaur)  
Director  
Date: 15.05.2017  
DIN: 05799570  
302 A, LIG Flats, Pkt D-6, Rohini,  
Delhi-110085

**Sarvada Enterprises Limited**  
(CIN: L51909DL1985PLC021359)  
Regd. Off.: E-253, Saraswati Kunj  
Apartment, 25, I, P, Extension, Patparganj,  
Delhi - 110092  
Tel: 011-22727486  
Email: info@sarvadaenterprises.in

**NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that a Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at its Registered Office at E-253, Saraswati Kunj Apartments, 25, I, P, Extension, Patparganj, Delhi - 110092 to consider and approve or take on record the Audited Financial Results for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 and other matters as per agenda.

Further, the trading window under SEBI (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015 read with Code of Conduct framed by the Company shall be closed for all designated persons of the Company and its relatives from 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2017 (both days inclusive).

By order of the Board  
For Sarvada Enterprises Ltd.  
Sd/-  
Sunita H Singh  
Whole Time Director  
Date: 15.05.2017  
DIN: 06992243

**GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, CHANDIGARH**  
Hospital Building, Sector 32-B, Chandigarh 160030  
Phone: 0172 2665253-60 Fax No 01725609360

**ACADEMIC BRANCH**  
**ADMISSION NOTICE**  
**PARAMEDICAL COURSES-2017**

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission to Bachelor of Optometry (B.Optom), B.Sc. Nursing, B.Sc. (Medical Laboratory Technology), B.Sc. Medical Technology (X-Ray) and B.Sc. Medical Technology (Anaesthesia & Operation Theatre Techniques) in Govt. Medical College, Chandigarh for the session 2017-2018.

Online applications are invited for applying for above said courses. The candidates willing to apply should visit website of this institute www.gmch.gov.in for further details. The Prospectus alongwith the application form will be available on the website from 22.05.2017 to 09.06.2017 upto 5.00 pm. All students who have applied online will be allowed provisionally to sit in the GCET-2017 i.e. Entrance Examination. Mere submission of application online & appearing in the entrance test does not make a candidate eligible for admission to the course. It will be subject to eligibility criteria laid down for the course.

Note: 1. The application received other than through online process will not be entertained and rejected summarily.  
2. For technical assistance regarding online submission in case of difficulty/enquiry please contact phone no 0172-2601023 ext. 2112, 4239, 4225 on any working day from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Sd/-  
Memo No 3907-11/PRC-53(AdvT) Director Principal,  
Dated: 15.5.17 Govt. Medical College & Hospital, Chandigarh

**MCG**  
**CORRIGENDUM**

Memo No. EE-III/MCG/F-6/2017/26178 Dated: 15/05/17

e-Tender is invited for purchase of below mentioned items in single stage two cover system i.e. Request for Pre-Qualification/ Technical Bid (online Bid under PQQ/ Technical Envelope and Request for Financial Bid (comprising of price bid Proposal under online available Commercial Envelope).

The tender for the following, works was called vide memo no. EE-III/MCG/F-6/2017/22850 dated 27.04.2017 & to be open on 15.05.2017. Now the above tender schedule is hereby amended due to administrative reason and will be opened on as per schedule given below:-

Sr. No.	Description of work / Items	Estmated Amount	EWD to be deposited by Bidder	Time Limit Months/ Years	Tender Document Fee & E-Service Fee (Rs.)	Tender Document Download and Bid Preparation/ Submission	Start Date & Time of Bid Preparation & Submission	Expiry Date & Time of Bid Preparation/ Submission
1.	Construction of RMC road from village Chhota to Ballywag under MC Gurugram.	98.12	196000/-	4 Months	1000+ 1000 = 2000/-	27.04.2017 10:00 AM to 17.05.2017 17:00 PM	27.05.2017 10:00 AM to 17.05.2017 17:00 PM	

1. Tender will be opened on dated 18.05.2017 10:00 PM to 18:00 PM  
2. The detail tender notice can be seen on website: http://mccgurugram.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in  
3. For any other queries, please contact Executive Engineer, Division No. III, Municipal Corporation Gurugram Tel (M) 9821395203 Gmail Address: ee3@mccg.gov.in office Address:- C 1 Infocity Building, Sector 34, Gurugram.

4. Any resident of MCG who has stake in any of those works and wishes to be a member of the Citizen Supervisory Committee to be set up by the MCG for supervision of the execution of works on the ground, may submit their willingness giving name, address, academic qualification, professional experience and contact phone number to the undersigned and before opening of the tenders.  
For & on behalf of Commissioner MCG  
B. K. Kardam  
Executive Engineer-III  
Municipal Corporation Gurugram

PRDH-AdvT. No-1078/11/4830/1718/49931  
Dated: 15.5.17

# ICJ's 'no' to play Jadhav's video setback to Pak: Harish Salve

**THE HAGUE:** The International Court of Justice (ICJ) denying permission to Pakistan to play a "confessional" video of Kulbhushan Jadhav during the public hearing on Monday was a setback for Islamabad, India's lead attorney Harish Salve said.

During the hearing, Pakistan had sought permission to play the purported video of Jadhav admitting he was a "spy" to support its allegations that retired Navy officer was sent by India to carry out espionage activities and was arrested from the restive Balochistan province.

But the ICJ denied permission to the Pakistani side. Asked whether it was a setback for Pak, Salve said, "Obviously."

"If you want to show something and it helps your case if you are denied that right, it's a setback. So, in that sense, yeah! They wanted to show it and that opportunity was taken away," he told a news channel.

"They did not allow it. We objected and the court felt it was not appropriate," he said.

Salve also criticised the Pakistani delegation's submission to the ICJ that India has not proved Jadhav was an



Indian. He said they contradicted themselves at the court. "The one comment I couldn't resist is that he (Jadhav) was an Indian spy, but the lawyer said that we have not proved that he was an Indian national. I don't know where they are coming from on that," he said. "Here, the allegation is

that he is an Indian spy trained in India, but then the lawyer also made the point that India has not proved his nationality. So, anyway, this is a kind of contradiction," he said.

The lead Indian attorney said he doesn't believe the verdict in the case will take long "because of the note on which it ended today (Monday)." The ICJ on Monday heard both the sides during the hearing. India has demanded immediate suspension of Jadhav's death sentence, expressing fears that Pakistan could execute him even before the hearing at the ICJ concludes.

On May 8, India had moved the ICJ against the death penalty given to Jadhav by a Pakistan military court, alleging violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. Eighteen years after the two neighbours last faced off at the ICJ - when Islamabad sought its intervention over the shooting down of its naval aircraft - India took up the issue of consular rights to its national and accused Pakistan of violating the Vienna convention and conducting a "farical trial" without a "shred of evidence."

"The execution of the death sentence cannot be done while this court is hearing the appeal. Else, it will be a violation of the Vienna Convention," lead attorney Harish Salve said. The urgent hearing comes after the ICJ last week stayed Jadhav's execution. While India presented its argument over 90 minutes, Pakistan, which claims that Jadhav is an agent of India's external intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), gets its turn later in the day.

Pakistan had denied India its 16 requests for consular access. AGENCIES

## Group who helped Snowden denied Hong Kong asylum



Family who sheltered Snowden

**HONG KONG:** The asylum seekers who bravely took in NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden and gave him shelter in their humble dwellings, while he was on the run in Hong Kong in 2013, have had their applications rejected.

Immigration authorities issued the decision on Thursday and informed the group of seven on Friday, according to Robert Tibbo, an attorney representing them.

"I'm really upset" said Philippine national Vanessa Rodel, one of the seven applicants tells TIME. "I'm very afraid, I'm worrying a lot. In Hong Kong, once your case is rejected, you're not allowed to stay."

Rodel said she feared being detained and separated from her young, Hong Kong-born daughter.

"The government's decision to reject our clients' claims is completely consistent with the effective zero acceptance rate [of asylum seekers] in Hong Kong," Tibbo tells TIME, calling the decision "completely unreasonable."

He says authorities only gave each of the seven refugees "brief screening interviews" and, in Rodel's case, only conducted screening in writing.

Details of how Snowden managed to lay low in the Asian metropolis had remained obscure until last

year, when the asylum seekers' role came to light in Oliver Stone's movie Snowden, and the details were disclosed in Canada's National Post. (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who played Snowden in the movie, has appealed for help on the asylum seekers' behalf.)

Three other adult applicants are from Sri Lanka. Two of the three children involved are stateless.

The group turned to Canada to seek asylum earlier this year, citing grave risks if their stay in Hong Kong was prolonged. At the time, two of the Sri Lankans reported of being pursued by police from Sri Lanka.

Hong Kong's rejection of the group "puts them in an even more vulnerable position, and triggers a need for urgent protection," says Marc-André Séguin, one of the Canadian attorneys representing the group in the country.

"We're confident that the Canadian government will come to the same conclusion."

Three weeks ago, he heard from Canadian authorities that the files have been transferred from Canada to the visa office of the Canadian consulate in Hong Kong," Séguin added. TIME has reached out to the consulate for comments. AGENCIES

## Amid much friction, Erdogan visits Prez Trump

**WASHINGTON:** The United States is on a collision course with its NATO ally Turkey, pushing ahead with arming Syrian Kurds after deciding the immediate objective of defeating Islamic State militants outweighs the potential damage to a partnership vital to US interests in the volatile Middle East.

The Turks are fiercely opposed to the US plans, seeing the Kurdish fighters as terrorists. And when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visits the White House this week, the most he and President Donald Trump may be able to do is agree to disagree, and move on.

"The Turks see this as a crisis in the relationship," said Jonathan Schanzer at the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

The challenge is hardly new. Long before Trump took office, US presidents have grappled with the fragility of partnering with Turkey's government and the Kurds to carry out a Middle East agenda.

Past administrations have sought a delicate balance. Too exuberant in its support for the Kurds, and the US risks pushing ally Turkey toward US geopolitical rivals like Russia or emboldening the Kurds to try to create an independent state a scenario that would destabilize multiple countries in the region. Too little cooperation with the Kurds risks squandering a battlefield ally with proven effectiveness against extremist threats and who has staunchly supported Washington. Trump has made his priorities clear.

His administration is arming Syrian Kurdish fighters as part of an effort to recapture the Syrian city of Raqqa, the Islamic State group's self-declared capital.

Coupled with the US-backed fight in the Iraqi city of Mosul, Raqqa is seen as a key step toward liberating the remaining territory the militants hold. Turkey has been pressuring the US to drop support for the Kurdish militants in Syria for years and doesn't want them spearheading the Raqqa effort. AGENCIES

## N Korea's new missile can carry nuclear warhead



**SEOUL:** North Korea said on Monday the missile it launched over the weekend was a new type of "medium long-range" ballistic rocket that can carry a heavy nuclear warhead. A jubilant leader Kim Jong Un promised more nuclear and missile tests and warned that North Korean weapons could strike the US mainland and Pacific holdings.

North Korean propaganda must be considered with wariness as Pyongyang has threatened for decades to reduce Seoul to a "sea of fire," but Monday's claim, if confirmed, would mark another big advance toward the North's goal of fielding a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the US mainland. Some experts, including officials in Tokyo, estimate that Sunday's launch successfully tested a new type of missile in Pyongyang's arsenal.

The test is also an immediate challenge to South Korea's new leader, Moon Jae-in, a liberal elected last week who expressed a desire to reach out to North Korea. Pyongyang's aggressive push to boost its weapons program also makes it one of the Trump administration's most urgent foreign policy worries, though Washington has struggled to settle on a policy.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency called the missile a "new ground-to-ground medium long-range strategic ballistic rocket," and said the "Hwasong-12" was "capable of carrying a large, heavy nuclear warhead." Kim Jong Un was said to have witnessed the test and "hugged officials in the field of rocket research, saying that they worked hard to achieve a great thing," according to KCNA. The missile flew for half an hour and reached an unusually high altitude before landing in the Sea of Japan, the South Korean, Japanese and U.S. militaries said.

The rocket, "newly designed in a Korean-style," flew 787 kilometers (490 miles) and reached a maximum altitude of 2,111.5 kilometers, the North said, and "verified the homing feature of the warhead under the worst re-entry situation and accurate performance of detonation system." Kim said the North would stage more nuclear and missile tests in order to perfect nuclear bombs needed to deal with US. AGENCIES

## Putin blames US for global cyber attack

**BEIJING:** Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday blamed the US for the global cyber attack that hit 150 countries since Friday and has crippled computer systems around the world.

Putin, who is currently in Beijing for the two-day Belt and Road Forum, said intelligence services should beware of creating software that can later be used for malicious means, Daily Mail reported.

"As regards the source of these threats, I believe that the leadership of Microsoft have announced this plainly, that the initial source of the virus is the intelligence services of the US," Putin said. "Once they are let out of the lamp, genies of this kind, especially those



created by intelligence services, can later do damage to their authors and creators," he told reporters in Beijing. Putin claimed there was no significant damage to Russian institutions, including its banking and healthcare systems, from the computer worm. "But as

## Lawmakers ask Trump to turn over any Comey tapes

**WASHINGTON:** US lawmakers on Sunday called on President Donald Trump to turn over any tapes of conversations with fired FBI chief James Comey, potentially setting up a showdown with the White House as Democrats considered a boycott of the vote on Comey's replacement.

In a highly unusual move, Trump last week appeared to suggest on Twitter that he might have tapes of conversations with Comey and warned the former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation against talking to the media. Trump and a White House spokesman declined to confirm or deny whether such tapes exist.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said the White House must "clear the air" about whether there are any taped conversations.

"You can't be cute about tapes. If there are any tapes of this conversation, they need to be turned over," Graham told NBC's "Meet the Press" program.

Trump sparked a political

firestorm when he abruptly fired Comey last week. The FBI has been investigating alleged Russian meddling in the US election and possible ties between Moscow and the Trump campaign.

Democrats have accused Trump of attempting to thwart the FBI's probe and have called for some type of independent inquiry into the matter. Trump has said he removed Comey because he was not doing a good job and that Comey had lost the support of FBI employees.

Trump tweeted on Friday that "James Comey better hope that there are no 'tapes' of our conversations before he starts leaking to the press!" If there are recordings, Republican Senator Mike Lee of Utah told the "Fox News Sunday" program it was "inevitable" that they would be subpoenaed and the White House would have to release them.

Lee, who was on Trump's list of potential replacements for Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, also said recording conversations in the

White House is "not necessarily the best idea." Trump's threat about tapes has intensified calls from Democrats for an independent probe of alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US election. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Trump must immediately provide Congress with any tapes and warned that destroying existing tapes would violate the law.

Schumer also said Senate Democrats are weighing whether to refuse to vote on a new FBI director until a special prosecutor is named to investigate Trump's potential ties to Russia.

Russia has denied the claims and the White House says there was no collusion. "To have that special prosecutor, people would breathe a sigh of relief because then there would be a real independent person overlooking the FBI director," Schumer told CNN's "State of the Union" programme.

Trump has continued to question whether it was behind the hacking of email accounts. AGENCIES

## Yemen declares state of emergency over cholera outbreak

**SANAA:** Authorities in Sanaa, which is controlled by Shiite rebels, have declared a state of emergency in the Yemeni capital, where a deadly outbreak of cholera has spread rapidly. The Huthi-run health ministry said it was "unable to contain this disaster" and appealed for international humanitarian assistance to deal with the crisis, in a statement released overnight. Yemen is witnessing a devastating war between the Iranian-backed Huthis and the Saudi-supported government, and less than half of the health facilities are functioning two years into the conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross said on Sunday the cholera outbreak has killed 115 people and left 8,500 ill between April 27 and Saturday. This is the second outbreak of cholera in less than a year in Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country. The WHO now classifies Yemen as one of the worst humanitarian emergencies. AGENCIES

## I was done with him: Bharara on not returning Trump's call

**NEW YORK:** India-born former top federal prosecutor Preet Bharara, who received a phone call from US President Donald Trump just two days before he was fired, said he "was done with" the American leader and did him a favour by not returning his call.

"I was doing everyone a favour by not returning the call. I was doing the President a favour by not returning the call," Manhattan's former prosecutor said during a conversation last week with New York University's School of Law Dean Trevor Morrison here.

Two days before he was fired, 48-year-old Bharara had got a phone call from Trump's office asking him to call the President back. Bharara did not return the call. Asked if he had considered returning that call, Bharara said there are lots of regulations regarding how contacts should be made between the White House and the Justice Department.

"This is a man who campaigned day after day on the argument that (former President) Bill Clinton met with the sitting Attorney General during the pendency of an investigation," Bharara said, referring to the controversial meeting in Phoenix between Clinton and Loretta Lynch.

Trump had repeatedly said during the campaign trail that he did not

believe that talks about investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server had not come up during that meeting between her husband and Lynch and that the two had just talked about their grandchildren and other frivolous things.

Bharara said any interaction between him and Trump could have raised doubts in people's minds over any future investigation his office would have undertaken.

"Who on earth was going to believe that the President of the US in a remarkable and unprecedented fashion is cultivating a relationship with the US Attorney in Manhattan, whose jurisdiction includes various things, only to shoot the breeze who is going to believe that," Bharara said.

"I saved a lot of people a lot of grief (by not returning the call). At that point I was kind of done with him (Trump) so I didn't return the call," Bharara said.

Referring to him being unceremoniously fired, Bharara recalled the meeting held with much "fanfare" between him and then president-elect Trump in Trump Towers in Manhattan shortly after the presidential elections. He said Trump had then explicitly asked him to stay on for another term. Bharara also stressed the independence of the US Attorney's Offices. AGENCIES

## New Jersey family 'kicked off' JetBlue flight over a birthday cake

**NEW JERSEY:** What does it take to get kicked off a plane? For one American family, it seems, the answer is a birthday cake.

Minta Burke, from New Jersey, was due to fly from New York to Las Vegas to celebrate her 40th birthday on 3 May, when she — along with her husband and two children — was kicked off the flight from JFK before departure. The family — seated at the very back of the plane — had brought a birthday cake with them, and told the *New York Daily News* that cabin crew gave them conflicting advice about where to store it. Cameron Burke, Minta's husband, told the *NYDN*

that they put the cake in the overhead locker above their seats, but then they were asked to move it: "A flight attendant nicely asked me to remove the cake from that compartment, so I moved it to another one."

"She then asked me to move it to underneath the seat in front of me, I did."

But Burke says that then another flight attendant arrived to tick off her colleague and accuse the Burkes of being "non-compliant".

"I said, 'Miss, because her behaviour was irrational,' Burke says. The next thing he knew, another crew member was asking the family to leave



MID-AIR BLUES: The Burke family

the plane. When they refused, crew called the police. In a video recorded by Cameron Burke, a police officer from

the Port Authority is heard telling cabin crew "I don't see any wrongdoing here." The five-minute video shows the cake at

Burke's feet as his son cries that the family hasn't done anything wrong and Minta Burke is on the phone, looking shocked but calm, beside her daughter.

Having told the flight attendant that the family hasn't done anything wrong, the policeman returns to the Burkes, tells them "no one's in any trouble" and asks for their ID because "unfortunately it got reported to us." He continues: "No one did anything wrong, everything is going to be ok, and unfortunately they're going to have to rebook everyone. We're trying to avoid that but this is JetBlue."

He then tells the little boy: "Don't cry, it's alright... don't worry, you'll be alright."

When Burke calmly asks whether the family will be refunded for their tickets, the police officer says he doesn't know, as it's up to the airline. He adds: "I wish everyone could just go on their way to Vegas and enjoy but unfortunately that's their policy." JetBlue has said it was the captain's decision to eject the family.

Other passengers on the plane are studiously ignoring the incident at the back during the video. No one comes to the family's defence. Perhaps keen to avoid any more awkward videos in the same week that United Airlines told crew to assume they are on camera at all times, the JetBlue crew then

asked all passengers to disembark the plane, in order to eject the Burkes. Their tickets were refunded, but their luggage remained on the flight, and was collected by Burke's mother in law, who'd been waiting for their arrival. The family flew to Vegas with United Airlines the following day.

In a statement, JetBlue said that the family had initially stored the cake in an overhead compartment used for emergency equipment - the very first and last lockers in a plane are often reserved for this - and that they had refused several requests to move it.

The Burkes say they intend to file a lawsuit. AGENCIES

# Obey CERT-In advice on WannaCry: RBI to banks

NEW DELHI: RBI has asked banks to follow the instructions of government organisation CERT-In to prevent the attack by ransomware, 'WannaCry', which has impacted various IT networks in over 150 countries.

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has come out with list of dos and don'ts and webcast on how to protect networks from the global ransomware attack.

It has been reported that a new ransomware 'WannaCry' is spreading widely, RBI advisory to the banks said.

Wannacry encrypts the files on infected Windows system and spreads by exploiting vulnerabilities, it said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also asked all banks to put in place a software update at ATMs to prevent their systems from a malware that has attacked payment systems across the world.

In a separate malware attack last year, 3.2 lakh debit card were compromised in the country. Data of the users who transacted from ATM machines of Hitachi were compromised during three months of May, June and July last year. The Hitachi ATMs deployed



by many White Label ATM players and Yes Bank were impacted by the malware.

According to reports Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are highly vulnerable to such malware attacks as they presently run on old version of Microsoft's Windows operating system, making a software security patch update a necessary exercise.

There are a total of 2.2 lakh ATMs in India, of which many

old ones run on Windows XP.

Over the weekend, the ransomware has hit systems in more than 150 countries, including Russia and the UK, in one of the most widespread cyber attacks in history. It infected computers running on older versions of Microsoft operating systems like XP, locking access to files on the computer. The cyber criminals have demanded a fee of about \$300 in crypto-currencies like Bit-

coin for unlocking the device. Microsoft has introduced a security patch to tackle the situation, and consumers across the globe have been advised to download the solution at the earliest.

CERT-In on Monday said it has not received any formal report of cyber attack on India's vital networks by the crippling global ransomware, 'WannaCry'.

The Ministry of Electronics

and Information Technology (MeitY) had said on Sunday that a few systems of the Police Department in Andhra Pradesh were impacted and that the state government has been informed to follow the advisory by the CERT-In.

Besides, the Maharashtra Police department said it was partially hit by the ransomware.

Following the alert, the Gujarat government began equipping its state computer systems with anti-virus softwares and upgrading its Microsoft operating systems.

As per the advisory issued by CERT-In, the ransomware infects other computers on the same network and is also spreading through malicious attachments to e-mails. Security firms have suggested that users immediately disconnect the infected device from the local network to contain the spread of infection.

In Spain, major companies including telecommunications firm Telefonica have been infected. The most disruptive attacks were reported in the UK, where hospitals and clinics were forced to turn away patients after losing access to computers.

## Power Grid Corp puts firewalls; no power outages due to Ransomware

NEW DELHI: Central transmission utility Power Grid on Monday said it has put sufficient firewalls to deal with the global cyber attack Ransomware and consumers need not fear sudden outages on that account.

Power Grid's top brass deliberated on the strategy to deal with the Ransomware, a malicious software that infects computers and restricts user access until ransom is paid for unlocking them.

"Since the Power Grid operations are information technology based, the issue was discussed in detail at a meeting of board members chaired by Chairman and Managing Director I S Jha," a senior official said.

The official said instructions have already been issued to the employees not to open certain mails or download material which can infect our system.

"There are reports that it

**Instructions have already been issued to staff not to open certain mails or download material which has the potential to infect the Power Grid's system**

has affected certain sectors like banks. But in our case we have put sufficient firewalls to deal with the situation to protect our system," he said.

Earlier, the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology had said that multiple cases of WannaCry/WannaCrypt ransomware infections in many countries around the world have been reported recently.

It said: "In India, no reports have been formally received so

far regarding this Ransomware attack. However, it is understood that a few systems of the Police Department in Andhra Pradesh were impacted. The ministry has informed Andhra Pradesh Government, to follow the CERT-In advisory."

Meanwhile, European and British policing and security agencies have warned that the fallout from an unprecedented global cyberattack which has hit more than 200,000 victims could worsen as people return to work.

An international manhunt was under way for the plotters behind the world's biggest-ever computer ransom assault which has affected more than 150 countries. The virus exploits a flaw in a version of Microsoft Windows first identified by US intelligence.

The attacks exploited the computers because they were running outdated versions of Microsoft's Windows operating system.

## Japan's Toshiba reports massive loss over Westinghouse woes

TOKYO: Toshiba, whose US nuclear unit Westinghouse has filed for bankruptcy protection, is reporting a 950 billion yen (\$8.4 billion) net loss for the fiscal year ended March.

The Japanese electronics giant's results have failed to win auditors' approval from the previous quarter, after questions were raised over the acquisition of US nuclear construction company CB&I Stone and Webster.

Tokyo-based Toshiba Corp. called the results released on Monday as projections, rather than results, since they lack the company's auditors' approval, but it was in line with what it had said recently.

The loss was about double the 460 billion yen (\$4.1 billion) loss racked up the previous fiscal year.

Toshiba, whose products include computer chips and household appliances, acquired Westinghouse in 2006. Its president, Satoshi Tsunakawa, has recently said the strategy based on Westinghouse was a mistake, and has promised it won't take on new nuclear projects.

Toshiba has been trying to sell its computer-chip business to shore up its finances, but has become embroiled in a dispute with US joint venture



partner Western Digital, which is demanding that Toshiba not sell it to anyone else.

Western Digital said that several of its SanDisk subsidiaries have filed a request for arbitration with the ICC International Court of Arbitration over its NAND flash-memory joint ventures with Toshiba.

The request seeks to stop Toshiba's sale without SanDisk's consent, arguing that it would be violation of the joint venture agreement. The arbitration will take place in San Francisco, it said on Sunday in a statement.

"Seeking relief through mandatory arbitration was not our first choice in trying to

resolve this matter. However, all of our other efforts to achieve a resolution to date have been unsuccessful, and so we believe legal action is now a necessary next step," said Western Digital Chief Executive Steve Milligan.

Tsunakawa said he doesn't think Western Digital can block Toshiba. "With regards to your first question as to whether this may delay bidding procedures, we will make effort to dispel such concerns by explaining to all potential bidders the validity of Toshiba's position," he told reporters.

Toshiba also said it expects to return to profit for the fiscal year through March 2018, of 50 billion yen (\$442 million).

## Hudco to list shares on May 19

NEW DELHI: Shares of state-run HUDCO, which recently concluded its Rs 1,224 crore initial public offer, will make stock market debut on May 19.

The IPO of Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) saw huge demand from investors and was subscribed nearly 80 times.

The portion reserved for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) was subscribed 55.45 times, non-institutional investors saw a subscription of 330.36 times and retail investor's category was subscribed about 11 times.

According to sources, the company will list its shares on the stock exchanges - BSE and NSE - on May 19. The price band for the offer, open from May 8-11, was set at Rs 56-60 a share. IDBI Capital Markets, SBI Capital Markets, Nomura and ICICI Securities were the book running lead managers to the issue. Hudco, has fixed the price band at Rs 56-60 per equity share. Of the total outstanding loan of Rs 36,385 crore as on December 31, 2016, HUDCO has financed 69 per cent to urban infrastructure projects and 31 per cent to the housing sector.

## Farmers asks Govt to usher taxation policy that disincentivises cigarette smuggling

NEW DELHI: Farmers' body FAIFA on Monday asked the government to have a taxation policy that disincentivises cigarette smuggling in India, ahead of a crucial meeting of the GST Council later this week.

The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), a non-profit organisation representing farmers across states such as Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat, said cigarette smuggling has hit tobacco farmers supplying to legitimate manufacturers in India.

It urged Finance Minister Arun Jaitley "to protect the interests of Indian FCV tobacco farmers through balanced and uniform taxation under GST".

"We appeal to the government to have a taxation policy that disincentivises cigarette smuggling in India," FAIFA



General Secretary Murali Babu said in a statement.

He further said GST is an opportunity for the government to ensure illicit trade is eradicated from the country by removing distortions and address tobacco taxation in India. It will bring back lost livelihood opportunities of the tobacco farmers, he added.

FAIFA said a steep increase in excise duty in the recent past has led to growth of smuggling of cigarettes in India due to the high tax arbitrage.

Illegal cigarette trade is more than 20 per cent of the cigarette industry in India, making the country the 4th largest and fastest growing illicit market in the world, it

claimed. It has resulted in revenue losses of approximately Rs 9,200 crore and is growing annually, it added.

A shift in consumption to smuggled cigarettes has affected Indian tobacco farmers adversely as the illegal cigarettes do not use Indian tobacco, FAIFA said.

The demand of the farmers' body comes ahead of the meeting of the all-powerful GST Council to be held in Srinagar on May 18-19, where it is expected to give final nod to four rules and also fix GST rates for major commodities and services.

The four rules pertain to how input tax credit is to be calculated and claimed, valuation of supply of goods and services, method for intimation for opting for composition levy and transitional rules.

## TCS to launch ₹16,000 cr buyback on May 18

NEW DELHI: India's largest software services firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) will commence its Rs 16,000-crore mega buyback offer from May 18.

The buyback programme, which received shareholder approval last month, will open on May 18 and close on May 31, the company said in a regulatory filing.

TCS will dispatch the Letter of Offer for the buyback to eligible shareholders on or before May 16, it added. The share buyback, if successful, will be India's biggest, surpassing Reliance Industries' 2012 share repurchase of Rs 10,400



crore. Share buybacks typically improve earnings per share and return surplus cash to shareholders while also supporting share price during periods of sluggish market condition.

The Indian IT companies have been under pressure to return excess cash on their books to shareholders through generous dividends and buy-

backs. TCS had earlier said that it received suggestions from investors over the need for certainty on dividend policy along with share buyback to distribute the cash.

The Mumbai-based company has a cash pile of Rs 43,169 crore, which is nearly 10 per cent of the company's market capitalisation. TCS rival, Infosys has also announced its capital allocation policy to return up to Rs 13,000 crore this financial year through dividend and/or buyback.

Earlier this year, Cognizant announced a \$3.4 billion share buyback, bowing to pressure from activist investor Elliott

Management Corp. Smaller peer, HCL Technologies has also approved a buyback of up to 3.50 crore shares worth Rs 3,500 crore.

The proposed shares under the buyback represent 2.85 per cent of the total paid-up capital at Rs 2,850 per equity share.

In February, the board of TCS had approved the proposal to buy back up to 5.61 crore equity shares for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 16,000 crore. In a separate filing, TCS said Vijay Kelkar has ceased to be a Director on the company Board from May 14, in accordance with the retirement age policy of the company.

# Mutual funds' AUM inching towards ₹20 lakh crore mark

MUMBAI: Backed by a booming stock market and increasing interest from retail investors, the assets under management (AUMs) of the mutual fund industry is likely to touch the magical mark of Rs 20 lakh crore next month.

Moreover, investment by the MF players in the equity market has surpassed that of foreign institutional investors, figures from industry body AMFI have revealed.

The AUM of the country's MF industry grew 9.8 per cent to Rs 19.26 lakh crore in April, from Rs 17.54 lakh crore in March, and it was likely to cross the Rs 20 lakh crore milestone in the next month itself if the assets grow by another 4 per cent, according to AMFI data collated by rating agency Ica.

AMFI, or the Association of Mutual Funds in India, is a nodal association of MFs across

the country. Of the Rs 1.5 lakh crore that investors pumped in different categories in April, liquid, income, and equity funds (including equity-linked savings schemes or ELSS) saw the highest inflows, it said.

The three categories saw net inflows of Rs 0.99 lakh crore, Rs 0.35 lakh crore and Rs 0.09 lakh crore, respectively.

Equity funds also got support from the broader market rally as the BSE Sensex hit an all-time high of 30,000 in April. Equity funds (including ELSS) witnessed net inflows of Rs 9,429 crore in April, an increase of 14.8 per cent MoM and 112.5 per cent YoY. This comes on top of over Rs 70,000 crore investments in equities in the fiscal 2017.

In April, net inflows via the SIP route hit an all-time high of Rs 4,200 crore, the data showed. According to



the AMFI, the industry added around 6.26 lakh SIP accounts every month on an average during the last fiscal with an average ticket size of Rs 3,660 per account.

MFs pumped in Rs 54,912 crore into the country's equity market as against Rs 52,977 crore by FIIs/FPIs during the year gone by. The trend con-

tinued in April where MFs' quantum of net investment in equities stood at Rs 9,918 crore compared with Rs 2,417 crore by FIIs/ FPIs, the report said.

Total folio count at the April-end grew 1.3 per cent at 5.61 crore from March, a SEBI data said.

Folios are numbers designated for individual investor

accounts, though one investor can have multiple accounts.

The growth was primarily on the back of 5.85 lakh new folios added to the equity category (including ELSS) and 1.5 lakh new folios to the balanced category. Exchange-traded funds were the only category to witness a decline of 20,000 folios, which could be due to the category's under-performance compared with the actively-managed funds, it added.

In the last 12 months, assets from beyond 15 cities, or B15 towns, have grown 43.9 per cent due to investor-friendly initiatives by the regulator and awareness campaigns by asset management companies (AMCs).

The B15 assets grew Rs 98,525 crore to Rs 3.23 lakh crore in April from Rs 2.24 lakh crore a year ago.

## Firms raise record ₹6.41 lakh cr via debt placement in FY17

NEW DELHI: Indian companies raised a record Rs 6.41 lakh crore last fiscal through private placement of corporate bonds to meet business needs, a surge of 40 per cent from the preceding year.

These funds have been raised mainly for expansion of business plans, repayment of debt and to support working capital requirements.

In debt private placements, firms issue securities or bonds to institutional investors to raise capital.

According to latest data available with markets regulator Sebi, firms garnered a total

of Rs 6,40,715 crore in 2016-17, higher than Rs 4,58,073 crore raked in the preceding fiscal.

This was the highest ever fund raising by companies in a financial year since 2001-02, when the firms had raked in Rs 45,427 crore.

In terms of numbers, 3,377 issues were made in last financial year compared to 2,975 in 2015-16. Bajaj Capital Senior VP and Head Investment Analytics, Alok Agarwal attributed the high inflow in the current fiscal to volatile and weak sentiments in equity markets.

"Volatile and weak sentiments in equity markets

encouraged companies to raise capital through private and public bond issues instead of equity issues. Also, cost of raising debt was lower in 2016-17 as interest rates fell.

"At the same time, there were various regulatory initiatives for deepening Indian bond markets such as banks being allowed to issue Additional Tier 1 Bonds, to meet their capital requirement, investment limit for foreign portfolio investors being increased and the withholding tax rate being reduced from 20 per cent to 5 per cent," he said.

# Iran asks OVL to pay triple gas price if it wants Farzad block

**NEW DELHI:** In fresh conditions, Iran wants India to pay more than triple the gas price for award of the coveted Farzad-B natural gas block to ONGC Videsh (OVL).

Iran wants India to buy all of the natural gas to be produced from the Persian Gulf block at a price equivalent to the rate Qatar charges for selling liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India under a long-term deal.

Qatar, as per a revised formula agreed upon in December 2015, sells 7.5 million tonnes a year of LNG to Petronet LNG Ltd - India's biggest gas importer - at a price of \$7-plus per million British thermal unit.

The rate being sought by Iran is triple of \$2.3 per mmBtu rate OVL is willing to pay for the gas during low global oil prices. If global rates rise, OVL is willing to pay \$4.3 per mmBtu, sources privy to the development said.

When oil prices move up, rates of LNG from Qatar would also rise.

Sources said that since the lifting of western sanctions, Iran is playing hardball over



award of the field which was discovered by OVL - the overseas arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp. OVL has recently submitted a \$5.5 billion master development plan for bringing the gas in Farzad-B to production.

Iran allows all the cost sunk in by an operator to be recovered from sale of oil or gas. For

this reason, it wants OVL to reduce the cost of development as well as pay a higher gas price.

The two nations were initially targeting concluding a deal on Farzad-B field development by November 2016 but later mutually agreed to push the timeline to February 2017. Now, the deal is being targeted to be wrapped up by

September after the two sides agree on a price and a rate of return for OVL's investments. Farzad B was discovered by OVL in the Farsi block about 10 years ago. The project has so far cost the OVL-led consortium, which also includes Oil India Ltd and Indian Oil Corp (IOC), over \$80 million. Iran was initially unhappy with

the \$10 billion plan submitted by OVL for development of the 12.5 trillion cubic feet reserves in Farzad-B field and an accompanying plant to liquefy the gas for transportation in ships.

It felt the \$5 billion cost OVL and its partners have put for developing the field was on the higher side and wanted it to be reduced. OVL will earn a fixed rate of return and get to recover all the investment it has made in the field development.

Sources said that in the new master development plan (MDP), the company has estimated cost of putting up a facility to convert gas into LNG and shipping it to India at \$5-6 billion.

The field in the Farsi block has an in-place gas reserve of 21.7 tcf, of which 12.5 tcf are recoverable.

New Delhi is keen that the gas from the field comes to India to feed the vast energy needs. But it initially felt deterred from investing because of the fear of sanctions imposed by the US. But with the lifting of sanctions last year, it is back to discussing a master development plan. **PII**

# Exports rise 20% in April; trade deficit swells 3-fold

**NEW DELHI:** Strong performance by petroleum, engineering and textiles sectors pushed up India's exports growth by 19.77 per cent to \$24.63 billion in April.

However, trade deficit also witnessed about three-fold increase to \$13.24 billion mainly on account of sharp jump in gold and crude oil imports during the month.

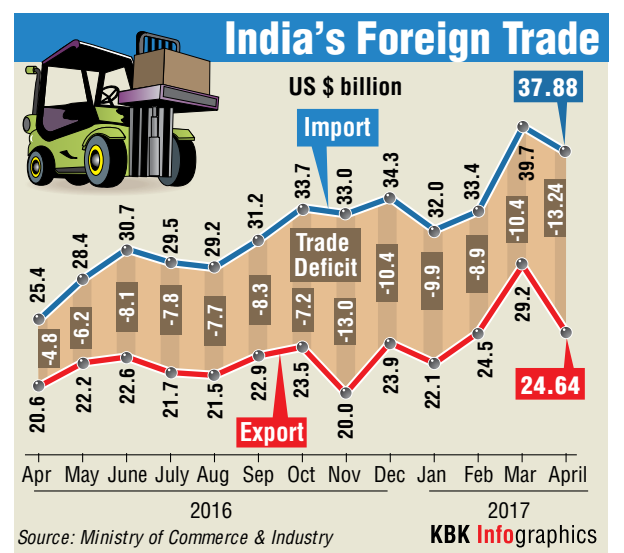
"In continuation with the double digit growth exhibited by exports during March, exports during April have shown growth of 19.77 per cent," the commerce ministry said in a statement.

The country's imports too jumped 49.07 per cent to \$37.88 billion last month from \$25.4 billion in April 2016.

Gold imports rose three-fold to \$3.85 billion in April compared to \$1.23 billion in the same month last year.

In April, petroleum, textiles, engineering goods and gems and jewellery shipments recorded a growth of 48.77 per cent, 31.72 per cent, 28.21 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

The other sectors that helped boost exports include chemicals, iron ore, marine products, cashew, oil meals,



iron ore and plastic.

Further, oil imports grew by 30.12 per cent to \$7.35 billion. Non-oil imports too rose by 54.50 per cent to \$30.52 billion.

For the entire last fiscal, 2016-17, exports saw a growth of 4.71 per cent to \$274.64 billion as against \$262.3 billion in 2015-16. Imports dipped 0.17 per cent to \$380.3 billion, lowering trade deficit at \$105.7 billion against \$118.7 billion in 2015-16.

Further, services exports in

March increased by 8.57 per cent to \$14.179 billion.

"The net export of services for 2016-17 was estimated at \$65.21 billion, which is lower than net export of services of \$69.41 billion during 2015-16," it added.

"The implementation of upcoming GST and release of the revised Foreign Trade Policy will give further push to export growth," said Federation of Indian Export Organisations President Ganesh Kumar Gupta. **PII**

## Economy to grow at 7.4% in FY18, says FICCI survey

**NEW DELHI:** India's economy is set to grow by a robust 7.4 per cent in the current fiscal, backed by the agriculture sector which is estimated to clock 3.5 per cent growth and improvement in the performance of the industry and services sector, according to a report.

However, the economists participating in the Economic Outlook Survey brought out by industry body Ficci have forecast the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2016-17 to be between 6.6 per cent and 7.1 per cent, with some even anticipating the fourth quarter (January-March) economic growth to be lower than the previous quarter numbers.

The third quarter GDP growth estimates released earlier by the Central Statistics Office had reported 7 per cent growth indicating a nominal impact of demonetisation and the estimate for the full 2016-17 fiscal was put at 7.1 per cent.

The survey pegged a median GDP growth forecast of 7.4 per cent for the fiscal year 2017-18, with a minimum and maximum level of 7 and 7.6 per cent respectively.

The strong performance expected in the current fiscal may help India retain the title of the fastest growing major economy in the world, ahead



**The study pegged a median GDP growth forecast of 7.4% for the fiscal year 2017-18, with a minimum and maximum level of 7 and 7.6% respectively**

of China. The industry and services sector are also expected to grow by 6.9 per cent and 8.4 per cent respectively in 2017-18.

The survey noted that India's economy was able to withstand the impact of the demonetisation move on the back of strong macroeconomic fundamentals. The setback was transient and the economy is gradually picking up momentum as the process of re-monetisation gets complete. The participating economists felt that with the process of re-monetisation almost complete, consumption activity is on the rise and will

further build up going forward.

Moreover, the Indian Meteorological Department's latest forecast of a sufficient monsoon arriving on time may provide some respite amidst earlier reports of El Nino having a dampening effect this year.

Going forward, the economists anticipate prices to remain benign, in line with the RBI's projection put out in the monetary policy statement announced in April this year.

The survey projected a median forecast of 4.8 per cent for the Consumer Price Index in 2017-18 with a minimum and maximum level of 4 and 5.3 per cent respectively. The wholesale price index based inflation rate is projected at 5 per cent in 2017-18, with a minimum and maximum range of 3.6 per cent and 5.9 per cent respectively.

Inflation, based on wholesale price index, slipped to a four-month low of 3.85 per cent in April as both food articles and manufactured items showed cooling in prices.

Besides, the consumer price index-based retail inflation fell sharply to 2.99 per cent in April, from 3.89 per cent in March, due to lower cost of food items, including pulses and vegetables that showed a deflationary trend, according to data released last week. **PII**

## Demonetisation led to decline in silver bar demand: Report

**NEW YORK:** The demonetisation drive by the Indian government to crackdown on unaccounted wealth combined with higher prices impacted demand for silver bar in India that led to global investment in silver bar drop by nearly half in 2016, according to a survey.

The World Silver Survey 2017, released by the Silver Institute and produced on its behalf by the GFMS Team at Thomson Reuters (GFMS), said that global silver mine production in 2016 recorded its first decline since 2002, dropping by 0.

6 per cent in 2016 to a total of 885.8 million ounces (Moz). A large proportion of the drop was attributable to the lead/zinc and gold sectors, where production dipped by a combined 15.9 Moz.

The report said that total physical demand for silver fell by 11 per cent last year to 1,027.8 Moz, dragged lower by weaker jewelry, silverware, and retail investment.

The largest falls were recorded from coin and bar investment, which declined 29 per cent last year to 206.8 Moz with a slump in Indian purchases accounting for the bulk



of the fall.

The survey further added that silver coin and medals fabrication fell by 9 per cent in 2016, from its record high in 2015, to 123.2 Moz.

"Silver bar investment fell by 46 per cent, mainly the result of lackluster demand in India due to a combination of higher prices, destocking and government measures on unaccounted wealth," the survey said.

The introduction of an excise duty on gold in India also had a spillover effect on silver demand.

"India played a huge role in last year's decline... This has a lot to do with the crackdown on unaccounted wealth and also the introduction of consignment basis which had a spillover effect to the silver sector as well," lead analyst at the GFMS Team/Thomson-Reuters in London Johann Wiebe said. **PII**

## Sebi penalises 8 entities for IPO document disclosure lapses

**NEW DELHI:** Markets regulator Sebi has penalised Rushil Decor, Corporate Strategic Allianz and six others for disclosure lapses in their IPO documents. Sebi has imposed a total penalty of Rs 7 lakh on Rushil Decor and signatories of the IPO prospectus - Vipul Vora, Ghanshyam Ambalal Thakkar, Krupesh Ghanshyambhai Thakkar, Harshadhai Navnitil Doshi, Shankar Prasad Bhagat and Hasmukh Kanubhai Modi.

These entities raised unsecured loans of Rs 5.94 crore after filing draft papers for Rushil Decor's Rs 40 crore IPO but before the allotment of securities. These loans were taken just before the IPO and repaid immediately after the public issue. **PII**

## RBI creates post of CFO, invites applications

**MUMBAI:** In a first, the Reserve Bank is creating a post of a chief financial officer (CFO) and has sought applications for the position.

The CFO, who will be of the rank of executive director, will be responsible for accurate and timely presentation and reporting of financial information of the central bank, and establish accounting policies and procedures and ensure compliance with regulations.

The official will also be entrusted with communicating RBI's expected and actual financial performance and overseeing its budget processes, the central bank said in a recruitment notification on Monday.

The CFO will also formulate the accounting policy of the bank, maintain the internal accounts and report financial results, and carry out corporate strategy functions like PF



policies.

Till now, the central bank did not have a dedicated official handling the finance function, and the tasks were being carried out internally. The appointment is part a major organisational change being carried out by Governor Urjit Patel.

His predecessor Raghuram Rajan had pursued an idea of creating a chief operating officer for the apex bank but the government shot down the proposal as it involved changing the RBI Act. Rajan had also hired a slew of specialists from outside. **PII**

## NTPC among first to list on new London Stock Exchange market

**LONDON:** India's state-run National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) is among the first bonds to list on a new International Securities Market (ISM) on the London Stock Exchange (LSE).

The NTPC Masala Bond is available for trading this week on ISM following the publication of its rulebook last week by Minister of state for power, coal and renewable energy Piyush Goyal.

"I am pleased that India's NTPC is one of the first companies to list their recent Masala Bond on London

Stock Exchange's innovative new debt market. London has been a long-term partner for Indian firms looking to raise finance in the global capital markets and the development of an additional platform for the listing and trading of fixed income should be welcomed," Goyal said.

The ISM is an additional market for the issuance and trading of UK and international primary debt targeted at institutional and professional investors.

"London Stock Exchange is delighted to announce that



its new International Securities Market is now live and welcomes the first bonds to begin trading on the platform," said Nikhil Rathi, CEO of London Stock Exchange.

"The International Securities

Market will provide UK and international fixed income issuers an additional efficient London listing venue, giving them access to the City's deep pool of global capital and an international investor base," he said.

"In particular, we are honoured to welcome the support of Shri Piyush Goyal, India's Minister of State for Power, Coal and Renewable Energy, for our new market. London Stock Exchange is the global home for Masala bonds raising over 5 billion dollars for supranational, municipal and

private company institutions on its markets," he added. Kulamani Biswal, Director (Finance) at NTPC, said the listing of NTPC Masala Bonds on ISM as the "maiden issue" on the market marks the growing cooperation between NTPC and LSE.

"To NTPC and other issuers from India and across the globe, this provides an opportunity to access quality investors for meeting our financing needs. The tremendous response to NTPC Masala Bonds entices us to look at offshore funds as a regular source of financing

our Capex needs," he said. The London Stock Exchange claims to be among the world's most international capital markets, with around 70 per cent of all bond secondary trading activity conducted out of London.

"As such issuers on ISM have access to one of the deepest pools of global capital. ISM has been designed to meet the demands of issuers and investors to improve the effectiveness and competitiveness of the UK primary debt markets providing greater choice for a variety of fixed income issuers," LSE said in a statement. **PII**

## Vedanta Ltd Q4 net profit grows 3.4 times to ₹2,971 cr

**NEW DELHI:** Metal and mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd on Monday saw its consolidated net profit jump over three fold to Rs 2,971 crore for the fourth quarter to March on the back of higher income.

The company had clocked a net profit of Rs 861 crore (attributable PAT before exceptional items and DDT) for the fourth quarter of 2015-16.

Its total sales grew 41 per cent to Rs 22,371 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 15,828 crore a year ago.

"Revenue in the fourth quarter was up... 41 per cent y-o-y, driven by higher volumes from Zinc India, supported by ramp-up at the aluminium and power business and improved metal and oil prices. Additionally, higher volumes at iron ore in Q4 FY2017 over Q4 FY2016 aided higher revenues," the company said in a statement.

Navin Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta Ltd, said, "The completion of the Cairn India merger transforms Vedanta Ltd into a diversified natural resources powerhouse, anchored in India."

He said further, "The combined entity truly reflects our strong, diversified, low-cost portfolio with industry-leading volume growth from our well-invested assets."

**Company's total sales grew 41% to ₹22,371 crore during the quarter under review against ₹15,828 crore a year ago**

Vedanta is one of the largest contributors to the exchequer in 2016-17, at Rs 40,000 crore, Agarwal said.

He added: "The record dividends during the past financial year highlight our commitment to shareholder value. We are looking forward to a very exciting 2017-18 and future years, with all our businesses operating at full capacities and cost efficiencies."

Tom Albanese, CEO, Vedanta Ltd, said the company's strategic focus to ramp up production across the portfolio, namely zinc, aluminium, power and iron ore businesses, has supplemented revenue growth.

"In particular, record production levels at zinc and aluminium were well-timed in an environment of strong supply side pressures on both commodities. Our cost management initiatives have helped us deliver strong returns for all our shareholders," he added. **PII**

## CORPORATE KALEIDOSCOPE



Krishnashila area of NCL organised a free health check-up camp in Dr Ambedkar Baal Shikshan Sansthaan, Jawahar Nagar. 150 children and school personnel were medically examined by team of doctors and medicines as prescribed by the doctors were provided free of cost



Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister of Assam, Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas (I/C), accompanied by Dinesh K Sarraf CMD, ONGC dedicated the ONGC multi-specialty hospital 'Chaolung Sukaphaa' to the people of Assam, with an investment of ₹ 313 crore by ONGC



**GAYLE AS GLOBAL BRAND AMBASSADOR**

**NEW DELHI:** Fashion and lifestyle online brand, Attitude.com on Monday signed West Indian star batsman Chris Gayle as its global brand ambassador in a multi-million dollar deal. The 37-year-old will represent the brand internationally for the next five years, according to the organisers. Gayle said: "The brand echoes my philosophy and I feel strong connect with it. Both Attitude and I are committed to a long-term partnership."

**MANOJ PRABHAKAR RESIGNS AS UP RANJI CHIEF COACH**

**LUCKNOW:** Uttar Pradesh Ranji Trophy team chief coach Manoj Prabhakar has tendered his resignation from his post, citing personal reason. The contract of former India all-rounder Prabhakar was for a maximum period of two years, but he resigned after completing one year. Before Prabhakar, fast bowler Venkatesh Prasad was the coach of the UP Ranji team.

**RAMIT TANDON WINS MAIDEN PSA TITLE**

**NEW YORK:** US-based Indian squash player Ramit Tandon has won his maiden professional title with a convincing win over compatriot Kush Kumar in the SYS Open. The one time top Indian junior, Tandon, who had come into this event as a qualifier beat third seed Kumar 11-3, 11-2, 11-3 in the final. This was Tandon's third appearance in a Professional Squash Association final. He has just begun to shape his career on professional circuit.



**Real Madrid, Barca set up final day title showdown**



**MADRID:** The fight for the La Liga title will go down to the last day of the season after convincing wins for Real Madrid and Barcelona on Sunday left them locked together on 87 points at the top of the table.

Madrid remain in the driving seat after the European champions saw off Sevilla 4-1 as they have two games remaining to Barca's one.

However, Barca remain on top thanks to their better head-to-head record with Neymar scoring a hat-trick as they also won 4-1 at Las Palmas.

Madrid visit Celta in their game in hand on Wednesday and then travel to Malaga, whilst Barca host Eibar on the final day next Sunday.

Sevilla's defeat at the Bernabeu also guarantees they will finish fourth and Atletico Madrid, who drew 1-1 at Real Betis, qualify automatically for next season's Champions League in third.

At the bottom, Sporting Gijon joined Granada and Osasuna in being relegated despite winning 1-0 at Eibar as Deportivo la Coruna secured safety in a 0-0 draw at Villarreal.

"It is a long road. We know to win the league in Spain is not easy," said Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane.

"Every day we are getting closer, we keep winning but there are two games to go and we need to keep doing what we have until now."

However, the fact two of Barca's four league defeats this season came at the two sides Madrid have still to visit gives the Catalans' boss Luis Enrique hope. "We have one game left and the objective is to win it," he told TV station Movistar.

"If we have lost (there) then any team can."

Sevilla have now won just three of their last 13 games as their season has petered out to

a disappointing end.

However, they gave Madrid more than a few scares at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Nacho gave the hosts the lead in controversial fashion as he curled home a quick free-kick with the Sevilla defence caught unawares and their protests towards referee Alberto Undiano Mallenco falling on deaf ears.

That goal meant Madrid broke Bayern Munich's European record for scoring in consecutive games as their streak now stretches to 61 games.

Sevilla fired their first warning shot when Stefan Jovetic smashed a shot against the post from the edge of the area.

However, moments later it was 2-0 as Sergio Rico could only palm James Rodriguez's effort into the path of Cristiano Ronaldo to score his 400th Madrid goal.

Jovetic then saw a fine chipped effort come back off the bar and was denied by Keylor Navas when played through by Joaquin Correa as Sevilla continued to threaten.

And they finally got back in the game through Jovetic's neat finish from outside the box three minutes into the second-half.

Yet, just as the hosts' nerves were becoming frayed, Ronaldo appeared once more by crashing home Toni Kroos's cut-back to restore Real's two goal lead.

And Kroos rounded off the scoring himself by prodding into the far corner six minutes from time. Barcelona kept the pressure on despite a series of defensive absences that meant Brazilian 21-year-old Marlon Santos was handed a full debut in the Canary Islands. AGENCIES



**KING OF CLAY BACK TO WINNING WAYS**

**Nadal downs impressive Thiem to win Madrid Masters for 5th time 7-6 (10/8), 6-4**

**MADRID:** Rafael Nadal's flawless record on clay this season continued as he outgunned the impressive Dominic Thiem to win the Madrid Masters for a fifth time 7-6 (10/8), 6-4 on Sunday.

The Spaniard is now 15-0 on his favoured surface this year having also picked up his 10th titles in Monte Carlo and Barcelona in recent weeks.

And the 14-time Grand Slam champion is now strong favourite to add a 10th French Open crown next month as he romped to victory on home soil for the loss of just one set all week.

Victory also moves Nadal above Roger Federer to fourth in the world rankings.

"I am aware that if I am fit and I can play well, I have the capacity to win important titles and achieve my goals," said Nadal.

Thiem also fell victim to Nadal's supreme form in the final in Barcelona two weeks ago, but there was little for

the 23-year-old to be dispirited about as he pushed Nadal all the way in his first Masters series final.

"Sometimes against the best players in the world, the best ever player on this surface, you even lose when you play well," said Thiem, who also rises to a career high seventh in the rankings.

"Now that I did it once, playing really well in such a big tournament, the next step is to maintain this level next week."

Nadal disposed of Novak Djokovic for his first win over the Serb for three years on Saturday and victory saw him level Djokovic's record of 30 Masters Series titles.

Thiem didn't finish his semi-final against Uruguayan Pablo Cuevas until after midnight on Sunday morning.

However, that lack of recovery time didn't show as Thiem struck the first blow by breaking the Nadal serve to move into a 3-1 first set lead.

Thiem handed the break

back by netting a simple volley for 3-3, but showed admirable resistance to battle back from 0-40 when serving to stay in the set a 4-5 to force a tie-break.

Both had their chances in the tie-break as Thiem again fought back from 3-5 down to have two set points of his own only to be denied by two punishing Nadal forehands.

And eventually it was Nadal who prevailed with his fifth set point when Thiem fired long.

"Anything could have happened at the end of the first set," added Nadal.

"I think I played well in the important points at the end of the first set. I saved a few set points playing some good shots with my forehand and after that I went for it." The marathon first set lasted a minute under an hour-and-a-half and seemed to drain Thiem's belief as well as his energy resources as he was broken to start the second set.

Nadal had to stave off a break point on his own serve to consolidate the break for 2-0.

**Nadal moves to 4th in rankings**

**PARIS:** Rafael Nadal's climb one place to fourth in the world on the strength of his Madrid Masters win was confirmed in the latest ATP rankings released on Monday. The Spaniard continued his flawless record on clay this season by beating Dominic Thiem to win the Madrid tournament for a fifth time 7-6 (10/8), 6-4 on Sunday. The Spaniard is now 15-0 on his favoured surface this year having also picked up his 10th titles in Monte Carlo and Barcelona recently. Thiem's reward for making the final was a two-place move to seventh. Angelique Kerber displaced Serena Williams at the top of the WTA rankings. She made it to the third round of Madrid Masters where she faced Eugenie Bouchard and retired with a lower back injury trailing 6-3, 5-0.

Four games without a point against the serve followed as Nadal closed in on victory.

Thiem again showed impressive poise to battle back from two match points down at 3-5 to force Nadal to serve

out for the title. The Austrian had his chance too to get right back in the match with four break back points, but couldn't take advantage as Nadal finally secured victory with his fourth match point.

**Tottenham bids farewell to White Hart lane with 2-1 victory over United**

**LONDON:** Tottenham Hotspurs bid farewell to their home at White Hart Lane with a 2-1 victory over Manchester United in week 37 of English Premier League (EPL) action, finishing the football season without a single home loss for the first time since the 1964-1965 season.

Kenyan midfielder Victor Wanyama opened the scoring for the Spurs at the six-minute mark in the first half here on Sunday, reports Efe.

Just four minutes into the second half, Christian Eriksen sent a flawless cross that found Harry Kane, who fired it into the roof of the net to double Tottenham's tally. With 19 minutes to go, Wayne Rooney pulled one back for the Red Devils, who could not tie it and suffered another disappointing loss that



shredded their chances of reaching the Champions League through the EPL gate. Tottenham, for its part, is guaranteed to finish the season in second place,

the team's highest position since 1963. After the match, cheering supporters took the field to celebrate the squad's last victory at White Hart Lane, which

**After the match, cheering supporters took the field to celebrate the squad's last victory at White Hart Lane, which has been the team's home ground for 118 years**

Tottenham will play its home games at iconic Wembley Stadium here next season before moving to a new 61,000-seat stadium that is scheduled to open for the 2018-2019 season. AGENCIES

**MUMBAI:** India captain Anup Kumar was among the seven players retained by U-Mumba for season five of the Pro Kabaddi League, it was announced by the organisers here on Monday.

Besides Anup, who led U-Mumba to the title in the second season and the final in the third edition, Rahul Chaudhari (Telugu Titans), Meraj Sheikh (Dabang Delhi), Jang Kun Lee (Bengal Warriors), Ashish Kumar (Bengaluru Bulls), Pardeep Narwal (Patna Pirates) and Deepak Hooda (Puneri Paltan) were retained.

Inaugural champions Jaipur Pink Panthers, however, did not retain any player.

"I am obliged to be retained by my family, my team U-Mumba for the fourth consecutive season. Pro Kabaddi Season 5 is going to be bigger and better in terms of four new teams, more matches, longer duration and endless action on the mat," said Anup, who led India in the victorious Kabaddi World Cup campaign last year. "I look forward to play the next season and wish all the four new teams Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana all the best for the same," he added.

Rahul, who is the most successful raider in Pro Kabaddi history, said: "I am delighted to return to Telugu Titans. I

am looking forward to the auctions to see the composition of the team where we are expecting new talent to participate as well."

"PKL has given Kabaddi a platform like no other domestic sport in India. I also want to welcome the four new teams — Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana — to Season five which will be bigger than ever before. Telugu Titans have their eyes set on the trophy."

Recently, the organisers of the league Star announced the inclusion of four new teams while announcing VIVO as the new title sponsors for the next five years. AGENCIES

**Gambling ad with disgraced Ben Johnson sparks outrage in Australia**

**SYDNEY:** A TV ad for a gambling company that features disgraced sprinter Ben Johnson making light of doping has sparked outrage in Australia, with politicians and sports officials demanding it be pulled from the air.

The Sportsbet ad has Canadian Johnson, who was stripped of his 100 metres gold medal in the 1988 Seoul Games after testing positive to a banned steroid, promoting a "juiced-up" mobile phone app.

"It tested positive for speed and power again and again," says Johnson in the ad, which includes other doping-related puns and muscular athletes touting the app.

Federal sports minister Greg Hunt crit-

icised Sportsbet and said the company should pull the ad.

"To use a known drug cheat such as Ben Johnson to advertise their product is utterly inappropriate," local media quoted Hunt as saying on Monday. Independent senator Nick Xenophon called upon the national media watchdog, the Australian Communications and Media Authority, to take action.

"It is just wrong on so many levels — glorifying a drug cheat, tying it in with gambling and promoting it to kids in a lighthearted way," Xenophon said. Australia's anti-doping watchdog said the ad sent "completely the wrong message."

"This advertising campaign belittles the achievements of clean athletes and denigrates those who work to protect clean sport across the world," the Australian Sports Anti-doping Authority said in a statement.

Outspoken Australian swimmer Mack Horton, who sparked controversy at the Rio Olympics by calling a Chinese rival a "drug cheat", was also disapproving.

"This is naht cool," the Olympic 400 metres freestyle champion wrote on Twitter. Sportsbet said it would not pull the ad.

"Sportsbet does not condone the use of performance enhancing drugs... (but) we make no apologies for injecting some

humour into advertising," a Sportsbet spokesman told News Ltd media.

The proliferation of gambling advertising at sport venues and on television has raised alarm bells in Australia, where nearly A\$23 billion (\$17.06 billion) was lost in all forms of legal wagering in the 2014-15 financial year, up nearly eight percent on the previous year, according to government statistics.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull confirmed the government would ban gambling ads from live sporting events before 8:30 pm and for five minutes before and after the start of play. AGENCIES



# Qualifier I: MI to meet Rising Pune Supergiant



M S Dhoni will be playing his ninth knockout match when Rising Pune Supergiant play Mumbai Indians in the playoff on Tuesday

**MUMBAI:** Table-toppers Mumbai Indians will be itching to avenge their double defeat against Rising Pune Supergiant in the league stage when the two teams face-off in Qualifier 1 of the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday.

Mumbai Indians outplayed the Kolkata Knight Riders in their last league match to secure the top spot.

The side will be particularly satisfied that their bench strength clicked against KKR, providing them more options to choose from for the key clash.

There is a lot at stake as the winning team goes straight into the final to be played in Hyderabad on May 21, while the loser gets another chance in the Qualifier 2, to be played on May 19 in Bengaluru.

Supergiant is the only team to have defeated Mumbai Indians twice in the league stage, both home and away and this fact would be playing on the minds of Mumbai players.

For the entire season, Mumbai's batting has clicked. When the likes of West Indians Lendl Simmons, Kieron Pollard, Parthiv Patel, skipper Rohit Sharma, Nitish Rana

fire in unison, they can destroy any bowling line up in the world and Pune's will be no exception.

And Pandya brothers, Krunal and Hardik, are delivering when needed and the hosts will expect that they rise to the big occasion. Hardik would like to continue from where he left off at Eden Gardens.

Considering that the Wankhede track will be batting friendly, it is expected to be another high-scoring affair.

Mumbai would get back to their regular openers Parthiv and Simmons, and the duo would want to give them another flaying start.

But the home team can bring in Ambati Rayadu, in place of an out of form Delhi-lad Nitish Rana, to play at the one-down position. Their bowlers, who leaked over 200 runs in their last home game, will have to put up an improved show. The team is likely to open their attack with Sri Lankan Lasith Malinga and Kiwi Mitchell McClellan.

Jasprit Bumrah has been their best death over specialist and along with Hardik he will have to play a key role to restrict the Pune line-up, which

boasts of some big names.

Pune, who decimated Kings XI Punjab by nine wickets to finish on the second spot, will take confidence from that game.

Their pacers Jaydev Unadkat (21 wickets), Shardul Thakur (8 wickets) and Dan Christian (9 wickets) have been impressive and regularly taking wickets.

The trio will need to strike once again to restrict Mumbai and also require support from Australian leggie Adam Zampa.

Their one opener Rahul Tripathi, who has amassed 388 runs in the cash-rich T20 league, will need support from his partner Ajinkya Rahane, who is not scored big this season.

The side, however, will badly miss Englishman Ben Stokes, the costliest pick of the season, as he returns to national duty. It was something that was acknowledged by captain Steven Smith himself.

Pune, who have come back very strongly in the tourney, will need to get their combinations right. Some or the other player has performed for them this season, but the Stephen Fleming coached side would not like to depend on one single player in Tuesday's game.

## Delhi's young batsmen need consistency, says Dravid

**NEW DELHI:** Disappointed after Delhi Daredevils failed to make it to the play-offs of the Indian Premier League (IPL) yet again, team mentor Rahul Dravid felt that young batsmen need to be more consistent with their performances.

Delhi finished sixth with 12 points from 14 games, with their batting line-up, rightly boasting the likes of Rishabh Pant (366 runs), Sanju Samson (386), Shreyas Iyer (338) and Karun Nair (281) floundering to deliver up to their potential.

Dravid said that the batsmen, picked at the auction as part of a "larger context" despite not having experience, have shown brilliance but lacked consistency.

"We are disappointed obviously. We had the expectations of qualifying for the play-offs," Dravid said after his side lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore by 10 runs in their last league game on Sunday here.

"The youngsters played brilliantly for us and I believe that they have the potential to become huge stars. Players like Rishabh (Pant) and Sanju (Samson) have really proved their mettle against good bowling line-ups. They need consistency, though. But there is no question about ability and talent in them."

"All are very talented. Nobody releases experienced Indian players in the auction. We honestly took the decision to back some young Indian talents, mixing them with experienced overseas players and experienced bowling attack. Couple of guys didn't kick on at the right time. But no excuses, we had opportunities and we haven't taken them."

## East Bengal footballers travel in general compartment

**KOLKATA:** Professional commitments forced three well-known Indian footballers, representing East Bengal at the club level, to travel in a general train compartment.

National team players Arnab Mondal, Narayan Das and Mehtab Hossain were returning home after representing East Bengal in the Federation Cup tournament at Cuttack.

Travelling without reservation has its own perils and Das was seen sitting on his kit bag next to the lavatory of the Jan Shatabdi Express.

They reached the city in the afternoon.

East Bengal were shown the door by arch-rivals Mohun Bagan with a 0-2 defeat in the

semifinals last evening.

According to team manager and former India defender Manoranjan Bhattacharya, they had arranged a bus after finding that all flights were full.

But former India international Mehtab and current players Mondal, Das, Mohamad Rafique, Subhashish Roy Chowdhury and goalkeeping coach Abhijit Mondal decided to take the first train back home without reservation.

"One cannot book tickets in advance because you don't know the result beforehand. We arranged a bus at the last minute but had to cancel eventually because some of them went on their own," Bhattacharya said.

East Bengal midfielder

Mehtab chose not to blame the club for the fiasco.

"They are not to be blamed. We requested the assistant coach to let us go, as we had office games. But all flights were full. We were offered to go by a bus but it could take around 12 hours to reach Kolkata. So, we decided to take the morning train," he said.

The rest of the team travelled by private vehicles.

A club insider, however, blamed East Bengal.

"There was no top official who accompanied the team to Cuttack. Situation would have been different then," he said.

With their second derby defeat in a row to Mohun Bagan, East Bengal capped a terrible season.

## Mohd Anas bags nat'l record, qualifies for World C'ships

**NEW DELHI:** Kerala quartermiler Muhammed Anas smashed the national record in men's 400m race en route to winning a gold medal at the third leg of the Indian Grand Prix Athletics Meet here on Monday.

The 22-year-old Anas clocked 45.32 sec under hot and humid conditions at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. He also qualified for the World Championships to be held in London in August. The entry standard for the World Championships stands at 45.50 secs.

Rajiv Arokia and Sachin Baby were second and third in 46.32 secs and 47.18 secs respectively.

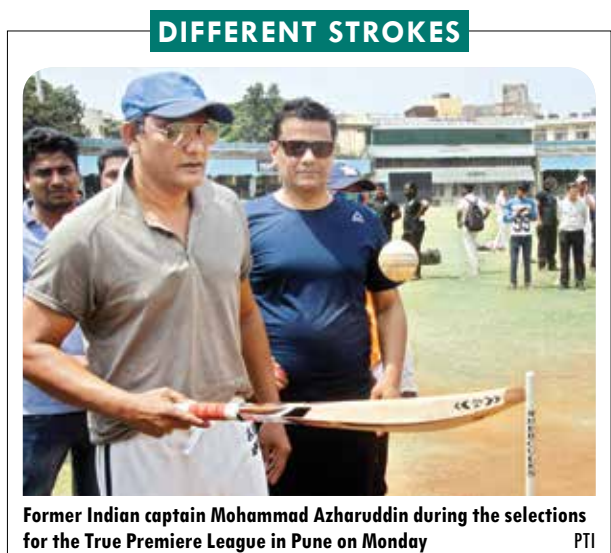
Before Monday, Anas has run two national record timings of 45.44 secs and 45.40 secs (both of last year) but these are yet to be ratified by the Athletics Federation of India. His timing was better than these two.

"It was hot and humid but every time I run I want to better my personal best and so it's a national record today," Anas, a Rio Olympian, said after the race.

"Now, my focus will be to win a medal in the Asian Championships in July (in Bhubaneswar) and do my best in the World Championships," said the Indian Navy sailor.

The other highlight of the day was the showdown between the seasoned M R Poovamma of Karnataka and the up and coming youngster Jisna Mathew of Kerala in the women's 400m race.

The 18-year-old Jisna, a protegee of legendary P T Usha, had finished second to Poovamma in the second leg on May 11 here by a hundredth of a second. But today, Jisna upstaged her more fancied rival.



Former Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin during the selections for the True Premier League in Pune on Monday

## Manav wins silver medal in Thai Open

**MUMBAI:** India's Manav Thakar won the silver medal in the junior boys singles of the SET 2017 Thailand Junior and Cadet Open table tennis tournament in Bangkok.

The young Gujarat paddler Manav seemed to have run out of steam and crashed at the final hurdle losing to Fumiya Igarashi of Japan in the final of the ITTF World Junior circuit event, according to information available here. The third-seeded Manav, who had not dropped a

game in the run-up to the summit round, was unable to find the same kind of form he had displayed earlier.

He was also unable to put up much of a fight against the Japanese opponent who clinched gold with a 4-1 (11-8, 6-11, 11-4, 11-9, 11-5) win. Earlier in the semi-finals, Manav breezed past Japan's Seiya Nishimura 4-0 (11-4, 11-4, 11-6, 11-6), while Fumiya beat Hsin-Yang Li 4-3 (11-9, 12-10, 11-8, 11-5, 11-13, 11-11, 11-8).

## Pakistan win thriller for first WI series victory



Arguably two of the greatest players to play for Pakistan, Misbah and Younis had both announced that they would be calling time on their careers after the West Indies series

**ROSEAU (DOMINICA):** Pakistan won a thrilling third and final Test with six balls to spare to clinch a first series victory in the West Indies and give a fitting farewell to the retiring captain Misbah-ul Haq and veteran Younis Khan.

Roston Chase's unbeaten 101, his second hundred of the series, proved in vain as the home side, set a target of 303 at Windsor Park in Dominica, slipped to 93 for six before the lower order almost rescued a dramatic draw.

"This was just incredible," said a breathless Misbah after Shannon Gabriel dragged a wide delivery from Yasir Shah onto his stumps with just six balls left in the game to trigger Pakistani celebrations as the West Indies were dismissed for 202 to lose the series 2-1.

"There were so many things happening in that last session — dropped catches, appeals, no-ball dismissals — it looked for a while as if it wasn't going to happen. I am thankful for myself, the team and all supporters of Pakistan cricket that we were able to pull it off."

Chase, who also top scored in the first innings with 69 and earned the man-of-the-match award, was the prime beneficiary of those near-misses.

Twice he saw caught-and-bowled attempts by Hasan Ali put down and then was rerieved on 91 when an edge to Asad Shafiq at slip off Mohammad Abbas was shown to be off a no-ball. "I'm really disappointed that we couldn't hold on for just one more over," said a crestfallen Chase.

"We have showed that we can compete with the best but it's up to us to be able to take it all the way. It doesn't even matter that I got a hundred." In the end he completed his third Test century

but was left helpless at the non-striker's end when Gabriel, who had defended resolutely for 21 balls, inexplicably attempted a wild drive off Shah and dragged the ball back onto his stumps.

Shah finished with five for 92 and a series haul of 25 wickets, the highest of his career, as he took the man of the series award. From their mid-afternoon perils, a 58-run seventh-wicket partnership between Chase and Jason Holder frustrated Pakistan for an hour-and-a-half, until the West Indies captain missed a knee-high full toss from Hasan Ali to be leg before for 22 just after tea.

Devendra Bishoo and Alzarri Joseph also offered some resistance but it was Gabriel's defiance through eight nerve-jangling overs with Chase that almost took the West Indies to safety and a drawn series.

A swift end to the match had looked likely as Vishnu Singh and Shane Dowrich both fell to Shah just after lunch.

Both were taken at short-leg by Babar Azam and on a pitch offering turn and bounce, it appeared only a matter of time before more wickets fell.

But Chase and Holder batted with calm assurance as the Pakistanis grew increasingly impatient in pursuit of the breakthrough. Such anxieties appeared unlikely at the start of the day. Having already lost the wicket of Kieran Powell overnight, the home side suffered two further setbacks inside the first hour of the morning.

Kraig Brathwaite's poor run of form continued when the opening batsman miscued an attempted cut off Shah for Hasan Ali to take the comfortable catch at backward point.

## India will have edge over Pakistan at Champions Trophy, feels Gayle

**NEW DELHI:** Star West Indies batsman Chris Gayle said on Monday that India will have the edge when they take on arch-rivals Pakistan in a much anticipated group match at the upcoming Champions Trophy cricket tournament.

The 37-year-old made it clear that both India and Pakistan are his favourites for winning the eight-nation tournament which starts from June 1 in England and Wales.

"That will be the biggest match of the tournament and to be frank that's my two teams as well. So, it will be a nice match. And yes, India is holding an edge against Pakistan when it comes to an ICC event," Gayle told reporters in a promotional event.

"In white ball cricket, you cannot call for one team. Everyone will have a chance, especially in England where the conditions will be different.

So, you have to see the conditions before you can pick that one team as your favourite," he added.

The eight-team tournament will be played in June, with defending champions India pooled with South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Group B.

India have not played outside the sub-continent for the last eight to nine months, so it should be a tough task for Indian batsmen to adjust to foreign ground and weather conditions.

But Gayle clarified that Indian batsmen will not struggle in England as they have played there earlier and are familiar with the conditions.

"No, I don't think that. Indian batting line is superb and experienced as well. The good thing is that everybody has played in England," the explosive opener said.

Playing for Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), Chris Gayle has this season failed miserably with the bat unlike earlier editions of the tournament.

In the nine league matches that he has played this year, Gayle has scored only 200 runs.

"This is cricket and these things do happen. Last year we were fantastic but this season we failed to click in unison. In this edition, we were struggling in all departments, so all we can do is rebuild as an individual and will regroup again for the next season," Gayle added.

Fellow West Indies star Sunil Narine has been in great form with the bat in this year's IPL. Primarily an off-spinner, Narine has been employed as an opener by the Kolkata Knight Riders and the move up the order has done wonders for his form.

## WOMEN'S CRICKET

### Deepti's terrific 188 sets up India's massive 249-run victory



Deepti Sharma missed out on a double ton by 12 runs

**POTCHEFSTROOM:** Deepti Sharma produced a stunning 188-run knock, the second highest score in women's ODI, to set up India's massive 249-run win over Ireland in the quadrangular series here on Monday.

The 19-year-old from Uttar Pradesh shared a record 320-run opening stand with Poonam Raut (109) as India rattled a commanding 358-3 after skipper Mithali Raj won the toss and decided to bat first. Deepti's 160-ball superb innings was studded with 27 boundaries and two sixes, while Poonam hit 11 fours in her 116-ball 109 innings at the Senwes Park. Deepti is now behind top-scorer Australia's Belinda Clarke, who had cracked an unbeaten 229 against Denmark in 1997 at

Mumbai. The knock is best by an Indian as she bettered the unbeaten 138 by Jaya Sharma against Pakistan in 2005.

India bundle out Ireland for a paltry 109 in 40 overs to hand the rivals an embarrassing defeat. Ireland never looked in the chase as they scored the first fifty in 18.4 overs, losing the wicket of opener Leah Paul (13) in the 17th over.

From there on, Ireland kept losing wickets and lost half their side in the 30th over for 75 runs.

Their downhill slide continued as they managed to bring up the team 100 in the 37th over before India quickly mopped up the tail. Mary Waldron (35) was the top-scorer for Ireland, while Jennifer Gray contributed with

## World Cup team announced

**MUMBAI:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday announced the squad for the 11th ICC Women's World Cup, to be held between June 24 and July 23. Veteran batswoman Mithali Raj will captain the side that will compete in the eight-team competition Britain. India have never won the trophy. They finished runners-up in 2005 to Australia.

A 46-ball 26 as only four batswomen could reach doubles scores.

Left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad (4/18) scalped four wickets, while Shikha Pandey (3/16), who had provided the late charge with a 14-ball 27 for India, took 3 wickets, while DB Sharma (1/15) took 1.

**Leading Leasing Finance and Investment Company Limited**  
 Regd. Office: Shop No. T-59, Ground Floor, West Patel Nagar, Nr. Khanna Market, New Delhi - 110008  
 (E) leadingleasing@gmail.com, (W) www.lfild.com  
 CIN: L65910DL1963C016712, Phone: 011-25875635

**NOTICE**  
 Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 at 2.00 P.M. at the Regd. Office of the Company, Interalia, to consider and take on record the unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 and any other businesses may be considered necessary.

By order of the Board  
 For M/s Leading Leasing Finance and Investment Company Limited  
 Sd/-  
 Place: New Delhi (Jinen Manoj Shah)  
 Date: 15.05.2017 Director  
 DIN: 02922873  
 16 Vitrag, 1st Flr, Flat No. 102, Khotiwadi, V.P. Rd., Mumbai, 400004, Maharashtra

**Sidh Management Corporate Services Limited**  
 (CIN: L65990DL1985PLC019846)  
 Regd. Off.: E-253, Saraswati Kunj Apartments, 25, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi - 110092  
 Phone No.: 011-2272486  
 Email: info@sidhmanagement.in

**NOTICE**  
 Notice is hereby given Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that a Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at its Registered Office at E-253, Saraswati Kunj Apartments, 25, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi - 110092, to consider and approve or take on record the Audited Financial Results for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 and other matters as per agenda.

Further, the trading window under SEBI (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015 read with Code of Conduct framed by the Company shall be closed for designated persons of the Company and their relatives from 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2017 (both days inclusive). The information is also available on the website of the Company (www.sidhmanagement.in).

By order of the Board  
 For Sidh Management Corporate Services Ltd.  
 Sd/-  
 Place: Delhi (Dinesh Sharma) (Whole Time Director)  
 Date: 15.05.2017 DIN: 07526355

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (ELECTRIC CONSTRUCTION DIVISION)-IV  
**NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
 VIDHYUT BHAWAN, D-4, P.J. ABUL KALAM ROAD, NEW DELHI-110011  
 PH: 23016814, 23010111, EXN-227

**E-procurement Tender Notice**  
 Tender ID No.-2017\_NDMC\_128849\_1

Name of work: Development of NDMC Malcha Marg Market transferred from L&DO to NDMC  
 Sub head: Providing Electrical Works at Malcha Marg

Estimated Cost : Rs.10,80,607/-  
 Date of release of tender : 15.05.2017  
 Last date/time for receipt of tender : 24.05.2017 at 3.30 PM  
 Date/Time for opening : 24.05.2017 at 4.00PM

Further details can be seen at <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

Note: To participate in e-tender in NDMC registration with application services provider NCT is mandatory. Executive Engineer(E)C-IV  
 To be the global Benchmark for a Capital City

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY E-Tendering Tender Notice**  
 Open e-tender on single packet system through E-Tender notice No. MCW/IZN/OT/56 are invited by Divisional Mech. Engineer (C&W), N.E. Railway, Iztanagar for and on behalf of President of India for the following work:-

Description of works	Estimated Value of Work	Earnest Money
Hiring of One Hydraulic Road Mobile Crane for loading/unloading of coach assembled bogies to/from the trailer at Coaching Depot Lalkuan for a period of 1.726 years (630 Days).	₹ 14,77,109.06	₹ 29,550.00
	<b>Cost of Tender forms- ₹ 2,000/-</b>	<b>Period of Work : 1.726 years (630 Days) from the date of commencement of work.</b>

● Date and time for closing of E-Tender 16.06.2017 at 15.00 hrs ● Tenderer may submit their E-tender online up to 15.00 hrs on date 16.06.2017. ● Please go to the Indian railway website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) to see the complete details and upload submit the E-tender.

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**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person whose name Amit, S/o Bhola and residence unknown, about 30 years of age was found dead at Arakashan Road near Uppal Hotel, Paharganj, Delhi on 10.05.17. In this regard DD No. 08-A dated 10.05.17 u/s 174 Cr.PC has been lodged at P.S. Nabi Karim, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved at LHMC Mortuary for 72 hrs for identification purposes. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:  
**Name:** Amit, **Sex:** Male, **Age:** 30 years, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Dark, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** White colour t-shirt and black colour shorts.

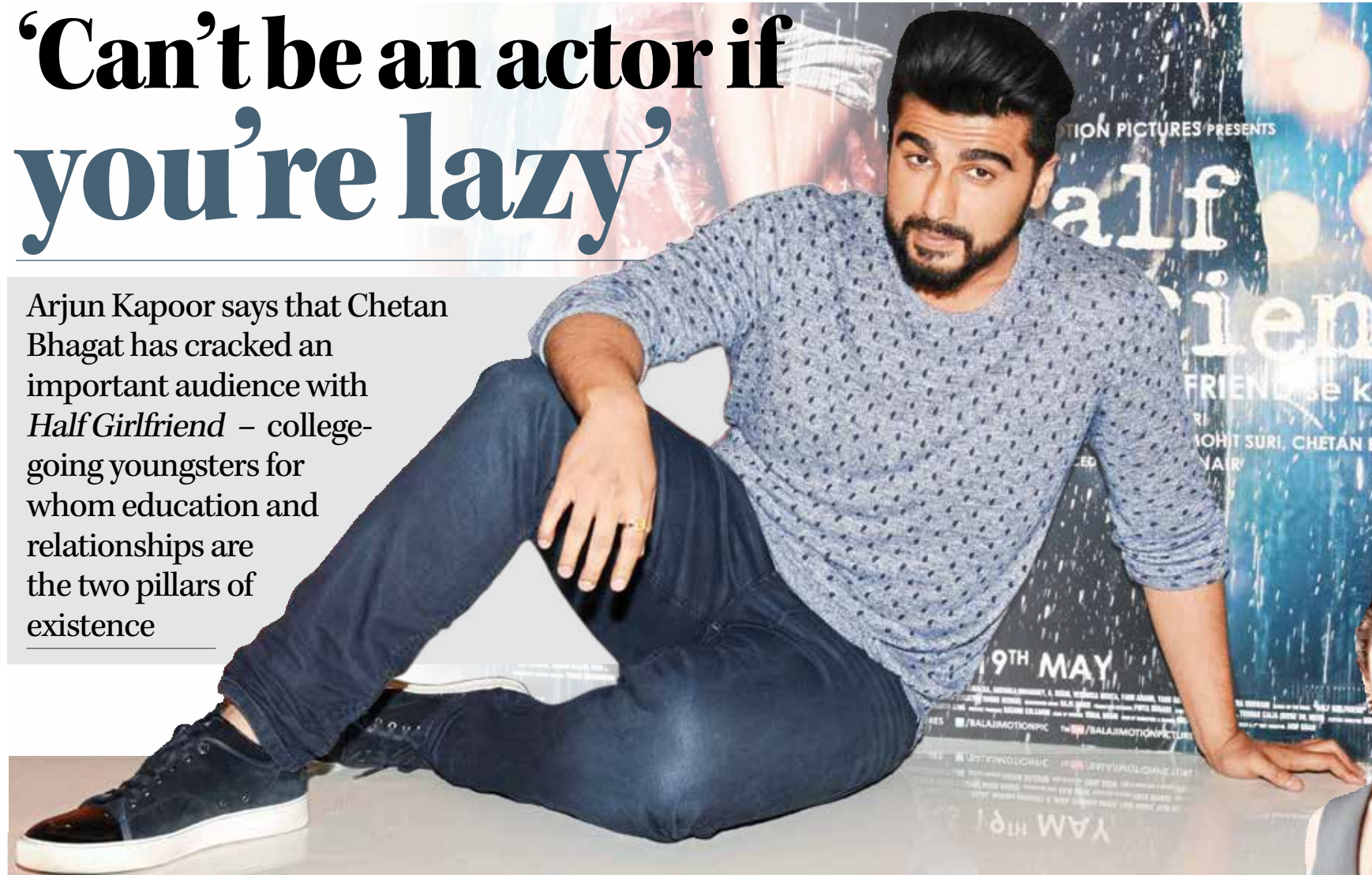
If anyone has any information about this UIDB, kindly inform the SHO/Nabi Karim, Delhi.

SHO  
 P.S. Nabi Karim, Delhi  
 Ph.: 011-23521081, 23531734

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# 'Can't be an actor if you're lazy'

Arjun Kapoor says that Chetan Bhagat has cracked an important audience with *Half Girlfriend* – college-going youngsters for whom education and relationships are the two pillars of existence



MUMBAI: Actor Arjun Kapoor, whose next film is *Half Girlfriend*, says laziness is not an option in any profession – especially not when it comes to the acting world.

Excerpts from the interview:

**Q. *Half Girlfriend* is your second project with author Chetan Bhagat. How different was the experience as compared with *2 States*?**

Chetan Bhagat is the author in both cases. But for *2 States*, he gave his consent for a screen adaptation and when the film was completed he was shown the end product and asked for his opinion. That was it. In *Half Girlfriend*, Chetan was part of the entire journey of filmmaking.

**Q. In what way?**

He's a producer on *Half Girlfriend* and was on the sets almost every day. He was a willing learner on the sets. I had not read either of his novels before approaching the films. But I got to learn a lot from the way he had written the characters.

**Q. Was it sheer laziness that made you not read the books before attacking the film versions?**

Not at all. I am subservient to my directors and their command. For both *2 States* and *Half Girlfriend*, I relied on my directors' vision and interpretation. They never asked me to read the books. Being lazy is not an option in any profession. You don't become an actor if you want to be lazy.

**Q. So it wasn't laziness?**

No. I've never been much a book reader. I am more of a movie watcher since I was a kid. Reading was never my hobby.



**Q. Whom is *Half Girlfriend* aimed at?**

I think Chetan Bhagat has cracked an important audience. The college-going youngsters for whom education and relationships are the two pillars of existence. Whoever hears the synopsis of *Half Girlfriend* says he has heard of people to whom this has happened.

**Q. A lot of youngsters who fail in education and/or relationships commit suicide these days?**

It would be unfair of me to generalize on such a sensitive issue. I wouldn't know what levels of depression they have gone through. I'd never think of suicide as an option. At the same time, it would be easy for me to judge and introspect on life and death. One can only hope and pray that youngsters should stop taking their lives. We should work toward counseling the depressed. Anyone who is depressed should have the option to reach out to people who can help.

**Q. Shradha Kapoor plays someone socially superior. How did you establish that rapport of unequals with her?**

I didn't have to try much. The disparity was evident in the writing. On my part, I didn't spend time joking and being friendly with Shradha. I maintained a distance. That was easy to do since Shradha and I were not the best of friends when we started working together, although we were both from the industry.

**Q. You didn't attend her birthday parties as a child?**

Of course I did. But she's younger than me. So we didn't grow up as part of one group of friends or hang out together. So it was easier for me to play this silently reverent lover boy. I needed to have that awe of a child towards someone he looks up to. Around her, I was supposed to behave like a child in candy store. Ironically she likes him for being himself.

**Q. So how do they break the ice?**

Actually these two form a very unique bond because of basketball. On the basketball court, all the facades and pretensions dissolve.

**Q. Are you now a good basketball player?**

Thanks to this film, I can hold my own on the basketball court. I have my basketball coaches to thank for that. Yes, before you ask, I actually had two National Basketball Association coaches on board.

**Q. You also had a language coach to teach you the Bihari accent?**

Yes, except for a life coach, I had all other coaches on board (laughs). IANS

## Glad to have my mother back on TV: Alia Bhatt

MUMBAI: Actor Alia Bhatt is glad that her mother Soni Razdan has returned to the small screen after a long time with new TV show 'Love Ka Hai Intezaar'.

Soni, best known for her roles in shows like 'Buniyaad', 'Saahil', 'Junoon' and 'Aur Phir Ek Din', was last seen on screen in 'Aisa Des Hai Mera' in 2006.

"Wohoo finally! All the best team 'Love Ka Hai Intezaar'. So glad to have my mommy back on TV," Alia posted on Twitter on Monday.

Besides Soni, Star Plus' 'Love Ka Hai Intezaar' also features Sanjeeda Sheikh and Keith Sequeira. Soni is also waiting to begin her next directorial venture "Love Affair". She will star in director Danish Renu's "Pashmina" alongside Suraj Sharma and Aditi Rao Hydari as well. IANS



## I never faced any discrimination over my accent: Irrfan

NEW DELHI: Actor Irrfan Khan, who balances his work in the international and Indian film world, says he has never faced discrimination over his accent. Often, Indian actors who work in films abroad flaunt an unnatural accent in English for their international projects. *Has Irrfan had any issues as such?*

"No. Fortunately, when I did my first international film, I had to play a Bengali in it and had to have an accent. And there were some films for which I had to acquire a foreign accent. Bengali was as important to me as an American accent. I had to do it," he said.

"Every time you have to adapt to the where the character is from and you have to adapt to his accent. It's a part of the job. Whether you're doing a Paan Singh Tomar or whatever..."

As an actor, accent is something



you have to acquire. It's not about Indian or American accent," Irrfan said. "If it's needed for a project, I acquire it... But I haven't faced discrimination (over it)," he added. The actor, who has earlier featured in foreign films like *Slumdog Millionaire*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Life of Pi* and *Jurassic World*, is busy promoting his forthcoming Hindi film *Hindi Medium* these days. IANS

## Johnny Depp to star in 'King of the Jungle'

LOS ANGELES: Hollywood star Johnny Depp will play a cyber mogul in dark comedy *King of the Jungle*.

The 53-year old actor is on board to portray McAfee antivirus creator John McAfee in the based-on-true-story movie.

The film will be directed by Glenn Ficarra and John Requa from a script written by Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski, reported *Ace Showbiz*.



An adaptation of a "Wired" article titled 'John McAfee's Last Stand' by Joshua Davis, *King of the Jungle* will see a "Wired" magazine investigator who "accepts what he thinks is a run-of-the-mill assignment to interview McAfee, but once he arrives in Belize, he finds himself pulled into McAfee's escalating paranoia, slippery reality and murder."

Depp will next be seen in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell no Tales*, reprising his role as Captain Jack Sparrow. He will also star in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* and crime drama *Labyrinth*. PTI

## Playing a villain in HOLLYWOOD easier, says Javier Bardem

SHANGHAI: He makes bad look really good in films.

Javier Bardem, the Oscar-winning Spanish superstar, says given his limitations with the English language, he finds it easier to portray villainous roles in Hollywood as they are "more connected to the impulse".

"I won't do anything which I don't enjoy. When I do anything in English, then the language is a barrier for me. I struggle with it. Performing and acting is about freedom and letting yourself go.

"When you are working in a language which you don't control, there is always reigns holding you back. That is why playing a villain is easier because I am more connected to the impulse, to the fury and to the emotions to express myself," Bardem said.

Bardem has already played two iconic Hollywood villains – the ruthless killer, Anton Chigurh, in *No Country for Old Men* and a cyber-terrorist Raoul Silva opposite Daniel Craig's James Bond in *Skyfall*.

The 48-year-old star returns to the space with *Pirates of the Caribbean: Salazar's Revenge* where he is in the role of the main antagonist, Captain Armando Salazar. The Disney film, led by Johnny Depp's Captain Jack Sparrow, releases on May 26.

Apart from "Pirates", the actor has two more films lined up for release – Darren Aronofsky's *mother!* and a Pablo Escobar biopic.

Bardem, whose wife, actor Penelope Cruz, was in the last *Pirates* film *On Stranger Tides*, says he was surprised when producer Jerry Bruckheimer offered him a role in the film.

"I felt honoured but very surprised. It is a franchise that I have seen years ago and I really enjoyed it. It is huge at every level – artistically, creatively and also as a movie.

When I read the script, I thought that it was a character I could have fun with."

The actor says he would often visit his wife on the sets of "Pirates 4" and had even jokingly asked why he was not cast in the film, not knowing that his turn will come soon. PTI



## Gal Gadot brings 'wonderful things' to 'Wonder Woman'

LOS ANGELES: Actor Gal Gadot brings "wonderful things" to *Wonder Woman*, says Connie Nielson, who plays her mother in the forthcoming superhero film.

Nielson will be seen as Queen Hippolyta in the Patty Jenkins directorial, which features Gadot in the title role.

"Our working relationship actually began before I met Gal. Patty told me, 'You know, I can't wait for you to meet Gal. She has this incredible energy. It's so positive that it'll touch you.' And it was," Nielson said in a statement. "I genuinely like Gal, both as an artist and as a person. Gal is bringing a lot of wonderful things to 'Wonder Woman'. She has this natural grace that makes all of the stunts and action really come alive and which, of course, really suits the character. "As a mother, my character Hippolyta gives Diana (Gal Gadot) her complete, unadulterated and unconditional love. It comes out of every pore of any mother, from the moment she is pregnant. Then, as her children prepare to leave the nest, the children fight to be allowed to be themselves," she added.

*Wonder Woman* will be released in India on June 2 by Warner Bros Pictures. IANS



## The Ruler and the Ruled

### Inside Pages

- 3 New India – Reflections
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The constitution had promised India's citizens justice, liberty, equality and dignity. We haven't been able to ensure that. We have failed the Constitution and its promise



BIBEK DEBROY

In the Valmiki Ramayana, there is an incident in Ayodhya Kanda.

Rama has been banished to the forest. King Dasharatha has died. When Bharata returns to Ayodhya from his maternal uncle's house and hears that Rama has been banished and King Dasharatha has died, he goes off to the forest to try and bring Rama back. They meet. Rama still doesn't know Dashratha is dead and starts to question Bharata about the state of affairs in Ayodhya.

There are several different Sanskrit texts of the Valmiki Ramayana, with minor variations between them. Between 1951 and 1975, the Oriental Research Institute in Baroda, now part of M.S. University, collated all these different versions, sifted through them and prepared what is called a Critical Edition of the Valmiki Ramayana. If one follows the Critical Edition, the incident I have spoken about occurs in the ninety-

fourth chapter of Ayodhya Kanda. Rama's questions are about the duties of an ideal king. The most common word for a king was rajan and a king was known as rajan because he delighted the subjects through his good rule. Today, we call this good governance. Though socio-economic contexts are different, it is remarkable that many strands of good governance have remained constant over time, with a king now replaced by a government. This is what Rama asked. I have selectively quoted bits that are relevant even today and the English translation is mine.

"I hope you have appointed as ministers noble ones who know about the signs, those who are brave, learned and have conquered the senses, those who are like your own self. The foundation of a king's victory lies in good counsel, from well-trained advisers who are accomplished in the sacred texts and can maintain secrets. ...I hope you do not seek counsel from a single person, nor do you seek counsel

from too many. I hope your secret counsels with ministers do not spread throughout the kingdom. I hope you determine whether an objective has minimum cost and maximum gain and having decided, act swiftly, without delays... I hope your debates and discussions, within your own self, or secretly with your advisers, are not divulged to others. I hope you prefer a single learned person over one thousand foolish ones. To accomplish an objective, a learned person can bring about great gain. Even if a king engages one thousand foolish people, their help will not bring about any benefit. A single intelligent, brave, accomplished and skilled adviser can bring about great prosperity to a king, or to one who aspires to be a king. I hope the best servants are engaged in superior tasks, medium ones

Continued on page 2

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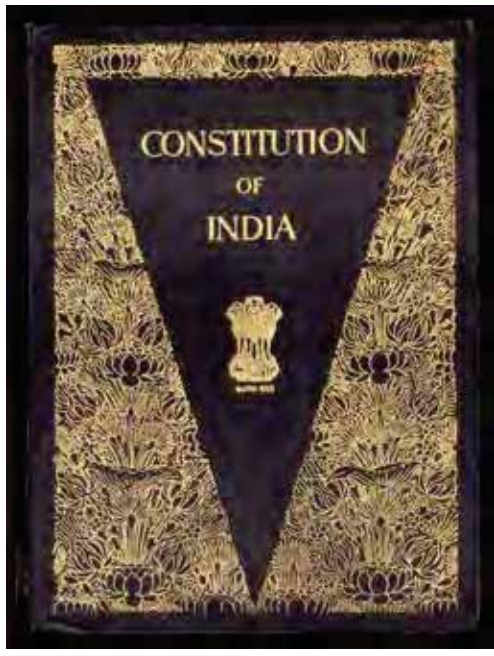
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# The Ruler and the Ruled



► Continued from page 1

in medium tasks and the inferior ones in inferior tasks. ...I hope you give the appropriate food and wages to the soldiers when the time arrives, without any delays. It has been said that if the right time passes, salaried servants, even if they are devoted, are angry at their master and censure him, thus leading to an extremely

great calamity... As ambassador in any specific habitation, I hope you have appointed a person who is learned, accomplished and talented, speaking what should be spoken... Earlier, Ayodhya was inhabited by our brave ancestors. ...I hope it is happy and prosperous and that you protect it. In the habitations of people, I hope

hundreds of altars are properly laid out. I hope the temples are adorned with stores of drinking water and lakes. I hope assemblies and festivals are decorated with happy men and women. I hope pens for the animals are laid out well and they are not subjected to violence. I hope the agricultural land is excellent and free of predatory

beasts. I hope the habitations are prosperous and happy places of residence. I hope that people who earn a living from agriculture and animal husbandry are cherished by you and are indeed happy. I hope that everything is being done for protecting them, maintaining them and tending to their needs. Following dharma, the king must

protect all those who reside inside his kingdom. I hope you comfort the women and protect them well....I hope all the forts are stocked with riches, grain, weapons and water and full of machines, artisans and archers. I hope the revenue is a lot and that the expenditure is limited. I hope the treasury does not reach those who are undeserving. ...I hope that when there is a dispute between a rich and a poor person, your extremely learned advisers resolve it impartially, without differentiating because of the relative prosperity. ...I hope that through gifts, thoughts and words, you please three categories of people – the aged, the children and the foremost among those who are learned.”

We gave ourselves a Constitution in 1950 and the Preamble promised us a sovereign democratic republic that would ensure, for every citizen, social, economic and political justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity; and fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual. The Preamble was subsequently amended through the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976 to make India socialist and secular and to bring in “the integrity of the nation”. Let’s leave aside the 42nd Amendment. For present purposes, we promised India’s citizens justice, liberty, equality and dignity. We haven’t been able to ensure that. We have failed the Constitution and the Constitutional promise. We have introduced policies that haven’t ensured justice, liberty, equality and dignity.

Let us ask the following questions. First, are people willingly poor? Do they not wish to better their lives and improve their standards of living? At best, there can be a qualification for the old and the disabled and households where the head of the household happens to be a woman. These apart, people in working-age groups do not wish to be poor. Second, even if people do not wish to be poor, they may be stuck because

they do not have access to education and skills, health services, market information, technology, financial products, roads, electricity, water, sewage and sanitation. But then, the answer is to efficiently provide these public goods. If such people continue to be poor, that is because in almost 70 years, these goods and services haven’t been efficiently provided, notwithstanding colossal amounts of public expenditure. Third, are there sections in the Indian Constitution that prevent such integration? For instance, Articles 370 and 371 of the Constitution ensure that certain parts of India will never be integrated and mainstreamed. If that is

**Poverty is an individual household characteristic – by equating it with a collective category like SC, ST or Muslim, we commit a mistake as we assume that everyone inside this collective category is poor, by virtue of being a member of a collective category**

the case, how can we ensure that people who live in these regions will ever be mainstreamed and become part of the growth process? Fourth, this kind of mindset also ensures that we look at the problem of poverty with a distorted lens. In any table of poverty, there will be categories of SC-s, ST-s, OBC-s and Muslims. But are they deprived because they belong to these collective categories? Or are they deprived because they lack access to the public or collective private goods? Poverty is an individual household characteristic. By equating it with a collective category like SC, ST or Muslim, we commit a double kind of mistake. We assume that everyone inside this collective category is poor, by virtue of being a member of a collective category. And we also assume that everyone outside this collective category is rich, by virtue of not being a member of this collective category. Neither of these propositions is true.

Towards the beginning, I deliberately quoted a conversation between Rama and Bharata from the Valmiki Ramayana, because that’s not that well known. The more familiar one is a similar conversation between the sage Narada and Yudhishtira from Sabha Parva of the Mahabharata. If we read these texts, we will realize that thousands of years down the line, the delivery issues for a king/government are very similar. It is just that different words are used now. •



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# New India – Reflections



**A decade of indecisiveness and fatigue has finally given way to the articulation of 'A New India'**

**ANIRBAN GANGULY**

As one increasingly heard and followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, especially from November, when he made one of his most "disruptionist" announcements of demonetisation, one could not but help recall the words of deep prescience that Dr S Radhakrishnan, philosopher, statesman and former President of India, spoke in the Constituent Assembly on August 14, 1947, on the eve of India's independence. Dr Radhakrishnan had said, "We have to assume the responsibility ourselves for what we do. A free India will be judged by the way in which it will serve the interests of the common man in the matter of food, clothing, shelter and social services. Unless we destroy corruption in high places, root out every trace of nepotism... profiteering and blackmarketing... we will not be able to raise the standards of efficiency in administration as well as in the production and distribution of the necessary goods of life."

Modi's message on the eve of the New Year, 2017, was similar to that of Dr Radhakrishnan's delivered about seventy years ago. The difference – Modi had tasked himself to undertake that national cleansing. As one heard his indefatigable speech on the necessity of

rooting out the negatives of corruption, black money, currency racketeering and tax evasion, so that the marginalised and the deprived could benefit and be part of our march towards growth and development, one saw this deep empathy and concern for the common citizen. Interestingly, along with this exhortation, he also appealed and continues to appeal to citizens to take a difficult leap to exceed themselves, despite the momentary challenges and constrictions that would bring.

The response was amazing, flooring many a sceptic and raucous analyst and noisy politician. If electoral referendum was anything to go by, the BJP's win in local and state elections post demonetisation have demonstrated the continuing support of the people. One often heard, during that period, stories of how ordinary Indians have resolved to exceed themselves, to go through the short tunnel of a momentary deprivation so that a thorough cleansing of certain vital aspects of our national life could be effectuated. Some have termed it a call to Satyagraha, while others saw in it the introduction of the moral quotient in a mass dimension – a phenomenon not seen since the Champaran Satyagraha, Mahatma Gandhi's first public movement on return to India.

Modi's recent address to the civil servants also displayed his same

concern for effective delivery, so that ordinary lives could be transformed, referring to his initiative of PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation), Modi pointed out that PRAGATI was not only about the use of technology for governance, but it was also about expediting the process of delivery. Why is it that decisions that could have been taken in 24 hours have been left pending for 15 years, affecting governance, affecting lives and arresting the march of development? The process was to evolve a greater synergy between various sections and departments so that a "lubricating cooperation" can evolve. The fundamental inspiration for this exhortation was again, his own concern for the empowerment of the marginalised.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

narrative of "A New India" has in fact caught the imagination of the youth. A decade of indecisiveness, of policy paralysis and fatigue has given way to the articulation of "A New India." Seven decades after independence, this clarion call has begun to reflect the actual state of our collective mind, when aspirations and quest for opportunities are increasingly

defining our politics and public articulations.

For Modi "the transition that is happening towards creation of a new India", is happening with elections being increasingly fought on the positive agendas of development and of aspirations. The hesitation among the political class to address the dimensions of "development" is being overcome. Issues of progress, of opportunities and of possibilities are increasingly driving the

election narrative this time round. Modi sees this shift as leading towards a "new normal" by rejecting the politics of self-

alienation and accepting the politics of performance and of progress. In fact, in the "New India", the politics of appeasement, of casteism and of discrimination and dynastic politics, will see dissolution. The new India has to rise on the rejection of these debilitating maladies.

The "Yuva Shakti" – youth power's dreams are shaping the New India and it is all "about giving opportunities to the poor." The poor, Modi says, do not want crutches, all they ask is for opportunities. The "New India" is all about creating those opportunities. Modi's exhortation for self-renewal

has a deep ethical dimension to it. He calls for a purification of our national life through a collective, *shuddhikaran* (purification). "An India that is driven by innovation, hard work and creativity; an India characterized by peace, unity and brotherhood; and an India free from corruption, terrorism, black money and dirt," can alone evolve into a "New India."

Modi speaks of and reaches out in affirmation. Never once, in the last three years as he has constantly interacted directly with people, has he ever displayed doubt or vacillated on the goal he has set for himself. It is a goal that is transformative and not merely reformative in nature. His initiatives in the last three years has been envisaged with this transformative agenda in mind and in working this out, he has also adopted and internalised the essence of the spirit of federalism. When he talks of "Team India" working to build "New India" as he recently did in his closing

remarks at the 3rd meeting of the NITI Aayog, he actually displays that genuine faith of his in our federal spirit. His call of "Ek Bharat, Shresht Bharat," springs from that federal faith, which he seeks to realise through a blending, through assimilation, through an exchange and an internalisation of diversities. New India seems to be responding to his call, it is creating a new energy wave, long after many had predicted that the Modi wave had crashed. New India seems to be creating a new narrative, a narrative that is gradually but surely shaping itself into the dominant one. •



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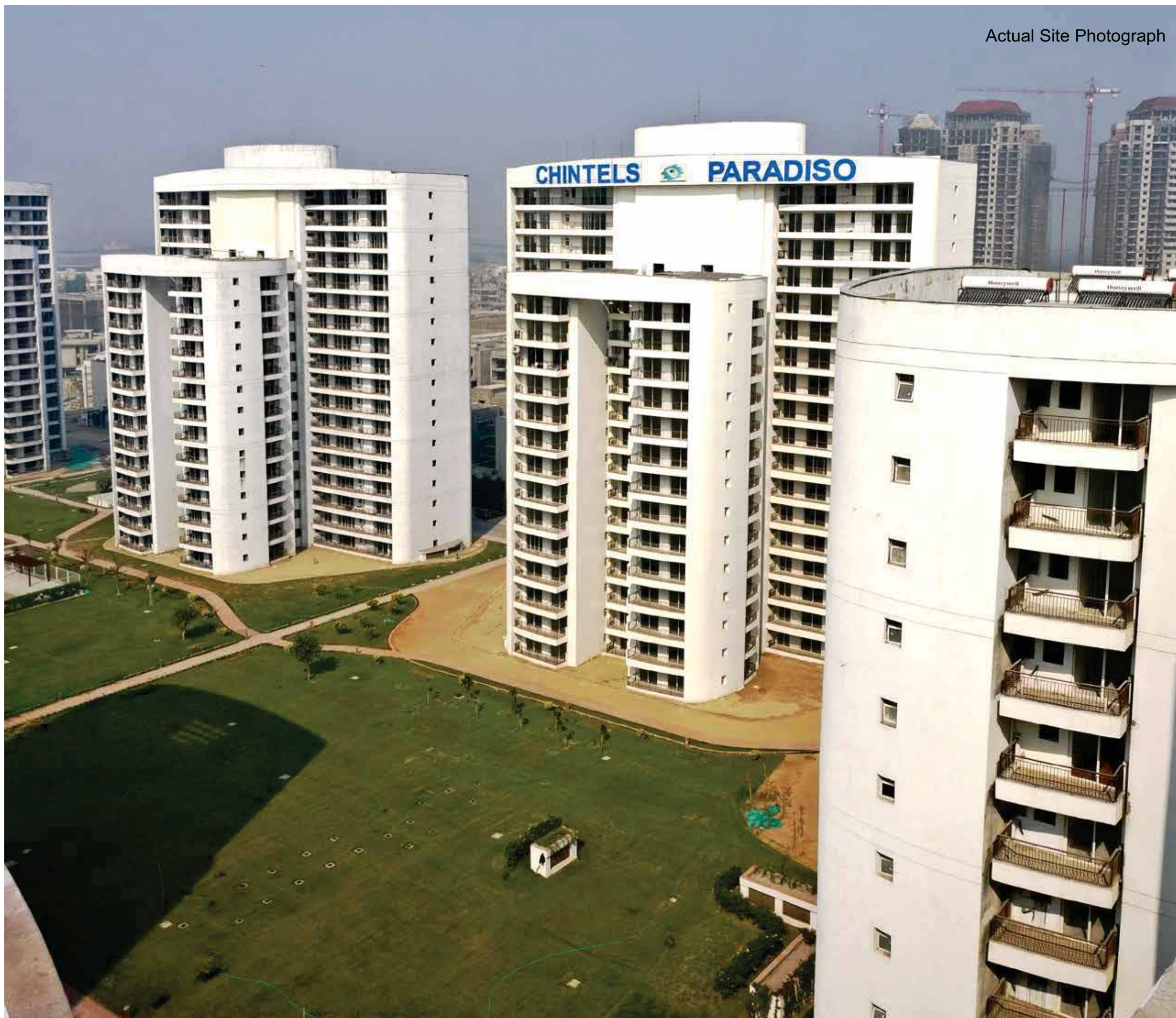
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Bengali  
cinema:

# Past perfect and promising future

In the Bengali film industry, the divide between commercially successful films and parallel cinema is finally getting blurred

NANDINI GUHA

The cinema of West Bengal refers to the Bengali language film industry based in the Tollygunge region of Kolkata. The origin of the word Tollywood, derived from the words Tollygunge and Hollywood, dates back to the 1930s. Although this regional industry is smaller, when compared to cash rich Bollywood, or Tamil and Malayalam cinema, Bengali films are known for producing many of Indian cinema's critically acclaimed films, with several of its filmmakers winning international recognition.

The golden period began with Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (1955), which was awarded Best Human Document at Cannes. After that, Bengali films frequently appeared in international film festivals for several decades and continue to do so. This allowed Bengali filmmakers to reach a global audience. The most influential among them was Ray, whose films became successful with European, American and Asian audiences. His films had a worldwide impact, with filmmakers such as Martin Scorsese, James Ivory, etc. being influenced by his cinematic style, and many others such as Akira Kurosawa appreciating his work.

Another important Bengali filmmaker is Mrinal Sen, whose films are known for their Marxist flavour. During his career, Mrinal Sen's films received awards from major film festivals, including Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Moscow, Montreal,

Chicago, and Cairo. Retrospectives of his films have been shown in major cities of the world. A noted filmmaker from the '50s, Ritwik Ghatak, began reaching a global audience long after his death.

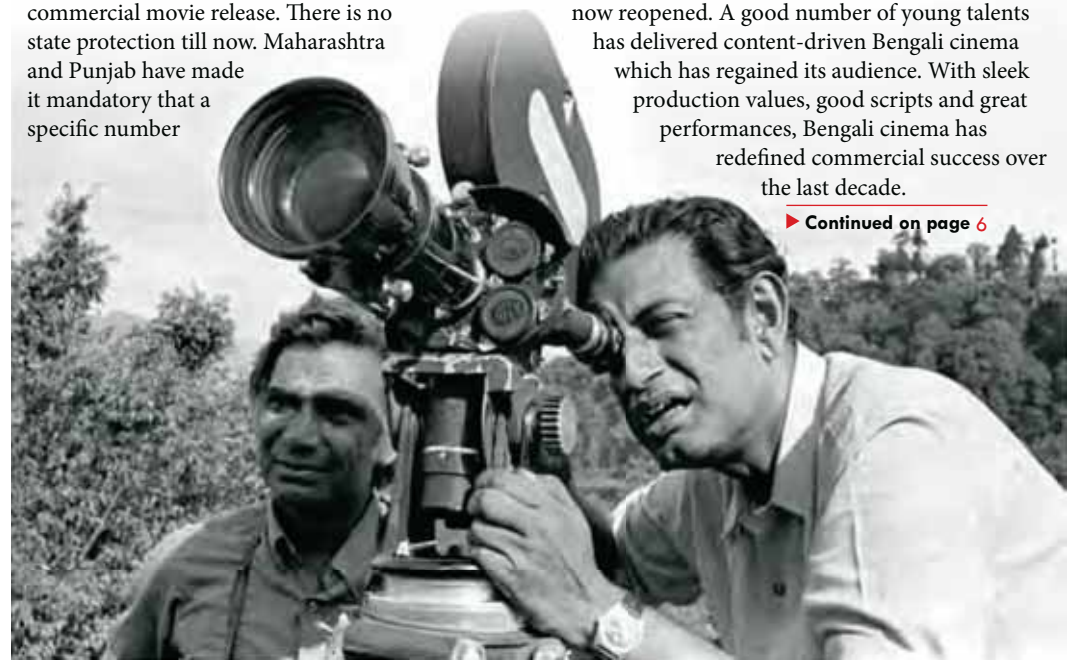
Cut to 2017, and the audience is raving about young Bengali filmmaker Kaushik Ganguly's *Bisarjan*, which won the Best National Film Award this year. Ganguly says that the film grossed one crore rupees in 10 days flat, not a mean achievement for a Bengali feature film. "The tragedy is that despite doing so well, the number of shows will go down from tomorrow due to a big Hindi commercial movie release. There is no state protection till now. Maharashtra and Punjab have made it mandatory that a specific number

of shows have to be given to local cinema," Ganguly told *Millennium Post*.

But directors like Ganguly have struggled hard and long to win recognition. Ganguly recalls how he and a handful of directors like Raj Chakraborty and Anjan Dutt started off making tele-films before Bengali audiences could develop a taste for a different kind of cinema. "The audience is slowly realising that content is king. The running-around-trees kind of commercial movies are not doing so well, instead, films like *Bisarjan*, *Apur Panchali* and *Goynar Baksho* are. The divide between commercially successful films and parallel cinema is getting blurred, finally," he explains.

Over the last few years, the Bengali film industry has undergone a major turnaround in terms of growth. The number of films produced every year has increased. Theaters that were shut down due to lack of good cinema and its audience, have now reopened. A good number of young talents has delivered content-driven Bengali cinema which has regained its audience. With sleek production values, good scripts and great performances, Bengali cinema has redefined commercial success over the last decade.

► Continued on page 6



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## Past perfect and promising future

Continued from page 5

The production values have also changed. Bengali films are now tapping national and overseas markets. The future looks very promising with digital rights management and steps against piracy.

Looking back, the first Bengali feature film, *Billwamangal*, was produced in 1919, under the banner of Madan Theatre. *Billwamangal* released on November 8, 1919, only six years after the first full-length Indian feature film, *Raja Harish Chandra*.

The early beginnings of the "talking film" industry go back to the early 1930s, when it first came to Kolkata. The movies were originally made in Urdu or Persian to accommodate a specific elite market. One of the earliest known studios was the East India Film Company.

The Madan Theatre production of *Jamai Shashthi* was the first Bengali film to be made as a talkie, released in 1931. At

this time, the early heroes of the Bengali film industry like Pramathesh Barua and Debaki Bose were at the peak of their popularity. Barua also directed movies, exploring new dimensions in Indian cinema. Debaki Bose directed *Chandidas* in 1932, a film noted for its breakthrough in recording sound.

The first full-length feature film *Dena Paona* was released on December 30, 1931, at Chitra Cinema Hall in Kolkata. Bengali cinema later produced directors like Satyajit Ray – who was an Academy Honorary Award winner, and the recipient of India's and France's greatest civilian honours, the Bharat Ratna and Legion of Honour respectively, and Mrinal Sen – who received the French distinction of Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters and the Russian Order of Friendship.

Other prominent filmmakers in the Bengali film industry included Ritwik Ghatak. The Bengali film industry has produced classics such as *Nagarik* (1952), *The Apu Trilogy* (1955–

1959), *Jalsaghar* (1958), *Ajantrik* (1958), *Neel Akasher Neechey* (1959), *Devdas*, *Devi* (1960), *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), *the Calcutta trilogies* (1971–1976), etc. In particular, Satyajit Ray's *The Apu Trilogy* is frequently listed among the greatest films of all time.

The most well known Bengali actor to date has been Uttam Kumar. His co-star Suchitra Sen and he were known as "The Eternal Pair" in the early 1950s and Sen is regarded as the most beautiful and the most influential actress of all time. Apart from Sen, Sabitri Chatterjee and Supriya Devi were popular actresses of the 1950s and they are celebrated among the best actresses of Bengali cinema. Soumitra Chatterjee is a notable actor, having acted in several Satyajit Ray films, and considered as a rival to Uttam Kumar in the 1960s. He is famous for the characterisation of detective Feluda in *Sonar Kella* (1974) and *Joi Baba Felunath* (1978), written and directed by Ray. He also played the adult version of Apu in *The World of Apu* (1959), directed by Ray.

In the 1960s, Bengal saw many talented actresses like Madhabi

Mukherjee, Sandhya Roy and Aparna Sen. Aparna Sen was one of the most successful actresses of the Golden Era. She became the leading heroine of the 70s and since 1981, she has been directing films. One of the most well-known Bengali actresses was Sharmila Tagore, who debuted in Ray's *The World of Apu*, and became a major actress in Bengali cinema as well as in Bollywood.

The revival of Bengali cinema dates from the rise of directors such as Rituparno Ghosh, Aparna Sen and Gautam Ghose. Rituparno made his first film *Hirer Angti* in 1992 and dominated Bengali parallel cinema until his death in 2013, winning numerous national awards for films like *Unish April*, *Dahan* and *Utsab*. Aparna Sen made her directorial debut in 1981 with the lauded *36 Chowringhee Lane*, which took a peak into the lives of Anglo-Indians living in Kolkata. Some of her later films which have been celebrated would include *Paromitar Ek Din*, *Mr and Mrs Iyer*, *15 Park Avenue*, *The Japanese Wife*, *Goynar Baksho*, etc. Gautam Ghose, another noted film director, is best known for award-winning films *Dakhal*, *Paar*, *Padma Nadir*

*Majhi* and *Abar Aranye*.

In recent years, a younger generation of Bengali directors have come to the fore. Many work in the domestic film industry, but others have gone on to Bollywood where they have achieved noteworthy success. In fact, they have also turned the cinematic spotlight on Kolkata, introducing the city to a much wider national audience (*Kahaani*, *Piku*, *Detective Byomkesh Bakshi*, etc). Successful Bengali films are getting their Hindi remakes in Bollywood: *Rajkahini* (*Begum Jaan*), *Bela Sheshe*, *Praktan*. Some of the directors who have gained success in recent years are Anik Dutta, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, Anjan Dutt, Arindam Sil, Kamaleswar Mukherjee, Mainak Bhoomik, Srijit Mukherji, as well as Nandita Roy and Shiboprosad Mukherjee (who have made several films as a duo).

Bengali directors who have found artistic and commercial success in contemporary Hindi films would include Anurag Basu, Ayan Mukerji, Dibakar Banerjee, Pradeep Sarkar, Shoojit Sircar and Sujoy Ghosh.

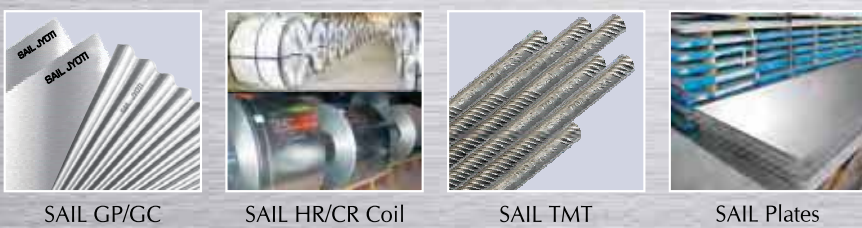


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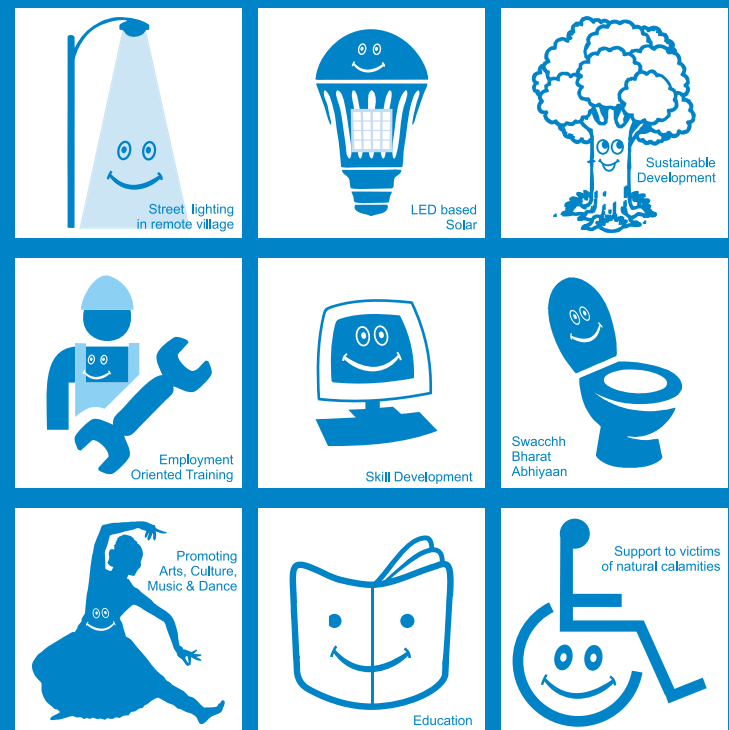
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## “ओएनजीसी बारासिंघा (ईस्टर्न स्वैम्प डीअर) संरक्षण परियोजना”



एक दुर्लभ प्रजाति को विलुप्त होने से बचाने के लिये  
ओएनजीसी की सीएसआर पहल।

असम में पाये जाने वाले बारासिंघा या ईस्टर्न स्वैम्प डीअर (*Rucervus duvaucelii ranjitsinhi*) आज विलुप्त होने की कगार पर है। प्रसिद्ध लेखक रुडयार्ड किपलिंग ने जिस से मंत्रमुग्ध हो कर उसकी सुन्दरता को अपनी दूसरी किताब ‘द सेकंड जंगल बुक’ में कैद किया हो, उस जीव के लिये यह काफी दुखद स्थिति है।

ओएनजीसी ने इस प्रजाति को विलुप्त होने से बचाने के लिये अपने कदम बढ़ाये, और वो भी बिल्कुल सही समय पर।

इसके पहले चरण के अन्तर्गत इनकी अनुमानित आबादी, अनुकूल पर्यावरण, पशु-चिकित्सा अंतःक्षेप एवं सामान्य अध्ययन और जागरूकता अभियान किया गया। इनके स्थानांतरण के लिये मानस राष्ट्रीय उद्यान को चुना गया, जो इनके रहने के लिये बिल्कुल उपयुक्त स्थान था।

काजीरंगा राष्ट्रीय उद्यान से 19 बारासिंघो को मानस में स्थानांतरित करना बहुत ही कठिन काम था। योजना के इस अत्यंत कठिन दूसरे चरण को दक्षिण अफ्रीका से बुलाये गये वन्यजीव विशेषज्ञों ने बहुत खास तरीके से अंजाम दिया। 19 बारासिंघो का स्थानांतरण खास तंबुओ में किया गया, जिनको अन्दर से उनके प्राकृतिक आवास जैसा ही बनाया गया था। कुछ ही महीनों में 6 नवजात बारासिंघो ने झुण्ड में जुड़कर, स्थानांतरण की खुशी को दुगना कर दिया।

इस योजना के विस्तार के तीसरे चरण के अन्तर्गत 20 अतिरिक्त बारासिंघो का स्थानांतरण किया जा रहा है।

यह परियोजना संतुलित पर्यावरण की ओर ओएनजीसी की एक शुरुआत है। लुप्तप्राय प्रजातियों का संरक्षण करने के लिये प्रेरित, हमारा संगठन प्रकृति की असली सुंदरता को बनाये रखने के लिये प्रतिबद्ध है।



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# CRISIS OF FEDERALISM

## Analysing the federal Indian Union

**A federal system is like a matrimonial alliance, in which each partner has autonomous rights, including the right to separate from an abusive relationship**

GARGA CHATTERJEE

resources of all other States are thus extracted to service the material economic interests of this group and their ideological and security anxieties. Dissent from this system is branded as anti-national. Subject after subject has been transferred from the State list to Concurrent list (where the Centre prevails if differences with States arise). In State subjects, Delhi interferes, coerces and blackmails, thus hollowing out the executive authority vested in State governments with regard to the State list. Federalism in the Indian Union has thus reached a serious crisis point.

A comparison with other federalised states like USA, Pakistan, Canada, Australia or UK, some of them being models upon which the Indian constitution is based, can reveal how fake the federalism practiced in the Indian Union is. In Pakistan, residuary powers are with provinces. It has learned a bit if not enough from the Bangladesh episode.



Through the 18th amendment, it has essentially abolished the concurrent list to transfer subjects to the provinces. In USA, states enjoy huge powers, which has prevented the tyranny

of Donald Trump from being actually felt at the State level. In Canada and UK, constituent parts have been allowed referendums on independence and have near sovereign

provincial parliaments with massive revenue powers. Even Sri Lanka, with its history of genocide against Tamils and the Tamil national aspiration, still has Tamil language in most government documents including its passport. All states of USA, all provinces of Canada, all nations within UK, have separate flags – something that is unthinkable in the Indian Union. This just expresses their deep anxiety about the fragile nature of unity that actually underlies paeans to Unity in Diversity.

A federal system is like a matrimonial alliance. Unless each partner has autonomous rights, including the right to separate from what is perceived by one partner to be an unequal, abusive relationship, what exists is not a marriage but forced cohabitation. In such a system, domestic partner abuse is the norm. Indeed, it is the only guarantor of the stability of such a "marriage". The federalism practiced in the Indian Union is not much different. •

To federate is to join together. Friendship is the basis of all federalism at any level. When there is diversity, and unity with others is mutually beneficial in some aspects, they federate or come together on that basis. Translated in terms of government, a federal government is one where certain diverse entities have some common interests and the body that oversees and executes these elements of common benefit, as mutually agreed, is called the federal government. Thus, diverse entities retain their autonomy in some aspects of their existence and concede some autonomy as other entities also do, to a common body; in so far as the common body functions to the benefit of each diverse entity, so that each such entity continues to gain. Unless there is nothing to gain for each participant in an interaction, there is no reason for them to join together or come together. This combination of own autonomy and ceded autonomy for own benefit, this structure of separate autonomy, is typically called a federal structure. The federal structure is part of the basic structure of the Constitution of India, that is, it cannot be changed by parliamentary legislation. This is because the basic structure is said to be comprised of qualities that are so fundamental to the formation of the Indian Union that no degree of majoritarianism can override it. Overriding the basic structure, which also includes practices like secularism, destroys the very basis for the existence of the Indian Union.

More than 80% of the world's populations live under federal or semi-federal administrations. At its core, federalism, as an ideology, is an agreement between friends. The friends may be big and small, rich and poor, fat and thin, but they come together due to friendly association. All true friendships are based on equality and dignity. If a fat friend forces his wishes on a thin friend, or if a poor friend steals from a rich friend, the friendship ceases to exist. Similarly, at the level of federal government, the abuse of ceded powers by taking from the rich, less populous constituents to give to the poor, more populous ones, without the explicit consent of the rich, is not federalism but another version of crude



majoritarianism. Federalism is based on consensus, not on the basis of the wish of a gang of constituents, ganging up on other constituents. When that happens, it is tyranny at work. In the so-called federal system of the Indian Union, the Finance Commission unleashes exactly this sort of tyranny on its rich, progressive constituents to subsidize the more populous basket cases of the so-called Hindi belt.

The separation of powers in the Indian Union's federal system is a much debated topic. Much of the debate actually took place before the 1947 Partition. During those debates, strong non-Congress ruled provinces had their say and thus the agreement that was reached was on the basis of the Cabinet Mission plan. In that plan, Defence, External Affairs, Currency and Communication were to be the fief of the Union or federal government. Every other power was to be with the States/Provinces. This crucially included residuary powers, that is, anything that was not mentioned. This is important since the list of residuary powers increases with time as new realities crop up with the passage of time. After Partition, this underwent a sea of change and the Indian Union constitution, dictated by a massive Congress majority, led by Upper and Middle Gangetic plain leaders, ended up with a super-centralised Centre which enjoyed almost all important powers. States were reduced to mere vassals, with very limited elastic revenue sources of their own. Since the adoption of the constitution of India in 1950, the story has been one of constant chipping away of the meager powers that remained with the states. The behavior of the Congress and the BJP are not fundamentally different in this regard, except that BJP drives the same centralization process under the garb of PR gimmicks like "co-operative federalism" with an eye towards a toxic majority of Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan. Its definition of the first citizen is the Hindi speaking Hindu male of the upper and middle Gangetic region (Hindustan). Everything else is an appendage. The




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# Masters of Modern Art



Indian contemporary art has found its market, and global recognition and collectors worldwide

UMA NAIR

When Google recently celebrated 130 years of the artist Jamini Roy, it put the spotlight on India's first modernist. To look at works by Jamini Roy is to be drawn into the frame of simplicity and the lingua franca of folk idioms, set amidst rural idylls of Bengal. His dimly lit figures rise above pigments of pure colour, nestled between lithe lines. Peaceful emotive expressions seem to kindle human emotions as if flickering from the inside. This is the kinetic energy of modern master Jamini Roy, who could make a woman look surprisingly simple yet sensual, hidden within the folds of her sari. Women, boys and men, and tales from the Ramayana as well as of Mary and Christ, are the cornerstones of his creations, offering a rich and rustic palette that conjures a luxurious yet pristine scene: one where the art of drawing is akin to a ritual. Of course, 130 years on, Indian contemporary art has found its market, and global recognition worldwide, with artists from the progressive school to young contemporaries like Jitish Kallat and Subodh Gupta and a host of others finding their own collectors and dealers alike, all over the globe. Artists like Sudip Roy, who won the Florence Biennale, echo the marvels of Da Vinci in his wash creation of Christ with thorns. Interest in contemporary Indian art practices goes back to more than five decades with buyers finding interest in

the works of Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury and many more.

In 1993 when the Husain-Doshi ni Gufa opened at Ahmedabad, the American collectors Chester and David Herwitz came to watch the fanfare, as MF Husain opened the Gufa as a museum. While Husain sped between India's states and cities like London and Dubai, there was Bengal's great teacher, Bikash Bhattacharjee, creating canvasses and sketches in his own little studio. "He would make more than a 100 sketches or portraits every day," says student Sanjay Bhattacharya. "I wish I had learnt that discipline."



In the 1980s, Bikash Bhattacharjee rejected traditional themes in pursuit of emotionally charged and visually direct depictions of contemporary life, such as street scenes of Calcutta. After graduating from art school, Bhattacharjee encountered American artist Andrew Wyeth's paintings for the first time, recalling the way "... the differences of country, period and characters melted away." Bhattacharjee

became an avid collector of books on Wyeth, and he continued to explore Wyeth's brush techniques and thematic preferences. Bhattacharjee shared Wyeth's dramatic handling of light and shadow, creating scenes sympathetic in their compositional techniques and tonal gradations. The Peabody Essex Museum owned Bikash's poignant work 'Durga' (1985) - a masterpiece in the art of portraiture.

In the same show in the Chesta and David collection was a work of equal vintage value - Jogen Chowdhury's 'Gaanpati the Warrior' (1977), and another work called 'Couple'. His 'Gaanpati the Warrior' executed in 1977 is a jewel beyond compare for its fluid lines and its attractive fervour of blending the spiritual and the sensual.

The charismatic contour of Jogen

Continued on page 10



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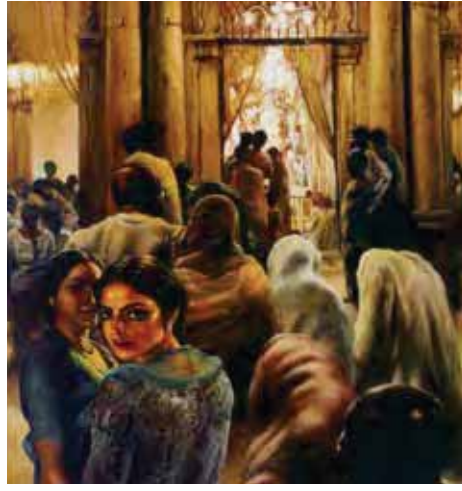
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artist. And Tyeb Mehta spent many years in the contemplation of suffering. He condensed long histories of violence and melancholia into the most austere forms; he delivered the freight of trauma through isolated figures delineated in planes of flat colours that vibrate against one another without discreet intervals of tonal shading.

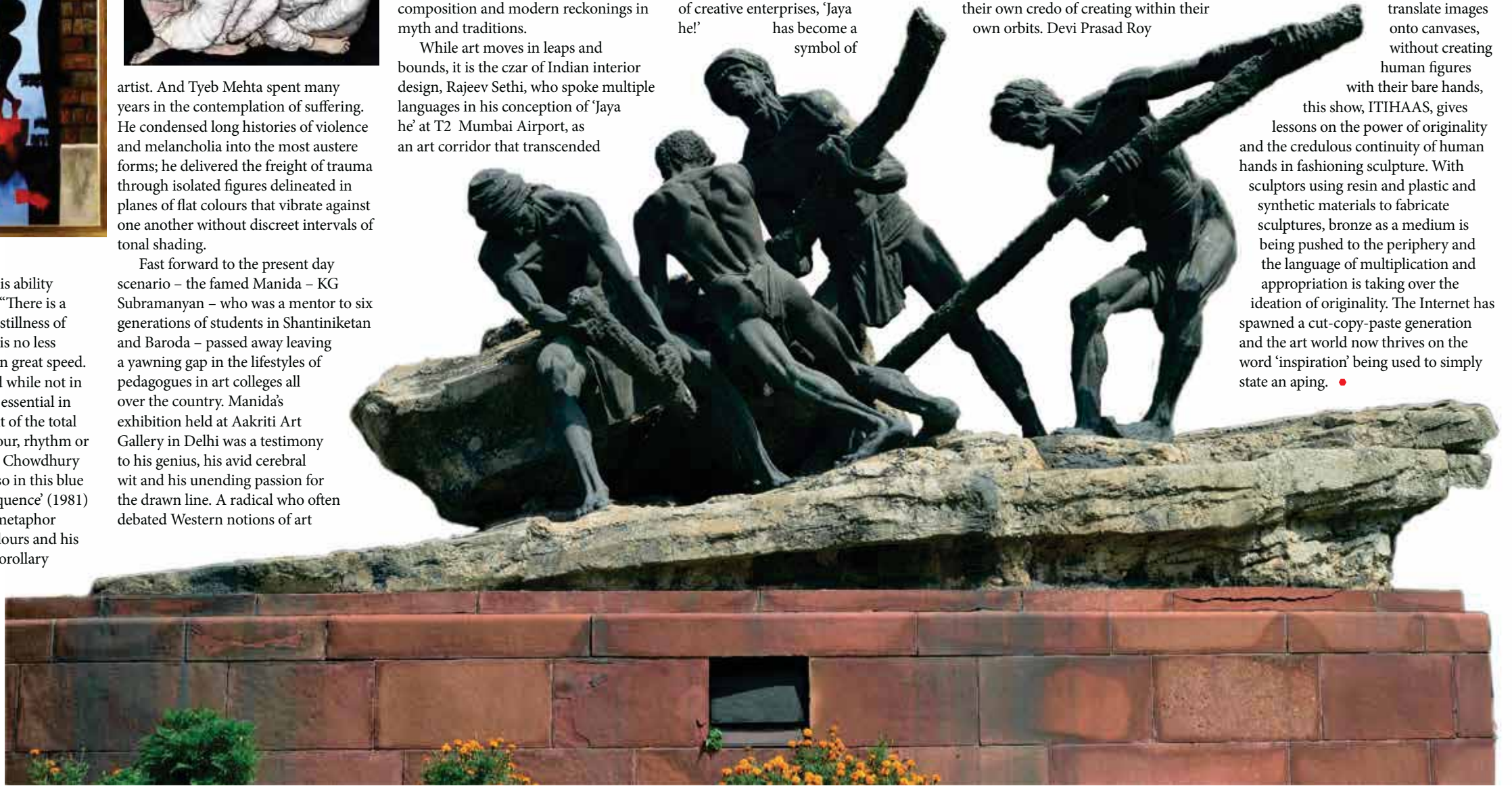
Fast forward to the present day scenario – the famed Manida – KG Subramanyan – who was a mentor to six generations of students in Shantiniketan and Baroda – passed away leaving a yawning gap in the lifestyles of pedagogues in art colleges all over the country. Manida's exhibition held at Aakriti Art Gallery in Delhi was a testimony to his genius, his avid cerebral wit and his unending passion for the drawn line. A radical who often debated Western notions of art

criticism he didn't believe in Seneca's words that 'Art is long, life is short.' Among all his works shown and reflected upon, it is his gods and goddesses at 'Project 88' that remain in the memory for the brilliance of composition and modern reckonings in myth and traditions. While art moves in leaps and bounds, it is the czar of Indian interior design, Rajeev Sethi, who spoke multiple languages in his conception of 'Jaya he' at T2 Mumbai Airport, as an art corridor that transcended

indigenous as well as contemporary art practices, when he juxtaposed different languages and crafts to create a seamless flow of journeys in myriad sensibilities. Rooted in pride for the subcontinent's varied heritage and its legacy of creative enterprises, 'Jaya he!' has become a symbol of

public private partnership (PPP) for a nation determined to enhance its rich history. In Delhi, NGMA's recent celebration of 63 years nailed the idea of sculptors being practitioners of teaching as well as their own credo of creating within their own orbits. Devi Prasad Roy

Chowdhury and Ram Kinkar Bajj stand tall as India's indigenous modernists who created for nourishing their own nectar of thoughts. In an age where artists in colleges do not want to draw and are using technology to translate images onto canvases, without creating human figures with their bare hands, this show, ITIHAAS, gives lessons on the power of originality and the credulous continuity of human hands in fashioning sculpture. With sculptors using resin and plastic and synthetic materials to fabricate sculptures, bronze as a medium is being pushed to the periphery and the language of multiplication and appropriation is taking over the ideation of originality. The Internet has spawned a cut-copy-paste generation and the art world now thrives on the word 'inspiration' being used to simply state an aping. ●



► Continued from page 9

Chowdhury always has this ability to draw you into its maw. "There is a tremendous power in the stillness of the subject, a force which is no less than apparently a matter in great speed. Stillness is a form of speed while not in force. A certain tension is essential in artwork which is the result of the total effect of composition, colour, rhythm or sensitive lines," said Jogen Chowdhury to this critic years ago. Also in this blue chip collection was 'In Sequence' (1981) - by the mandarin of the metaphor Tyeb Mehta. Tyeb's flat colours and his shifting planes created a corollary that reflected the resonance of an all-time genius who created art for his own journey of inner and outer references. Inspiration from real life in volatile regions can bring new meaning to what it feels to be a troubled

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# AIZAWL FC: A step towards FOOTBALL resurgence



A team few thought had a chance of even making it to the top level, went all the way to become the champions of Indian football

SAYAK DUTTA

Fairytales. It's a term used often nowadays to describe a dream run of a team of smaller stature, compared to its illustrious rivals. For example, Leicester City's run in the English Premier League last season, where they went on to become the champions of England, has been the stuff that legends are made of. It's practically guaranteed that everyone, from the fans to the players, will tell the story of an underdog's triumph over the big guns for years to come.

This year in the I-league, a team few thought had a chance of even making it to the top, went all the way to become the champions of Indian football. This is the team, which in last year's edition had been relegated to the bottom after finishing eighth, but was reinstated when the AIFF handed them a way back to the I-League as a few Goan clubs

reached roadblocks in their talks with the governing body. Yes, I am talking about the newly crowned champions Aizawl FC, who, after a neck to neck battle with Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan, etched its name in the annals of football history by becoming the first team from the North-eastern part of the country to win the coveted trophy. At the start of the season, if you had told any football fan that the team for the North-east would topple heavyweights like Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, and Bengaluru FC, they would call you crazy. But as the final whistle was blown to draw the curtain on this edition of the I-League, Aizawl FC was the club that was standing with its head held high among the fallen warriors. This is the beauty of football. Sometimes it may tread a tried and tested path bordering on the familiar, but there are times when the game springs such surprises that it leaves supporters, players and even the managers in awe. In



India, a country which is mainly known for its cricket, football has always been considered somewhat of a red-haired stepchild. Even before the advent of the cash-rich IPL, Indian kids were always encouraged to play cricket as it would lead to more fame, money, and recognition. It's a fact that in this country cricketers are worshiped like demigods while all the other sports are shunted aside. If a kid wants to play football, he is told about the trials and tribulations that a football player has to go through to make it big and is often discouraged from

taking up the sport as a hobby. But if recent events are an indication, slowly and steadily, India is getting ready to buck the trend.

Just like the IPL, Indian domestic football also received a shot to the arm in the form of the ISL or the Indian Super League. Though, after the first season, it has lost its momentum somewhat, this is definitely a good start. Indian audiences, who had been exposed to legends of world football like Alessandro Del Piero, Alessandro Nesta, Marco Materazzi, David James, David Trezeguet, Florent Malouda,

Mikaël Silvestre, Robert Pires, Nicolas Anelka, John Arne Riise, Helder Postiga, Adrien Mutu, Luis Garcia and Joan Capdevilla only through recordings on TV, can now witness their heroes play live.

As a national team too, India has improved in leaps and bounds as our ranking in the recent FIFA list jumped to 101 and we have a distinct possibility of cracking the top 100 in the near future. With the advent of social media and the ISL, Indian football is finally getting some part of its due recognition. Earlier, only two regions of the country were

famous for their football spirit. One was the state of Bengal and the other region was the North-eastern states. The Bengal giants East Bengal and Mohun Bagan need no introduction as these clubs have always been synonymous with churning out footballing greatness. The rivalry between the clubs and their legions of fans are the norm for legends in Bengal. The North-eastern teams are, however, not celebrated as much as their illustrious counterparts but hopefully, after the historic victory, Mizoram's Aizawl FC can turn it around.

North-east India is considered as the original hub of football and with its win, Aizawl FC has won hearts not only in North-east India but in all corners of the country. Football is much more than a sport in Mizoram. Nothing else can raise such fever-pitch excitement in the state. But it's only in recent years that the popularity is starting to manifest itself into something tangible. Aizawl's historic win has opened the doors of opportunity, not just for the players but for the residents of Mizoram as well, as football takes first priority there. This victory may well change the course of history in the small

state, with kids looking up to local heroes, to whom they can relate.

Unfortunately, given the uncertainty surrounding the next season, due to the impending merger of the I-League and the Indian Super League (ISL), a massive question mark hangs over the team's future. The two organisations wish to have only three clubs from the I-League playing in the retooled ISL, and those are the more glamorous teams of Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, and Bengaluru FC. Thus, a dark cloud is hovering over the future of these professional players and the underdog clubs.

Aizawl will be representing India in the AFC Champions League next year, but they might not even be playing in the top echelons of Indian football in the future. The ISL, in future, will be an even bigger commercial juggernaut and with its merger with the I-League, it may become more commercially successful, but in doing that, it will lose the essence of the beautiful game, where a team of plucky upstarts created history, just to be relegated to a sideshow in the upcoming map of Indian football. After their triumph this season, surely Aizawl and the North-east deserve so much more. ●

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# FROM RETRO TO FASHION BIZARRE



believe it or not, people have been following these trends. A few of these which made their way into 2017 are:

**Marble lips:** It is amazing how these beauty bloggers always come up with such piece of artwork. Marble lips are the newest mesmerising makeup trend going viral on Instagram, with makeup artists puckering up to show off their glam creations in this trend. And if you want to try this picture-worthy makeup look, just google 'marble lip art tutorial' and dozens of youtube videos will pop up. Meanwhile, I can barely even apply regular old red lipstick without messing it up.

**Fake mud jeans:** There is absolutely no explanation for this. Fake mud jeans are a thing now and they will cost you \$425, or Rs 27,000. Twitter slammed these jeans by Nordstrom saying, "Just go roll around in a pair of Walmart jeans, you fool!" and no sentence can better describe such idiocy.

**Feather eyebrows:** Why would anyone copy such a bizarre thing in the first place? It was makeup artist Stella Sironen who started this trend on Instagram and people came up with their own different versions. Well, at least it's a relief for those who hate threading those long eyebrows constantly, right?

These are only three out of hundreds of bizarre fashion trends out there on social media. Some are curated by fashion bloggers and some are born out of sheer monotony. But it is not all bad in the trending sphere or as Aashmeen Munjaal, a celebrity make-up artist puts it, "Be it make-up, eyeliner, hair-do, the old era

is coming back with a bang. Fashion is something which is always revolving in a circular manner, whatever goes away comes back. If we talk about make-up, nowadays, more matte bases are in. Even winged, angled and thick eyeliner with thick kohl are very much in fashion. Thick brows are in trend, along with pale and metallic lip shades. Hair trends like huge bouffants, curl extensions, braid extensions and elaborate wig hairstyles are back in fashion again. To sum up, fashion of the bygone era is the fashion of today's time."

Carolina Herrera, a Venezuelan-American fashion designer known for her "exceptional personal style" and for dressing various First Ladies, including Jacqueline Onassis, Laura Bush, Michelle Obama, and Melania Trump, has said, "Fashion has always been a repetition of ideas, but what makes it new is the way you put it together." Numerous designers and stylists are trying to bring back the 'classics' in their own way, from different draping styles of a saree, to fringes incorporated with laser cut hairstyle.

## THE 90S RESURGENCE

Nostalgia hits us really hard. People born in the '60s or '70s know all about the vintage trends. But in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how some of these old world trends are coming back is interesting. Even on fashion ramps, it is almost as if designers have exhausted all their innovative ideas and have decided to merge the grunge with modern looks.

**High-waisted straight denims:** Straight denims are what most of the young girls are seeking. Teaming them up with cute crop tops and contrasting bellies is what's trending today. These are comfortable, stretchable, compared to the so called 'flexible jeans' and looks cool if worn with the right attitude.

**Denim overalls:** Fan of F.R.I.E.N.D.S? Then you must remember the style diva Rachel and her denim overalls are what stole the show. It is a treat for the people who love their comfort zone and still want to look sexy.

**Round glasses and collars:** Chokers of the '90s are "in." Go out on the streets and you will see almost every girl wearing a black collar: laced, solid, with a pendant or anything. And during a sunny afternoon, sunglasses are a must. After Lisa Haydon wore those quirky round glasses in the

**Platform shoes:** There isn't a single lady left now who doesn't own these chic shoes or boots. There are two versions of platforms - one is space age and the other simply flat platform boots. Remember those giant shoes the Spice Girls used to wear? The towering space age footwear made a huge comeback on the runway this year and is adored by its loyalists.

The list goes on, if you pick out everything that has made a comeback lately, including black leather jackets,



film *Queen*, girls went gaga for them.

**Fishnets:** If you are not wearing fishnets under your ripped jeans this year, then what are you doing? For some, fishnets are a Nay but for many it's a Yay - it depends on your personal choice.

**Checked shirt:** In the late '90s it became obvious that checked shirts don't look good on just men. They look super cool and casual if paired with the right accessories like aviator sunglasses, ripped jeans and boots.

**Cold shoulder sleeves:** Such tops feature a flash of skin just on the top of the arm. The style is gorgeous and is a hot favourite among women who want to look slimmer and stylish.

floral dresses, tracksuits, leggings and military boots. But there is one fabric that has completely taken the fashion industry by storm and that is Khadi. It had been popular among the masses before Independence. Recently, Khadi went international, with rising popularity among foreigners. It is becoming a style statement amongst youngsters, who want that modern look with a *desi* touch.

As the saying by Ralph Lauren goes, "Fashion is not necessarily about labels. It's not about brands. It's about something else that comes from within you." At the end of the day, you should be comfortable with what you wear, be it Khadi, bell-bottoms or a skirt. •

## Numerous designers and stylists are trying to bring back 'classics' from the 20<sup>th</sup> century in their own way setting up new fashion statements

SHREYA DAS

"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man" - Heraclitus' (Greek philosopher) quote implies that you cannot step into the same river twice because you are changing and the river is changing. It is the same with fashion; it is always in a state of flux. And once you step into a new pair of shoes, you never really go back to wearing the old ones. Fashions come into vogue and then fade away because humans are restless, they love change. Different styles, colours and looks, make one feel confident, fresh and novel so one is always looking for the next trend, the new fad.

Breaking the monotony of daily life is necessary. While living life in the fast lane, we demand whatever

comfort we can get. And when you are working for the whole day, what's better than wearing comfortable yet stylish clothes. Alexander McQueen has said, "Fashion should be a form of escapism, and not a form of imprisonment." If you are comfortable in something, walk around in it as if it's your own skin. If you are confident in what you are wearing, people will notice you, and who knows, you may well become a trendsetter!

Something strange has been happening in the past few years. We have become social media prisoners. 2016 was all about the '90s, 2015 was obsessed with the '70s - this time, things are getting a little bit more out there. 2017 is a mix of trends from the '80s, early 2000s and a little bit of the '90s.

It's not even six months into 2017 and we have already seen some really weird fashion trends cropping up (some continuing from previous years) and

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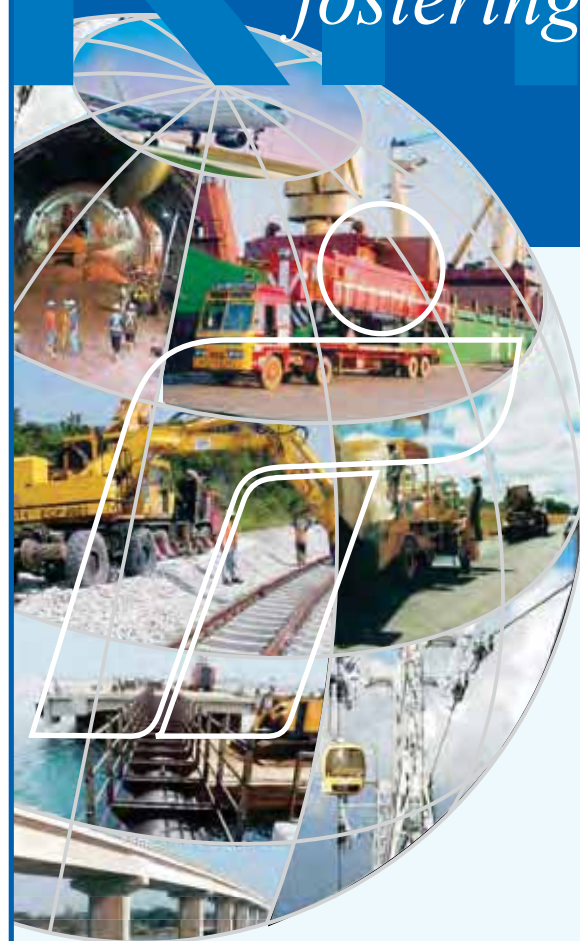
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# Why old still remains GOLD



In our monotonous lives, melodies jazz things up. With music being an ever-changing art, here's an overview of the evolution in our very own B'town

SHARAD DUTT

Nostalgia is bound to be subjective. But it is as likely that what the generations of the 1940s and 1950s raved about, the present generation may like too. To understand the changing trends of film music, let's first have a bird's eye-view of these vintage genres of music.

With the advent of talkies, song and dance became an integral part of Indian Cinema. When Wazir Mohammad Khan sang, 'De de khuda ke naam pe pyare' in *Alam Ara* (1931) and became the first playback singer of Hindi films, it set the pace and created stiff competition to have a dozen songs or even more in a film. The film *Indra Sabha* (1932) had 69 songs. It sounds incredible, but the decades between 1930s-50s launched an era where each big studio and a big banner had its own music composer. New Theatres had RC Boral, Pankaj Mullick and Timir Baran in

the music department. Bombay talkies had Saraswati Devi (nee Khursheed Minocher Homji), who happened to be the first woman composer. Prabhat of Pune had Govind Rao Tembe and Keshav Rao Bhole on its payroll. Composers like Master Ghulam Haider, Shyam Sunder, Pandit Amarnath and GA Chishti dominated the film music scene in Lahore.

The 1930s were the years of singing stars. New Theatres created the most popular duo, Kundan Lal Saigal and Kanan Devi. Bombay talkies had Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani. Santa Apte was the most popular singing star of Prabhat. Saigal's 'Balam aaye baso morey man mein in raga desh' that he sang in *Devdas*, and Babul mora in *raga bhairavi* in *Street Singer*, were the most popular songs of that decade. 'Main ban ki chidiya' sung by Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani was the rage of its time. Shanta Apte's 'Suno suno ban ke prani' (*Amar Jyoti*) and 'Kamsini mein dil pe gham ka' (*Amrit Manthan*) were great hits. The major achievement of the 1930s was the introduction of playback singing in *Dhoop Chaon* (1935).

The 1940s saw the emergence of folk tradition in films. Master Ghulam Haider introduced Punjabi folk with beats of dholak in film *Khazanchi* (1941). Its song 'Sawan ke nazare hair' became a cult song. He also introduced Shamshad Begum, Noor Jehan and Lata Mangeshkar. Anil Biswas created a sensation in the film *Kismet* with the romantic number, 'Dheere dheere aa re badal', and the patriotic song, 'Door hato ae duniya walo Hindustan hamara hai'.

Naushad brought Uttar Pradesh's folk tunes in *Rattan* (1944) in that noticeable song, 'Akhian mila ke', sung by Zohra Bai Ambalewali. Naushad gave musical hits like *Dard* (1947), *Anmol Ghadi* (1948), and *Dillagi* (1949).

After Partition, many artists like Ghulam Haider, Noor Jehan and Firoz Nizami among others, migrated to Pakistan, while OP Nayyar and lyricists Sahir Ludhianvi and Qamar Jalalabadi came to India. Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand and Guru Dutt gave utmost importance to music in their films. Raj Kapoor introduced composer Ram Ganguli in

*Aag* (1948) and duo Shankar Jaikishan in *Barsaat* (1949). Lata Mangeshkar provided playback for various actors in film for the first time. Music director Khemchand Prakash introduced Kishore Kumar in *Ziddi* (1948). Kishore did playback for Dev Anand (*Marne ki duayen kya mangoon*), and also composed for *Mahal*, which gave Lata Mangeshkar her all-time great song, 'Aayega aane wala'.

Another hit of 1949 was Mehboob Khan's *Andaz*. Mukesh gave playback for Dilip Kumar and Mohammad Rafi lent his voice for Raj Kapoor. Lata Mangeshkar also sang one ghazal in *Andaz* (Uthaye ja unke sitam) composed by Naushad.

The 1950s were dominated by composers C Ramachandra, SD Burman, Madan Mohan, Khayyam and Hemant Kumar. C Ramachandra gave such catchy tunes to music lovers in films like *Shehnai* (Aana meri jaan Sunday ke Sunday) and *Patanga* (Mere piya gaye Rangoon) in 1949. He kept this trend in film *Samadhi* also with 'Gore gore, o banke chhorey'. But his music in

Continued on page 14



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# Why old is still gold

Continued from page 13

Anarkali and Azad was a forerunner. Naushad's compositions in Baiju Bawra were raga-based and he roped in great masters like Ustad Amir Khan and Pandit DV Paluskar to give playback for films Tansen and Baiju Bawra. Naushad also made use of western instruments while composing for films like Jadoo and Dastaan.

SD Burman composed for Dev Anand's banner Navketan right since its inception. He gave peppy numbers in Baazi directed by Guru Dutt. "Tadbir se bigdi hui taqdir bana le" penned by Sahir Ludhianvi is hummed by music lovers even today. SD Burman had showcased a bewildering range in his music. He blended classical and western music and rendered jazzy and trendy tunes in Dev Anand's films, Taxi Driver, Nau do Gyrah, Kala Pani, Kala Bazar and Jewel Thief and he composed music for Bimal Roy's films. In Devdas he composed two 'mujras' and Bangla folk tunes. In Sujata he revived Talat Mehmood's career by giving him a heart-rending song, 'Jalte hain jiske liye'. In Bandhini he sang himself, 'O manjhi re', based on Bangla folksong Bhatiyali. His

best creations were Guru Dutt's Pyasa and Kagaz ke Phool. In Pyasa, 'Jaane kya tune kahi, Jinhe naaz hai, and ye duniya agar mil bhi jaaye' and light number 'Sar jo tera chakraye', were all sung by Mohammad Rafi, and it also had a solo number by Hemant Kumar, 'Jaane wo kaise log the'. All these were chartbusters of that time. In Kagaz ke Phool he gave Geeta Dutt her best song, 'Waqt ne kiya'.

Guru Dutt brought OP Nayyar in his home production Aar Paar (Sun sun sun zalima, Ae lo main haree piya, and Kabhi aar kabhi paar) which truly created a sensation. He repeated OP Nayyar in Mr and Mrs 55 and CID as well. Who can forget the songs of CID (Le ke pehla pehla pyar and Aankhon hi aankhon mein) sung by Mohammad Rafi, Geeta Dutt and Shamshad Begum, who did full justice to the melodies of Majhrooh Sultanpuri? OP Nayyar used Punjabi folk in film Naya Daur (Udey jab jab zulfein teri and Reshmi salwar kurta jali ka) that won him the Filmfare Award. He also composed the biggest hit with the rock 'n' roll number, 'Mera naam chin chin choo', sung by Geeta Dutt in Howrah Bridge.

Another music director from Bengal, Salil Chaudhari introduced a bhanga number for the first time in Raj Kapoor's Jagte Raho. His best creations were

Madhumalti, Parakh and Anand. And Madan Mohan, who was known as the king of ghazals, composed two ghazals for the film Adalat (Yun hasraton ke daag and Unko ye shikayat hai). He also composed 'Kaun aaya mere man ke dware' sung by Manna Dey and also gave music in Heer Ranjha (the only film written in verse), 'Ye duniya ye mehfil'.

The 1950s and 1960s were dominated by Shankar Jaikishan. They gave their best to Raj Kapoor in Awara (Awara hoon); Shri 420 (Mera joota hai Japani and Pyaar hua iqrar hua); Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai (Mera naam Raju and O Basanti pawan pagal), Sangam (Bol Radha bol and Dost dost na raha), Mera Naam Joker (Jaane kahan gaye wo din and Kehta hai joker). They were also lauded for their compositions based on classical ragas for film Basant



Bahar, and gave unforgettable numbers for Dilip Kumar in Daag (Aye mere dil kahin aur chal) and 'Ye mera deewanapan hai' in Yahudi. They gave music in a maximum number of films for Shammii Kapoor, too, from Ujala, Junglee to Pagla kahin ka. The music was popular but not lasting. All the same, their magic was restored in films, Amrapali and Teesri Kasam.

Composer Roshan also composed unforgettable qawwalis in Barsaat ki Raat and Taj Mahal. He also composed melodious numbers in Anokhi Raat (O re taal mile), in Chitrlekha (Man re tu kahe na dheer dhare) and in Manta (Rahen na rahen hum). Jaidev also composed melodies like 'Raat bhi hai kuchh bheegi bheegi' in Mujhe Jeene Do and in Hum Dono (Abhi na jao chhod kar and Main zindagi ka saath nibhata chala gaya). Khyyam

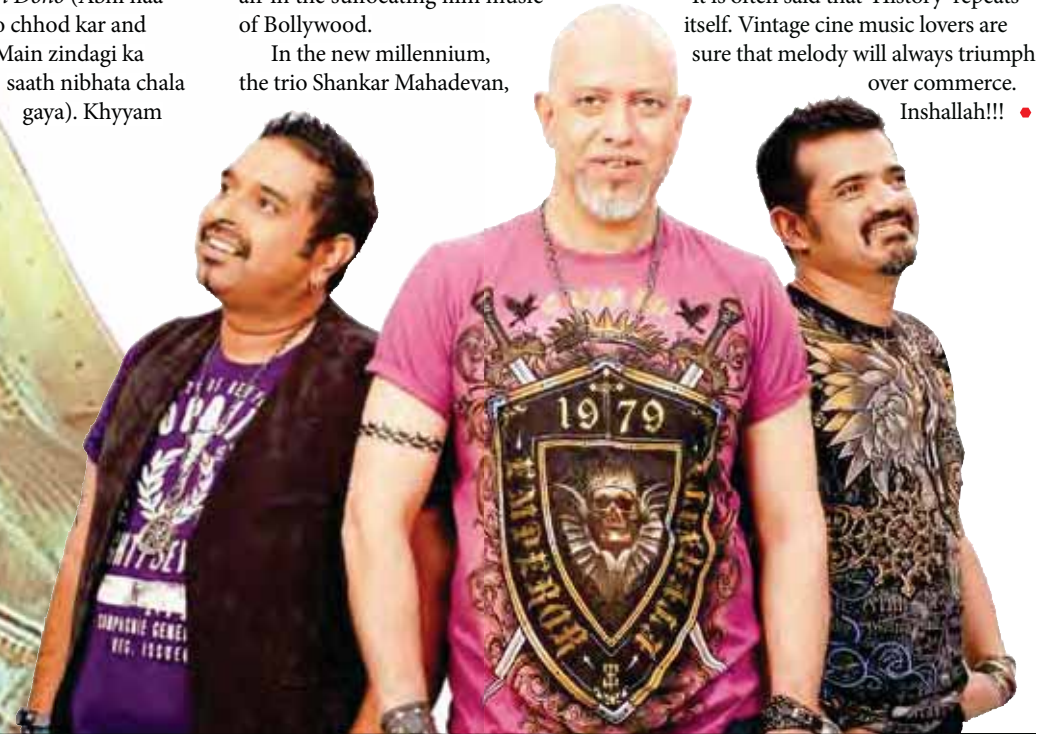
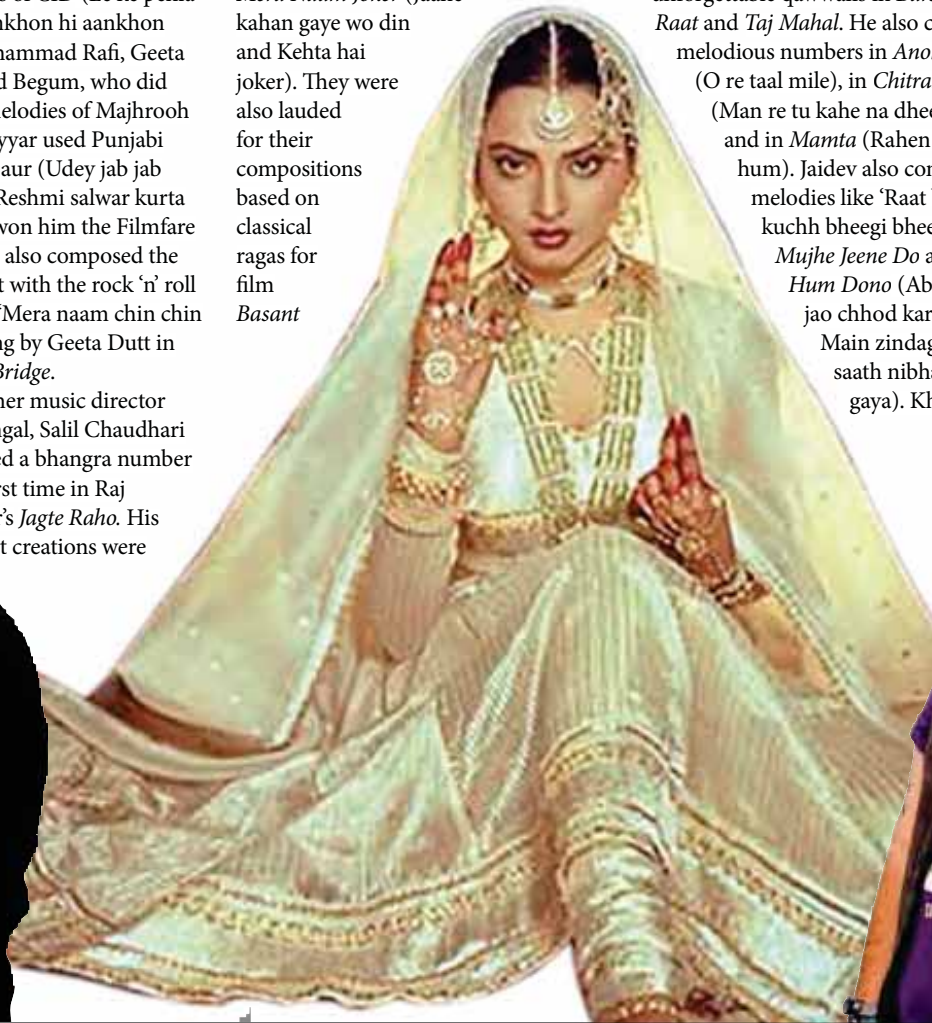
gave music in lesser films but it was everlasting - be it the compositions of Phir Subah Hogi, Umrao Jaan, Razia Sultan or Kabhi Kabhi. In the 1970s, Rahul Dev Burman, Kalyanji Anandji and Laxmikant Pyarelal evolved their own distinct style and set a new trend.

In the 1980s, the taste of Indian audiences changed drastically. Sex and violence replaced the socially relevant cinema. In such films, music had no significant role to play. Item numbers became a must in every film. Music became an industry within an industry. Sometimes one or two catchy numbers were noticed but these were ephemeral. The music aficionados recall the 1950s and 60s as the golden era of Hindi film music. The decline started by the mid-70s, but by the end of the 20th century, AR Rehman came as a fresh air in the suffocating film music of Bollywood.

In the new millennium, the trio Shankar Mahadevan,

Ehsaan Noorani and Loy Mendonsa took the lead from AR Rehman and offered stirring music in Mission Kashmir, Dil Chahata Hai, and Tare Zameen Par. They gave two fresh versions of the numbers of film Don (Khaye ke paan Banaras wala and Ye mera dil payar ka deewana) that passed the litmus test of the audience. So did Vishal Shekhar and Saleem Suleiman show great possibilities in their compositions? Vishal Bhardwaj's music in film Machhis, Maqbool and Omkara were exemplary creations. Amit Trivedi's numbers in Dev D (Ye tera emotional atyachar) and in Wake Up Sid (Ek tara) created its own niche. After Jaddan Bai, Saraswati Devi and Usha Khanna, another female composer Sneha Khanwalkar gave pleasing music in Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye! and Love Sex and Dhokha.

It is often said that 'History' repeats itself. Vintage cine music lovers are sure that melody will always triumph over commerce. Inshallah!!!



खुशियों का सृजन  
समृद्धि की वृद्धि

जलविद्युत से भारत को  
ऊर्जावान बनाते हुए

मिनी रत्न श्रेणी-I का दर्जा प्राप्त भारत सरकार का उद्यम

जलविद्युत परियोजनाओं की परिकल्पना से संचालन तक का 40 वर्षों से अधिक का अनुभव

रेटिंग एजेंसियों द्वारा 'एएए' की रेटिंग

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# Putting affordable housing on the FAST TRACK

In the backdrop of India facing a massive urban housing shortage, the government took a major reform initiative focusing on affordable housing

VINOD BEHL

The three-year term of the Modi government is marked by its commitment to ensuring development for all, through its progressive approach of 'Reform, Perform & Transform', putting an end to years of policy paralysis, through good governance.

Fully realising that urban development by way of boosting real estate, housing and infrastructure, is a key to economic development, NDA government's major focus on these vital sectors, with a view to reforming the economy and ensuring long-term sustainable growth, is showing visible results.

A number of landmark reforms and policy initiatives taken by the government in line with its vision have paid rich dividends, belying the claims of critics that the government's economic development programmes have largely remained stagnant on the ground and their benefits are not reaching the people. The government's intention to give a fillip to urban development was clearly reflected in its first full-fledged budget, in which allocation for infrastructure development was hiked by Rs 70,000 crore, besides creating a Rs 4,000 crore National Investment & Infrastructure Fund and earmarking Rs 22,000 crore for housing and urban development. And in the following budget, a massive Rs 2.31 lakh crore was made available for roads, highways and railways. In this year's budget, in a bid to put housing (especially affordable housing), on the fast track, the government undertook far-reaching reforms to accord it the status of infrastructure.

It is significant to mention that over the last three years, the central assistance of Rs 18,500 crore per annum was given for urban infrastructure development as against Rs 9,850 crore a year during 10 years of the UPA regime. In fact, immediately after taking over in May 2014, the NDA government set out on its reform agenda by addressing the long pending issue of liberalising FDI in real estate and construction sector, to ensure better access to foreign funding for housing. As the government has done away with unnecessary restrictions on the flow of NRI and foreign capital, the liberalised FDI policy has helped boost fund flows in a big way. According to United Nations' World Investment Report 2016, India has attracted a record \$5.7 billion of FDI inflows in real estate, besides receiving \$32 billion in private equity funding. The ushering in of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) reform is set to further bring in much-needed funding to the sector.

In the backdrop of India facing a massive urban housing shortage of 18.78 million units, the government took a major reform initiative - 'Housing for All by 2022' - focusing on affordable/low-cost housing. This mission for urban housing is aimed at promoting affordable housing and housing for weaker sections of society, through credit-linked subsidy, PPP, subsidy for beneficiary-led individual house construction, besides slum rehabilitation. And for this purpose, a special provision of Rs 4,000 crore was made for National Housing Bank, besides tax breaks for home buyers and property developers. Hundred per cent service tax exemption was extended to affordable housing developers, besides providing income tax incentives. With the inclusion of EWS and slum redevelopment under CSR, developers got entitlement to 100 per cent tax deduction. The reform to provide infrastructure status to affordable housing was made to enhance credit flow, with a view to boost the construction of affordable and low-cost homes by the private sector. HDFC bank Chairman, Deepak Parekh, has lauded the reforms and tax sops which have drawn big players including large corporates to housing, especially affordable housing.

The government complemented it with mortgage reforms to give a further push to affordable housing. In addition to affecting over 150 bps cut in interest rates, the RBI introduced a new Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate (MCLR) for speedier transmission of rate cuts to home buyers. The new Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) broadened the scope of interest subsidy to cover those having an annual income of Rs 18 lakh and availing a maximum home loan of 12 lakh, with a view to benefit more middle-income people.

In the context of Housing for All, the real game-changing reform done by Modi government is Real Estate Regulation Act (RERA), that had been hanging fire for almost a decade.

RERA (operational from May 1, 2017), that empowers and protects property consumers, will help make homes affordable to the masses. Aimed at regulating real estate, with fair and transparent transactions, it will also boost investors' confidence. The passage of Benami Transaction Prohibition Bill, together with measures to check influx and circulation of black money, including demonetisation, not only had a sobering effect on land and property prices but also boosted investor sentiment. The GST reform, set to be implemented later this year, will also have a similar impact on real estate, as single uniform tax regime will bring in transparency and predictability, besides reduction in tax management expenses and compliance costs.

There is a paradigm shift in the government's strategy for urban transformation by improving urban governance through focused reforms for better service delivery. The focus is now on achieving better resource utilisation and targeted result through area-based development against open-ended and project-based approach in the past. This new urban development approach has shown results. As part of this strategy to accelerate urban infrastructure for inclusive and sustainable development, urban missions like AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation), PMAY, Smart City Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission, City Development & Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY), Urban Transport, have been launched which have made considerable progress.

Under AMRUT, projects worth over Rs 10,000 crores have already been awarded for execution, out of a total of 77,000 crores, approved for entire mission till 2019-20 for providing drinking water to 2 crore urban households in 500 mission cities, besides augmenting water supply to 135 litres per capita per day, expanding sewage and drainage systems and non-motorised transport. The Smart City Mission aimed at improving the quality of life of 13 crore urban people in 100 cities, has made good progress. A total investment of Rs 1,33,368 crore has also been approved in 60 mission cities, about 150 projects worth Rs 1,600 crore in 20 cities are close to completion and projects worth Rs 30,000 crore would be either under execution or awarded by June 2017. Swachh Bharat Mission, being implemented at a cost of Rs 62,009 crores to benefit 32 crore urban people in terms of improved sanitation, has already succeeded in making 633 cities Open Defecation Free (ODF) out of statutory 4041 cities and towns to be made ODF by October 2019. Already 31 lakh individual and 1.25 lakh community toilets have been constructed and a target of 100 per cent door to door collection and transportation of municipal waste achieved in 3995, out of a total of 81,015 urban wards. As part of Urban Transport Mission, about 68 km of the new metro section has been opened and 5 new metro projects, spanning over 143 km have been sanctioned in Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Lucknow, Chennai Extn and Pune, at a cost of Rs 41,571 crores. Plans

are afoot to build metros in 50 cities.

That Modi government's reformist policies are on track to put India on high growth trajectory, is confirmed by Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) which says that India is poised to see impact investment worth up to \$40 billion by 2025 as the country is in a sweet spot, with high potential to deliver solutions. On the economic front, political stability and structural reforms have paid rich dividends as India continues to be the fastest growing economy. With IMF projecting that after securing a coveted place among Big Five, India is well on its way to breach the \$3.5 trillion mark, overtaking Germany by 2022, to take 4th place in the world, after US, Japan & China. And a spate of real estate and housing reforms have firmly put real estate on the recovery path, with BSE Realty Index gaining 52 percent this year.

Notwithstanding all these achievements, the challenge before the Modi government is to not just ensure that the reforms undertaken so far reach the grassroots level, to benefit the common man, but also to carry out its unfinished agenda. The immediate challenge is to ensure a smooth take-off of RERA and GST. Equally significant is the effective implementation of 'Housing for All', to meet the target of building 50 million homes by 2022, ushering in new reforms like single window mechanism to fast-track clearances for promoting ease of doing business, rental housing and reforms related to labour, stamp duty and property registration. •

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# Easing gridlock in URBAN TRAFFIC

India's craze to own cars and rule the roads is driven by lust, greed and pride. This mainstream and luxurious mode has led to an irretrievable street tangle and high traffic casualties

K V VENKATASUBRAMANIAN

Urban transport in India's sprawling cities presents a chaotic scenario today. Mobility in the four metropolitan capitals is a nightmare, despite the progressing networks of metro trains that promise to take you home. On the other side, the contribution of public and non-motorised transport is dismal and declining.

Kolkata, the first city to introduce the metro in 1984, is today at the tail-end, having failed to expand beyond 27 km. Mumbai is moving slowly and Chennai has just started breathing after an inordinate delay. Roads in Delhi are bursting at the seams with a medley of vehicles, as it awaits more networks this year and further expansion in the next decade. There is utter neglect of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport commuters in all cities.

India's craze to own cars and other motorised vehicles, and to rule the roads is driven by lust, greed and pride. This mainstream and luxurious transport has led to an irretrievable street tangle and high traffic casualty. It imposes an enormous burden on all in terms of energy, time and money; and also affects others' lives, as vehicle exhaust fumes further contaminate the atmosphere.

Also, motor bikes clogging roads are a big impediment. It is a cumulative vicious circle that is bound to cause disaster and ruin sustainable mobility in cities. Pollution has found a permanent abode in the country, with Delhi leading the pack. Transport modes that have experienced growth in recent years are the most polluting. Transport is the key sector where carbon dioxide emissions seem difficult to reduce. India's progressive urbanisation and social disparity pose distinct challenges to climate change. Planners are just blinking.

Decongestion is the order

of the day. To decongest roads, the noose on driving to the city centres must be tightened. It is crucial to introduce and enforce car parking techniques (parallel, perpendicular, angle, double), ban parking at market places and make car owners pay heavily for idling and parking on roads. All market areas need to be designated as pedestrian zones. It is imperative to alter road geometry and increase road space.

Idling or speeding consumes fuel and pollutes the air. An idling engine can produce up to twice as many exhaust emissions, containing carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, as an engine in motion. It is illegal in many countries. But, India is yet to bring in the law. In short, use of private cars needs to be discouraged.

Scanty measures to run buses and cars on green fuel have brought little relief. Urban mobility needs to be largely decarbonised to achieve reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Electric bicycles on dedicated tracks must be incentivised for commutes to nearby destination. These can be also used for rides to shopping areas. E-rickshaws and rickshaws need to be confined to peripheries.

Governments express concern over the urban chaos. But are they serious? On one hand, they want to introduce bullet trains and on the other, they provide legal protection to e-rickshaws, expressing political sympathy.

Transport planning is anachronistic and political lobbies spring into action as scientists raise the alarm about pollution and climate change. Unfortunately, most efforts have focused on improvements in vehicle efficiency and renewing



vehicle fleets. Planning grossly lacks in strategies related to management of sustainable urban mobility and modal share. Kneer-jerk solutions crop up whenever pollution levels rise alarmingly—such as running destination buses (a new name for chartered buses) and experimenting with odd-and-even-numbered vehicles on alternate days. Perspective planning is being totally neglected. The urgent need is to introduce demand management and congestion management.

In 2011, 31 percent of India's population lived in its cities. By 2039, this is expected to rise to 50 percent. On the other hand, slums now account for a quarter of all urban housing; and it is increasing rapidly in large cities.

Hence, by the time, metro trains expand their lines and routes further, commuters would have outsmarted their availability. Therefore, an alternate mass transit system needs to be introduced soon. What are the solutions?

Perhaps, a Skytrain, the

levitating mass transit of the future, like the one being built in Tel Aviv; or a (vestibule) modern streetcar system (or tram) that uses modern light rail vehicles with 50-200 passengers per car, which can run as mass transit.

In Delhi, its sole saviour, the four metro lines, are overcrowded already. Routes expansion may solve connectivity problems. But, trans-mobility and migration of workforce from suburbs are bound to shoot up phenomenally and exert further drain on the Capital's over-stretched utilities. Already routes that have penetrated into suburbs have the same cars (coaches). These are being further extended to neighbouring states. For travelling to and from long destinations e.g. Sonapat, Meerut, Mathura and Alwar, the DMRC should change the system with a faster commuter train that can be used interchangeably with the city metro—like in many countries. It will be faster than the metro, with

fewer stops and long distances between stations, mostly above ground. For increased passenger density, these should have bigger and wider coaches, even double-decked, with cushioned seats. Metro planning requires a thorough overhaul and should stop being in stand-alone mode. And in cities and towns, a new concept in metro planning is required.

It is a pity that metros and local trains (EMUs) are not linked. Instead of local trains, street-level light rail transit (LRT) may be planned and can be integrated with metro stations. Or launch monorails could be launched. In either case, the land vacated/released may be put to better use environmentally.

India may not immediately require Elon Musk's on-demand, "energy-efficient" hyperloop—high-speed travel in pods inside a partial-vacuum loop—a new way to move people and things at airline speeds for the price of a bus ticket. But, definitely, a last-mile connectivity that can be solved with

EZ10, a driverless, 12-passenger smart electric shuttle designed to cover short distances and predefined routes in multi-use environments. It can be operated in metro mode, bus mode and on-demand service mode like taxi. Also, pods, connecting metro stations, for short distances can be considered. Definitely, an utterly fresh approach is required.

Clearly, sustainable mobility will be a big issue. India is yet to develop a transport system that is efficient, reliable, affordable and accessible to all. Governments lack a clear vision on sustainable mobility and an integrated move. Mobility planning is being messed up by a multiplicity of authorities and departments involved in urban transport. With conflicting agendas, their understanding of the issues and efforts are not realistic.

India's national urban transport policy needs a massive revamp. The policy should aim at providing an integrated multimodal transport in cities, taking into consideration the varying demands from corridor to corridor and capacity of

different modes. To offer a seamless journey to users, the public transport network must be city-wide, coordinated and well-integrated with efficient interchange infrastructure. To enable commuters to choose their network, and to avoid conflicting movements and save time, this requires not only physical integration but also network, fare, information and institutional integration. A new department focusing on public transport should be set up immediately. Is the Government up for this monumental task?

Even if Government attempts to revolutionise transport, real transformation can be effected only by an enlightened public. Imposition of any number of laws can make only a small dent if vehicle users either circumvent the law or escape after paying even a hefty fine. Travel behaviour in cities ought to drastically change. More importantly, unless mindsets mature, roads will be ruled by the unruly.

K V Venkatasubramanian is an independent journalist



# Kolkata: Nostalgic love

This city of intellectuals, eclectic interests and odd innovations, moves on – Cheers to its spirit, soaked in sensitivity, modesty, curiosity and continuity...

KAUSHIKBRATA BANERJEE

For a quintessential Bengali staying away from his native city Kolkata, the complexities of life and monotony of daily routine never take away the resplendence of nostalgia.

For this sandesh-loving species of inherently agitated souls, who are much more than being sentimental about Durga Puja, New Market, misti doi, football, politics, Coffee House, Nahoums, Flurys, Victoria Memorial and Rabindranath... any reference to that land he belongs to or even a faint hint of its joys and he brims over with memories.

Thoughts of "shei din gulo" come

crashing down as his mind, in an instance, traverses to far away Kolkata, with nostalgic yearnings for spending hours with friends and family, indulging in *adda*, and street food like phuchkas, egg rolls and fish cutlets, visiting Nandan, the theatre hall, enjoying playing football at the maidan, watching films of the detective Feluda, reading Tagore's masterful writing or pandal hopping during Durga Puja.

The charm of such flashbacks is very enduring and in most cases prepare him to survive a lifetime without losing his identity.

An interior narrative, whose echoes he still discovers in his sleep, has no prototypes. From trying to cope with the belated stirrings of ambition to

combating the ever-existent mood of feeling forlorn, his longings are nostalgia personified – an euphemism, often for the world within him to negotiate and move on. And desire never to forget.

Nostalgia itself has been the focus of enquiry for years now across the globe. It is not until recently that this mental process has been associated with meaningfulness, connectedness and continuity to the past and it is like a vitamin and an antidote to those lonely states of being. It is no longer considered a malady but is now treated as a profoundly rooting experience of some sort and slowly through the years, this nostalgia has become a powerful stimulant to feel optimistic about the future. No wonder, it is so central to human experience.

For the nomadic Bengali, his lethargic and lackadaisical mood are the other side of patience and composure. And nostalgia, to add to this, is unbinding and unrestrained. There is a charm to the overtly-criticised portrayal of the Bengali temperament that he loves to

cultivate. And so does his nostalgia!

Sovabazar Rajbari's Soumit Narayan Deb says: "I miss my childhood days. The whole paraphernalia used to revolve around our house, Sovabazar Rajbari (Boro Taraf). I miss the Ganga dips and the rickshaw rides. On specific occasions, my father used to take us out for Chinese food. At that time, Chinese restaurants were very rare, you see. It used to be like a festival. For days, we used to chat about it. All my schoolmates used to show great interest regarding the outing and I used to narrate every minute detail, adding my own embellishments, of course. Those days used to be so much fun. The feeling used to be very different. Visits included those to the zoo, Indian Museum, and Rabindra Sadan, where there used to be a park-like area called Jhilmil. It used to house several species of birds, deer and rabbits. There also used to be a hanging bridge that is still there but now, it cannot be used to cross from one side to the other."

Kolkata as a cultural and intellectual hub is quite vibrant and uplifting, contrary to what Dominique Lapierre portrayed in his novel *City of Joy*. Known for its crowds and massive traffic jams, friendships are struck up in an instant over a cup of *cha*.

For a broader picture, one can visit the wholesale flower market at Mallick Ghat, under the eastern end of Howrah Bridge. Here, wind through the mountains of marigolds and jasmine that bring one hope and a different kind of faith. Just above it, after a few steps on to the bridge itself, is the space for graffiti art and Kolkata's iconic aerial shots.

For those who live in some faraway foreign land and crave unstoppably for authentic Bengali experiences, there's Bomti Iyengar, a charming art collector who lives in a great heritage building and welcomes visitors to browse through his possessions. Apart from scanning through his extensive collection, one can enjoy lunches and dinners of Bengali cuisine, hosted by him.

Heritage activist Anthony



Khatchaturian, who organises several tours covering Kolkata, attempts to give an insight into the colonial era of the place. Taking the "Ghost Walk" along Telephone Bhawan, well past midnight, with the roads all empty and barren, would indeed be quite challenging. The Standard Life Assurance Building, its colonial architecture and its Biblical connect, looks quite enchanting at night, leave alone its majesty in the daytime. Then comes the famous Garstin Place, where once stood the old All India Radio Studios. Every Calcuttan has heard of ghost stories from here and the studio was forced to shift to its current location after the workers at the station refused to work there. Then there is the GPO (General Post Office) and the mighty Town Hall, followed by Kolkata's very own iconic Writers' Building.

With less traffic around midnight, the city becomes a walkers' paradise. Traversing the silent, desolate lanes and by-lanes of this age-old city can be extremely interesting. Next time, my NRI friends, when you visit Kolkata, try to gather your courage and take this walk. It may not be down your memory lane but could well be one to remember for a lifetime.

Kolkata, for those in the know, offers

a lot of variety in every sense of the term. From its buzzing market places to Asia's largest green lungs, the maidan, or a nature park in the wetlands, from its lessons on tolerance and co-existence to the political violence, from its soulful music to the lip-smacking street food, from its cultural affluence to its imposing Colonial-era majesty — the city has it all. It moves at its own pace. Slowly, carefully, and the world can wait. It has its own pride and lives within its means. And as Anthony would put it: "Everything that happened in India first happened here, be it gas streetlights, trams and even the modern-day Metro. It is very important for Calcuttans themselves to discover what lies at their doorstep, leave alone others."

So, this city of intellectuals, interests and innovations, moves on... Cheers to its spirit, soaked in sensitivity, modesty, curiosity and unending continuity, and so the overpowering experience lives on in our hearts.

*Dhonyobaad...* Many of us who live in some other land as well as in obscurity, would definitely be back for another round of drinks at Oly Pub. Soon enough. Because no one likes to be away from a city that generates so much warmth, emotion and nostalgia! •



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Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

# Keeping the home fires burning

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, through Ujjwala, is taking clean and green LPG to millions of poor households



in India, especially in rural areas, due to the use of unclean fuels. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, through Ujjwala, is taking this clean and green LPG fuel to millions of economically underprivileged households. Under the aegis of the Ministry, the three public sector oil-marketing companies (OMCs), namely, Indian Oil, HPCL and BPCL, are playing a pivotal role in the physical execution of the scheme. About 100 million households use unclean traditional biomass fuels such as firewood, dried cow dung, agricultural waste, charcoal etc. as cooking fuel. The toxic smoke emitted by these fuels contains particulate matter and many harmful chemicals that not only cause reddened eyes, but also choke and corrode lungs, causing several ailments, including acute and chronic respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases. The smoke also contains carcinogens – chemicals that cause malignancies, especially lung cancer. Apart from women, children also suffer from this harmful kitchen smoke. Inhaling this

harmful smoke is equivalent to smoking 400 cigarettes per hour. Women and children also often walk long distances to collect firewood from remote and lonely places, which is not only a strenuous task but also risky from the point of view of personal safety. Scorpion or snakebites, or attacks by animals and predatory men are a constant threat while collecting wood. Rainy season and extreme heat and cold adds to their woes. Preparing cow dung cakes (gobar upla) is a time-consuming chore. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) aims to banish household air pollution (HAP) from kitchens. Under the PMUY 5 crore families living below poverty line (BPL) are to be provided deposit-free LPG connections over a period of three financial years, starting from FY 2016-17. The scheme has a budgetary allocation of Rs 8,000 crore. Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled

Tribes (ST) and other economically underprivileged sections of the society are given priority. Beneficiaries have been identified on the basis of Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC-2011) data. States with LPG coverage lower than the national average as on January 1, 2016, are being given priority in for releasing connections. Every PMUY LPG connection is free of cost and includes the security deposit of a 14.2 kg LPG cylinder, pressure regulator, suraksha hose, DGCC booklet and administration & installation cost for distributor. LPG – a clean cooking fuel, is women's health ticket to get rid of household air pollution and its concomitant health issues. LPG brings joy into cooking. There will be no more smoky kitchens, drudgery of collecting firewood or preparing dried cow dung cakes. Cooking takes less time, so women can spend this saved time to pursue other gainful activities. PMUY primarily serves rural

womenfolk, who are now increasingly enjoying the experience of individual identity, as they are being issued LPG connections in their own names based on their Aadhaar cards and bank accounts. PMUY has thus truly given them dignity and a renewed confidence to face the world. PMUY has become synonymous with women empowerment and social inclusion. Parallel effort on multiple fronts and help from different quarters have ensured brisk implementation of PMUY. PMUY has been implemented by meticulous planning, time bound and in mission-mode manner. There has been continuous engagement and support by the Ministry for regular follow-up based on on-ground feedback. Ministry has been closely interacting with Oil Marketing Companies and their District Nodal Officers (DNOs). Significant IT developments at Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and

National Informatics Centre (NIC) has also helped in its speedy implementation. Daily MIS reporting on industry basis through "PMIS"; Dedicated website for PMUY ([www.pmujiwalayojana.com](http://www.pmujiwalayojana.com)); Toll-free number for PMUY (18002666696) have been also been employed. Freedom fighters, ex-servicemen, other prominent personalities, NGOs and self-help groups have been involved by way of special drives. A 360° media campaign was launched in regional languages through newspapers, TV, radio, banners, hoarding/standees, social media, etc. to create awareness.

**Safety First**  
Education about safe usage of LPG for first-time users is vital, as most of the PMUY beneficiaries are illiterate and unaware of safe LPG usage practices. Pictorial safety posters displaying Dos & Don'ts of LPG usage are distributed to all beneficiaries at the time of release of the connection.

Rural Marketing LPG teams of OMCs have conceptualised "Train the Trainers" workshops for field officers, DNOs and proactive distributors, who will in turn train the Anganwadi, primary healthcare workers, etc. at the grassroots level. A special kit comprising posters and the booklet 'Gyandee' in local languages, covers safe use of LPG equipment and acts as a ready reference material for master trainers.

Adding a novel dimension to the endeavour are street plays (nukkad natak), interspersed with interactive sessions, which are increasing safety awareness in an innovative and engaging way. Special 'Safety Clinics' are being organised in rural regions to 'demonstrate' the safe use of LPG. Safety and Insurance Card is given to each PMUY beneficiary. 2-Crore Mark in users has been crossed. As on May 1, 2017, PMUY connections crossed the 2-Crore mark, far exceeding the target for the period.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was launched by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on May 1st, 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh. The initiative, in line with the dream of the Prime Minister of creating smoke-less villages across the country, has come as a moment of pride for the women in BPL-households for getting LPG connection as an identity of their own and to lead a smoke-free, less polluted, convenient and healthy life. An adult woman member of BPL family, identified through Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data, is given a deposit free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs. 1600 per connection by Government of India, under this scheme.

**Why Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana?**

The daily act of cooking is a major health hazard for millions of women



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# NAND GHAR

## Readying India for the future

Providing early childhood care and pre-primary education to all would create the necessary stimulus to make this the truly Indian century

ANIL AGARWAL



The year 2016 was a momentous year towards Agenda 2030, set by United Nations to combat poverty, climate change and inequality. For the first time, we will have a common global framework to not only measure progress against the goals, but it also paves the way to understand the impact being made by the investment of governments and responsible businesses on society. It is important to mention here that our Hon'ble Prime Minister, in his first speech at the United Nations, mentioned the importance of Agenda 2030 in poverty alleviation. It, therefore, comes as no surprise to me when this government launched programs like Swachh Bharat and Beti Bachao-Beti padhao, which are at the centre of their thinking.

The year 2030 is a very significant year for India, as India's share in world population will peak in that year. 250 million young men and women will join the workforce that year, the highest anywhere in the world. How efficient and productive this workforce will be, would be the outcomes of decisions we take today. A majority of them today will be found in Anganwadis around

you and how they are performing today will be a window to our future.

A little context here is important. Every year, nearly 8.7 crore children across India and nearly 2 crore women are covered daily through a network of nearly 13 lakh Anganwadis across India, as part of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) under the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD). Jointly funded by the state and the centre, the program enables delivery of nutrition to growing children, pregnant and lactating mothers, ensures pre-primary education for children as well as ensuring delivery of primary health care. This well-meaning program has no parallels in the world in terms of scale and ambition and its role in shaping the future of India is often understated.

Every year we lament the pitfalls in our education system when the Annual State of Education report (ASER) is released. One area that often fails to find mention and advocacy is that of pre-school education. The effects of poor development in early childhood have life-long consequences, setting children on a lower trajectory and adversely impacting the country's social and economic development. No wonder, the World Bank calls investing in early childhood education one of the smartest decisions that a country can make. As we attract capital from the world to invest in India for the creation



of jobs, the onus becomes stronger to create a workforce that is capable of taking up these jobs. The government's push to Swachh Bharat and Skill India are important enablers for a healthier and skilled workforce. A similar push towards our Anganwadis is a pressing demand that can no longer be ignored.

Our Anganwadis are in need of a massive upgradation. A Niti

Ayog report pointed out to the large deficiencies in basic amenities such as drinking water, electricity and toilets. The status of implementation of preschool education guidelines is also not very encouraging. As partners of the WCD Ministry, we are now working to create a new Model of Anganwadis called Nand Ghars (home of the infants). A Nand Ghar is equipped with

solar panels, water purifiers, modules for learning and toilets. We have seen an increase in attendance of children, and the early indicators for pre-primary learning look promising as well.

Opening this space to the vibrant edu-tech startup space in the country is one of the biggest areas of opportunity. As high-speed wireless networks penetrate across every nook and

corner, the government must shift its paradigm from being the implementor to a regulator. By creating frameworks and curriculum guidelines for early childhood care and recognising Pre-primary education in the right to education would create the necessary stimulus that our children need to make this century truly the Indian century. •

The author is Chairman, Vedanta Group



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