

# millenniumpost



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ADB SANCTIONS  
LOAN WORTH  
RS 2,280 CRORE  
**PG4**



NHRC NOTICE TO  
AP GOVT, HRD ON  
STRIPPING OF 88  
SCHOOL STUDENTS **PG5**



HAPPY OPENING  
DILEMMA AS INDIA AIM  
TO SEAL SERIES AGAINST  
SRI LANKA **PG14**



'TO DO COMEDY,  
YOU NEED TO  
BE A GOOD  
ACTOR' **PG16**

## 4-year-old girl sexually assaulted by two teachers inside school premises

**OUR CORRESPONDENT**

**KOLKATA:** A four-year-old girl was allegedly sexually abused by two teachers of a reputed private school at Ranikuthi under Jadavpur police station area. The victim who has been admitted to SSKM hospital in Kolkata is still in a state of shock. The police have arrested the two accused after the victim identified the two teachers from a photograph shown to her.

State Education minister Partha Chatterjee has ordered a probe into the incident. Expressing his shock, Chatterjee said, "The accused should be subjected to exemplary punishment as per law. The guardians sent their wards to reputed private

schools with the hope that they get a quality education. I have heard that a similar incident had occurred in the school three years back. The incident has made it clear that the school authorities have not learnt from their mistake."

Prodded by the Education department the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) is holding an enquiry into the matter. "I have already sent a three-member team who will probe the entire matter and will submit a report within 24 hours," Kalyanmoy Ganguly, president of WBBSE said.

According to police sources on Thursday, the minor after she returned to her residence at Vidyasagar Colony in Garia

complained of severe pain in her private parts and started weeping. She also informed that she was having difficulty passing urine. Initially, her parents thought that there might be some infection and took her to the local doctor. However, immediately after examining the child, the doctor suspected that there might have been a sexual assault on her. The girl's parents wasted no time and quickly admitted the child to the gynaecological ward of SSKM. A complaint was accordingly lodged at Jadavpur police station.

As per police sources, the four-year-old girl was lured into the toilet with the promise of offering chocolate and then was sexually abused by the physical edu-



cation teacher and another fellow teacher. "We have arrested both of the accused Avishek Roy and Mohammad Mofijuddin by evidence that we have gathered from the spot," Vishal Garg, Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) said. Police are slapping Protection of Children from Sex-

ual Offence (POCSO) Act on the accused. Sources in SSKM hospital said that the girl's condition is stable, but she is still in a state of shock. A three-member medical team has been constituted with doctors from gynaecology, paediatrics and forensic medicine departments and her medical test was conducted.

The minor's uniform has also been sent for forensic examination.

Guardians protested in the school premises alleging lack of security and demanded the resignation of the Principal Sharmistha Nath.

The victim's parents complained of negligence on the part of the school. "We are paying an exorbitant amount as tuition

fees. The school charges more than a lakh during admission. But I am sorry to say; there is lack of security. I will never send her to this school," the girl's anguished father said.

The school Principal said that we were informed of the incident after we received a call from the Jadavpur police station at around 11.30 on Thursday night. "We tried to contact the victim's father, but it was switched off. We want seven days time to inquire about the incident and accordingly take action," Nath said.

In November 2014 the school had made headlines when a bus assistant was accused of molesting a Lower KG student of the same school.

**CENTRE SYSTEMATICALLY DEPRIVING BENGAL: MAMATA**

## Basirhat to be new district soon: CM



**OUR CORRESPONDENT**

**HAROA:** Basirhat will be a new district soon, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced here on Friday afternoon and in the same breath alleged that the Centre had deprived Bengal just because she was opposing the BJP's wrongdoings.

Addressing a gathering, she said: "Basirhat will be a district soon. But you will have to give me some time as it takes some months to construct the administrative building and permission is required to set up a court."

On Thursday Banerjee had announced the formation of Sunderbans district at a meeting in Gosaba in south 24 Parganas.

She said once the district was created the people living in far-flung areas of Basirhat would be greatly benefited. It takes 35 minutes for those living near Basirhat town to reach Barasat. But, it takes Hingalganj residents two to three hours to reach Basirhat.

Coming down heavily on the BJP she said questions had been raised about her closeness to the minority commu-



PIC/MPOST

nity. Quoting Sri Ramakrishna, she said: "When water is taken from a pond, some call it aqua, some jal and some pani," she said adding "Some call mother Ma, some Amma and some Mother." "Do they regard themselves to be better Hindus than Swami Vivekananda who had spoken about universal religion," she asked.

Banerjee alleged that the Centre was against her just because she was opposing the wrongdoings of BJP. "The Centre has stopped funding many proj-

ects just because I have opposed some of the wrong policies of BJP. I will stand with my head held high, and no one can force me to accept what is wrong." She further alleged that Centre had stopped disbursing funds for schemes under ICDS. However, the state government ensured the continuance of the schemes by managing funds from its coffers. The Centre has not paid any money to flood-hit farmers. "This is unjustified but we have given them support."

Banerjee maintained that BJP had failed to bring black money from foreign countries but forced many Indian people in business to move to other countries. "They cannot bring back black money but have forced businessmen to go abroad." She urged local people to identify outsiders loitering aimlessly in the area and inform the police immediately. "I have also asked the police to step up vigil and attend to such complaints immediately," she said adding "some people are trying to woo local people and local clubs. Lodge complaints against them immediately. BJP is trying to trigger riots. Riots cause loss of lives and we are against it."

The Chief Minister said the state government had given scholarships to 57 lakh students belonging to scheduled caste and tribal communities and another 31 lakh scholarships to the minorities. In the health sector, treatment in the state-run hospitals is free, and through various schemes, the state government has tried to help people belonging to all strata of life.

**AOs ASKED TO ABIDE BY GUIDELINES**

## Taxmen asked not to exceed brief during scrutiny inquiries

**MPOST BUREAU**

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has warned the taxman against undertaking "roving or fishing" inquiries in the name of scrutiny assessments and asked them to adhere to its guidelines scrupulously.

The policy-making body of the department, in a stern two-page communication to the taxman, has asked assessing officers to not "travel beyond the issue" and not to randomly or unauthorisedly expand the scope of a limited scrutiny procedure.

The Income Tax department, in cases of suspicion of tax evasion and under-reporting of income, is empowered to open a scrutiny assessment of the assessee under the law and the procedure entails submission of some documents and hearing between the two sides.

Taxpayers have complained about this action in the past, saying complying with this procedure has been very cumbersome and harassing for them at times.

The CBDT has maintained that it only brings less than one percent of ITRs or cases under the rigorous scrutiny procedure in a given assessment year, either full or limited.

The letter, issued to all the I-T ranges in the country, has said that such acts give a bad name to the tax department and complaints in this regard are being viewed "very seriously".

"Instances have come to notice of the CBDT where some assessing officers (AOs) are travelling beyond their jurisdiction while making assessments in limited scrutiny cases by initiating inquiries on new issues without complying with mandatory requirements of the relevant CBDT instructions.



Some assessing officers (AOs) are travelling beyond their jurisdiction

Idea behind such stipulations was to enforce checks and balances

"These instances have been viewed very seriously by the CBDT..." the letter said.

Given this, it said, it is "once again reiterated that the AO should abide by the instructions of the CBDT while completing scrutiny assessments and should be scrupulous about maintenance of note sheets in assessment folders".

The letter states that recently a team of CBDT inspectors, on receipt of a complaint, found that in one such case there were glaring irregularities on the part of the AO as he had not recorded the reasons to expand the scope of the scrutiny against the taxpayer and no approval was taken from the supervisory officer for doing so.

This gave rise to a very strong suspicion of mala fide intentions," the letter said adding the CBDT has placed the officer concerned under suspension.

The CBDT said the guidelines are framed by it so that the AO "cannot travel beyond" the issues for which the case was selected.

"The idea behind such stipulations was to enforce checks and balances upon the powers of an AO to make fishing and roving inquiries in cases selected for limited scrutiny," the CBDT said.

India needs to 'cherish and nurture' its Muslims

BARACK OBAMA

In today's paper

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**AIR INDIA PLANE PURCHASE**

## SC asks CBI to complete probe in six months

**MPOST BUREAU**

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday directed the CBI to complete in the next six months its probe into allegations of irregularities in purchase or hiring of 111 aircraft for Air India for a whopping Rs 70,000 crore when Praful Patel was the civil aviation minister.

The top court refused to accept a plea of the CBI seeking time to complete its probe saying "the investigation has to be completed in days, not in years."

A bench of justices Adarsh Kumar Goel and U U Lalit said that the apex court had earlier asked the CBI to complete its investigation in June, but it failed to do so.

"It's around one year since the last order of apex court on January 5. This is sufficient time to complete the investigation. Can you give us any deadline how much time you need to complete the investigation," the bench asked Additional Solicitor General P S Narasimha appearing for the CBI.

The ASG said that CBI has already registered an FIR in the case and is investigating all aspects but since there are accused, who are residing abroad, letter rogatory needs to be sent.

"Two years time should be given to complete the probe on all the

aspects," the ASG said.

To this, the bench said, "No, it cannot be done, you complete the probe in next six months. Investigations have to be completed in days not years."

The top court had on January 5, asked the CBI to complete its probe by June into the allegations of "serious irregularities" in purchase or hiring of 111 aircrafts.

It had also asked the agency to look into the fresh allegations made by NGO CPIL that Patel made Air India buy a biometric system for a hefty sum of Rs 1,000 crore.

The Centre had earlier told the court that most of the allegations referred to in the petition are a result of adverse comments made by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament (PAC).

It had said that some of the observations in the case were made by senior BJP leader Murlu Manohar Joshi, as the chairman of PAC, in February 2014 and a detailed response was filed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation on January 19, 2015.

The NGO had earlier told the court that Canada's superior court had convicted a person for paying a bribe to the then minister for the purchase of the biometric system for a whopping cost of Rs 1,000 crore for the airline.

## HC dismisses hawala dealer Qureshi's plea against arrest

**OUR CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Friday rejected the plea of controversial businessman Moin Akhtar Qureshi against his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and P S Teji agreed with the ED's contention that there was "no illegality" in his arrest and that a petition of habeas corpus was not maintainable.

A habeas corpus plea is a petition which is filed to ensure that a person under arrest is brought before a court which

will determine whether the detention is legal.

The Centre and the ED had opposed the plea, saying questioning of his arrest was an "abuse" of the legal process, claiming there were serious charges of hawala transactions against him.

The government had also refuted Qureshi's allegations that he was unauthorisedly detained by the ED in the money laundering case, saying he was arrested under statutory provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and remanded to ED custody by a competent trial court.

## Delhi newborn declared 'dead', later found alive

**YOGESH KANT**

**NEW DELHI:** A baby declared dead along with his still-born twin by an upscale Delhi hospital, and handed over to his parents in a plastic package, was found breathing when he was about to be buried. The monumental botch-up has come at a time another private hospital is under the scanner for overcharging the parents of a seven-year-old girl who died of dengue.

Police have registered a case under Section 308 of the IPC which governs cases related to attempt to commit culpable

homicide and is punishable by up to seven years in jail.

The Delhi government ordered an inquiry into the "criminal negligence" with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal promising "strict action".

The parents, who were devastated by the news broken to them by Max Hospital (Shalimar Bagh) on Thursday, were shocked when they found one of the twins wriggling.

"We tore the packet; there were 2-3 clothes and polythene bags. The kid was still breathing. We rushed the baby to a nearby nursing home in Pitampura," the father told reporters.



The mother of the boy-girl twins, born on Thursday morning, was brought to the hospital from a nursing home in Paschim Vihar, police said.

"An inquiry regarding the said incident is to be initiated, and a preliminary report is to be submitted within 72 hours and a final report within a week," an order, signed by city health minister Satyendra Jain, said.

Reacting to the incident,

Health Minister JP Nadda said he had directed the Delhi government to look into the matter and take necessary action.

"On Thursday, we received a call at Shalimar Bagh Police Station. The callers said one Varsha, wife of Ashish, was referred to the Max Hospital from a nursing home in Paschim Vihar on account of the possibility of premature delivery.

"She was admitted there on November 28. The doctors had told the family that she was serious and the chances of survival of the twins were slim, as she was six months pregnant," police said in a statement.

Based on a Moti Nandi novel

**INDRAJIT ROY PRESENTS**  
**LUST. ENVY. DECEPTION.**

**Directed by Reshmi Mitra**

Releasing on 8th December in theatres near you

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SHREYA DAS

# Get your yearly dose of PUPPY THERAPY

Dogs jumping through a loop, playing dead on command, sniffing out bombs and pouncing on snatchers. See every cute trick at Pet Fed 2017 happening this weekend at NSIC Grounds, Okhla

After looking at cute puppies and doggies all year, finally, the time has come when we can actually go and look at those puppy eyes, their tricks and furry wagging tails this weekend i.e., December 2-3. India's biggest pet festival - Pet Fed - is back this year in Delhi's NSIC Grounds, Okhla and this time, it's bigger than ever.

The year 2017 will count many firsts for the cutest gathering at Pet Fed 2017 will also happen in Mumbai's MMRDA Grounds, BKC on December 16 and 17.

The allegation that it will be the cutest weekend of the year with 3000+ pets (dog, cat, hamsters and guinea pigs included) should be enough to get you there, but the immense stature of activities planned is the extra nudge that will have you rushing to book the tickets now.

Completely different from the previous editions, the activity ring this year is lined with displays like the Security

Dog Show, Good Dog Citizen Program and an Obedience Display. "In the security dog show, we are trying to show that dogs can be more than our companion. During the two days, you can witness multiple acts in which a dog is sniffing out a bomb and a whole scene enactment in which a dog pounces on a robber who snatches something from a lady," informed Akshay Gupta, Founder and CEO of Pet Fed.

If your pet has some cool tricks up their sleeves, enroll them for the Pet's Got Talent, happening for the first time in India and show off how well they can jump through a loop, play dead on command, blue cards or any such cool trick. Your pet can even try their paw at the Fashion Show and Temptation Alley. Cash prizes are in

store for these activities, apart from the whole act being in front of a live audience of 25,000+ pet lovers and a million people who will watch it from their homes on TV.

Set your dog's name in history, at Pet Fed 2017 powered by Dogsee, in Delhi and Mumbai, as they are attempting a Limca Book of World Record for the biggest dog gathering ever. The Off-Leash Play Area is a must drop by with your dogs for an Agility have-a-go, trampolines, ball pools and doggo slides. Do check out the Discover Dogs section as well, which is taken over by 11 dog breeds and mounted with uber cool facts. Even

though Akshay Gupta is the founder of this loved festival, he says that he never had a dog of his own but that doesn't stop him from loving and feeding the street dogs outside his house. He believes that every dog is unique in their own way and should be loved the same way. That's why this year, he has taken a small little initiative to spread the love by giving free entry to those who bring their desi dogs to the event.

"During the whole event, you will see on different occasions, different people coming and sharing their stories

with their Indie dogs. Rahul Ram, lead singer for the Indian Ocean will also be there with his Indie breed dog where he will be sharing with the whole crowd his story about how he adopted, and how his desi dog has helped him through life. So we are sharing these stories for people to understand that even our desi dogs are as good as pure breed dogs," said Akshay.

That's not all, if you've always wanted to get home a bundle of joy but haven't found your furry partner yet; Pet Fed is where you need to be to 'tie-the-knot' by adopting a pet. And if you're more into being mastered than being the master yourself, then the Cat zone is where you should be. With more than 100 stalls, food and drinks, a Cat Zone and a separate VIP Lounge, there is something for everyone at this pet festival.



## First Bengali movie to release in six languages

### OUR CORRESPONDENT

SVF, EASTERN India's largest movie production house, launched the trailer of their upcoming movie *Amazon Obhijaan* - the most expensive film ever produced in Bengali language. Launching the trailer in multiple languages, namely - Bengali, Hindi, Oriya, Assamese, Tamil and Telugu, SVF has achieved yet another industry first with *Amazon Obhijaan* set to become the only Bengali movie to be released in six languages.

After unveiling the biggest movie poster for a Bengali film and becoming the first production house to make the story



board public before the movie release, SVF has left no stone unturned to promote its mega production *Amazon Obhijaan*, releasing on December 22.

Mahendra Soni, Co-Founder and Director - SVF, said, "This is probably the first time in Indian film history that any movie trailer is being

released simultaneously in six languages, and this is another step in our efforts to take Bengali cinema to newer heights, and reach a wider audience."

The two minute trailer showcases the eternal saga of an explorer's quest for adventure. Two years after Marco Florian, an Italian adventurer fails in his mission, his daughter Anna approaches the Bengali explorer Shankar Choudhury, requesting him to join for an expedition. Shankar readily accepts Anna's request and from there on, an enthralling yet long and arduous journey to the heart of Amazon, to discover the hidden city of gold, El Dorado begins.

### A TRIBUTE TO KISHORE KUMAR



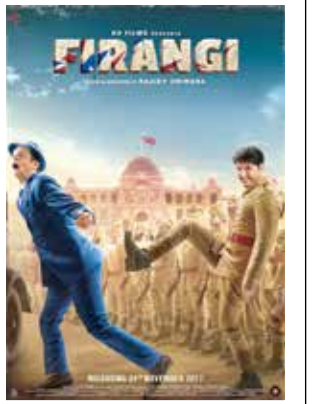
In a recently organised musical cultural programme, Kishore Kumar Memorial Club paid a beautiful tribute to the legendary playback singer, Kishore Kumar. The programme was jointly inaugurated by former MP Lal Bihari Tiwari and chairman of 'Sakha' - Amarjeet Singh Kohali. The Tourism Minister, Govt. of India, K. J. Alphons was the chief guest of the occasion. A number of memorable songs of Kishore Kumar were sung by artists coming from across the country on the occasion. "The organisation has been celebrating this event every year for more than one decade and is credited to have given platform a number of budding artistes in the field of play back singing," informed Kamal Dhiwan, founder of Kishore Kumar Memorial Club.



## Kapil kicks serious ass

### 'FIRANGI'

Director: Rajiev Dhingra; Starring: Kapil Sharma, Monica Gill, Ishita Dutta, Anjan Shrivastava, Edward Sonenblich; Rating: ★★☆☆



In his second - and far superior to the first - outing as a feature-film star, Kapil Sharma has a special skill.

He kicks ass. Literally. With one foot in the butt, he can heal the most stubborn backaches. It doesn't take long for the curious British officer - yes, "Firangi" is set in the colonial Raj - to hone in on our hero Manga's unique talent. The rest of this wildly enjoyable poked-faced comedy has a lot to do with how Manga uses his talent to get his way with the Gora Log.

First things first. "Firangi" is an original and frequently clever take on the tricky relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. And though Kapil Sharma is no Aamir Khan and this is no "Lagaan", "Firangi" often careens audaciously towards making a complete fool of itself but pulls back just in time to stay within the realm of the tongue-in-cheek.

Take a bow, then, Kapil Sharma. And his director Rajiev Dhingra for a film that offers the elementary pleasure of cinema that relies on simplicity artlessness and a humorous candour to glide across a well-executed colonial saga where the British are not barking tyrants and the Indian peasants are not always the doe-eyed oppressed innocent creatures we want them to be or have seen them being in films as diverse as Manmohan Desai's "Mard" and Ashutosh Gowariker's "Lagaan".

For a film that aims only to alchemize British India into primal entertainment - and succeeds in doing so - "Firangi" displays a great eye for visual detail. From the clothes and mannerisms of the British characters to a matchbox with the British flag painted on it, Shabana Kannam's art direction and Rashid Rangrez's production design are top-notch, much more so than the flippant tone and off-hand execution of the buoyant plot suggest.

Throughout the lengthy but never dull narration, the director employs an offhand tone, that suggests we don't take the quirky colonial saga too seriously. But look closely. You will see the film leaves nothing to chance. From the attractive songs and the eye-catching authentic locations in rural Punjab to the absolutely delightful supporting cast, "Firangi" gets it right in the bright light. The glare never blinds the characters and their doings.

Every cameo of the villagers in revolt against the local British ruler (Edward Sonenblich, playing the white oppressor with some arrogance and some compassion) is well-etched. Kumud Mishra as buffoonish royalty sucking up to the Britishers represents a very true chapter of history from British India when princely states sold themselves out to the British. Inaamulhaq as Kapil's pal has to run around in a bridal outfit for the climax while Anjan Shrivastava as a Gandhian freedom fighter must project righteousness without seeming pompous.

Every actor succeeds in walking that tightrope where clownish colonialism must be cloaked in massy entertainment without the plot plunging into anarchy. Many of the actors, including Monica Gill as an Oxonian Rajkumari, manage to be borderline caricatures, larger-than-life yet endearing, none more so than Kapil Sharma who brings a great deal of improvised warmth to his role as a reluctant rebel.

Those who think Kapil's days are numbered should make it a point to see what unrehearsed energy he brings to even the most mundane conversation about a bar of soap.

And guess who makes a very special appearance at the end? No, it's not Sunil Grover. IANS

## Singing about cancer

I Have A Dream Musical and CAPEP - Cancer Awareness, Prevention and Early Detection Trust announced the second edition of 'I Have A Dream - For CAPEP'. It is the first-ever theatrical performance to create awareness about cervical cancer in the country. This is a Musical, based on the story of four strong women, who are bold, independent and live life on their own terms. Directed by Ritu R. Chandra, the story of I Have A Dream is inspired by the simple philosophy of life and let live.



WHEN: December 2 - 3

TIMINGS: 7 pm onwards (Saturday) | 3 pm and 7 pm (Sunday)

WHERE: Shri Ram Centre, Mandi House

# 'Manto' more relevant today than ever: Rasika Dugal



At a time when artists in India are fighting for freedom of expression, actor Rasika Dugal says her upcoming film *Manto*, which traces the life of Urdu short story writer Sadat Hassan Manto, "unfortunately" resonates with the current wave of dissent and emotions. Sanjay Leela Bhansali's historical drama *Padmavati* has been facing protests from Hindu groups backed by the BJP and some critics have even issued violent threats. Another row has erupted over the films *S Durga* and *Nude*.

"I think there is threat for freedom of speech in every aspect, not just in cinema. Therefore, 'Manto' is more relevant today than ever unfortunately. I wish it wasn't like this," said the actor.

"We are struggling with the same issue in a big way. Death of freedom of speech is one thing that I am worried about and worried that it will affect cinema and other art forms." Manto, who died in 1955 at age 43, had penned an impressive body of work touching various genres.



He churned out 22 collections of stories comprising a novel, essays, personal sketches and movie scripts. One of his literary gems was a story on Mirza Ghalib, a poet often compared with William Shakespeare. Manto's work also gained attention for stories around the ordeal of India's partition as well as sexuality. Nandita Das is directing *Manto*, which features Nawazuddin Siddiqui

in the title role. Rasika will be seen as Safia Manto, wife of Manto, in the movie.

Talking about *Manto* on the sidelines of the Indian Panorama section of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Rasika said, "It is a very special film for me. This project has given me a lot of recognition by just being associated with the project because of the kind of reputation that Nandita comes with and also Nawaz."

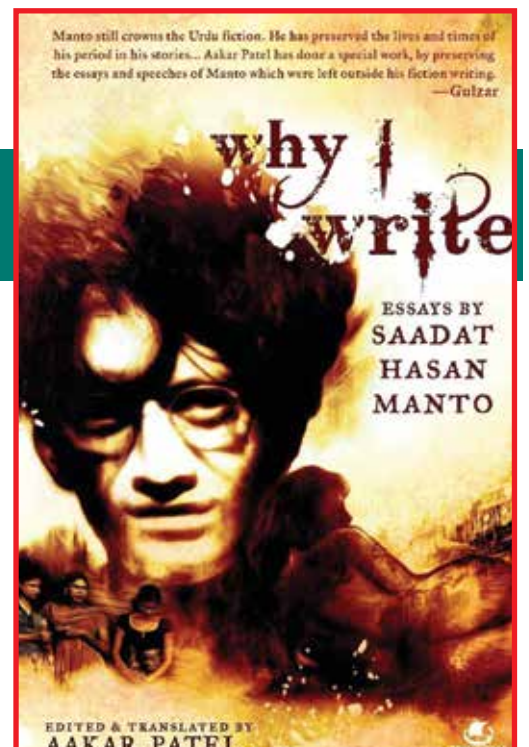
"Manto has been the writer who has influenced me a lot since my college days. I am so happy to be associated with the project and to be able to delve into his writing more and be able to get into his life more."

Rasika says she had fun working with Nandita and Nawazuddin.

"I thought they are very serious... That is the kind of impression people have about them. But they are a lot of fun and they are quite crazy. We shared a common sense of humour... We had a lot of fun. It was a good relief from the seriousness of the script," said the actor, who has projects like "Hamid" and "Reincarnation" in her kitty.

The film will be in theatres by the middle of next year. Rasika hopes *Manto* gets the "release it deserves".

On the Film Bazaar, organised by the National Film



Development Corp, she said, "It is one of a kind. It is very encouraging to see somebody is taking an initiative seriously and putting everything into it so that good projects get the kind of support they should." IANS

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GUARDIANS COMPLAINED THAT THOUGH IT IS A GIRLS' SCHOOL, THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND DANCE TEACHERS ARE MALE

# Security woes lead parents to train gun on authorities

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The security arrangements of the reputed private school at Ranikuthi area in South Kolkata has come under the scanner following allegations of sexual abuse against two physical education teachers of the school.

Agitated guardians demanded resignation of the principal, alleging that the school authorities had turned a blind eye to the security aspect, despite a similar incident having occurred at the same institution three years ago.

"Three years back when a similar incident had occurred where a Nursery girl was sexually abused by a helper of a bus, we had requested for specific preventive measures from the school. The administration had assured us that they would install CCTVs to ensure safety of the students. But nothing has been done. There is not a single CCTV inside the school premises," said Samir Ghosh, whose ward studies in Class VII at the school.

Guardians complained that though it is a girls' school, the physical education and dance teachers are male. "There is a lack of female attendants in the school and no one keeps an eye on girls of junior classes



The school premises remained tense throughout the day with guardians in a state of shock and nothing to boost security measures in the institute

when they go to the toilet," said Tulika Maity. The school premises remained tense throughout the day with guardians in a state of shock and nothing to boost security measures in the school.

"The school charges more than Rs 1 lakh for admission and more than Rs 4,000 a month as tuition fee, which is paid on a quarterly basis. However, security has been totally neglected," one Sujata Roy alleged.

Minister of State for Women and Child Welfare Shashi Panja said that such an incident had happened three years ago and now it has been repeated. "This

is very serious. Teams from Child Welfare Committee have been sent to the school as well as SSKM Hospital where the child is undergoing treatment. Necessary action will be taken."

Ananya Chatterjee Chakraborti, Chairperson of West Bengal State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBSCPCR) paid a visit to the school and made it clear that there was stark deficiency on the part of the authorities when it comes to security.

"The school principal could not provide any satisfactory answer as to why the school authorities sat idle on installation of CCTV at some locations

in the school. They had told me that they had no information about the incident when the victim was handed over to her mother at 4 pm on Thursday when the school was closed. We will soon prepare a report and submit it to the government," she added.

The guardians submitted a deputation to the school authorities demanding CCTV surveillance at relevant positions in the school premises as well as school buses, special measures to avoid potential threat near the toilet area and empty rooms, as well as a guardian forum to check compliance of safety arrangements.

# Celebs lash out at minor's sexual assault, child safety under scanner

NANDINI GUHA

**KOLKATA:** A four-year-old's traumatic sexual assault on the premises of a reputed private school in South Kolkata has led city doyens to rethink the definition of what an educational institute should be and to ponder how secure are Kolkata's minors filling up their rank and file.

Shocked by the incident, noted film director Aparna Sen said that sexual assault of any child is unacceptable and outrageous and that the school must bear responsibility of the incident.

"Why was no CCTV installed in the school premises? Why was there no attendant in the washroom for little kids? My heart goes out to the small child who is going through this trauma at the moment. Even I have daughters and I shudder to think of something similar happening to them. The guilty must be found and after investigation, the strictest punishment must be meted out to them."

For acclaimed Bengali actor Rituparna Sengupta, such criminal incidents are becoming rampant in Kolkata and the rest of India.

"I condemn this gruesome incident strongly. It happened to someone I know a while ago. The child can never completely forget the brutality and it must be so traumatic for her. And what are we actually doing to prevent such crimes? There must be exemplary punishment for the guilty. That hardly happens. Even in the Nirbhaya case, there was so much debate," she rued.

Filmmaker Goutam Ghose was stunned when *Millennium Post* first broke the news to him. "This is unbelievable. What is happening to our society? All human values have been commodified and everything is measured in terms of gain



**“ Why was no CCTV installed in the school premises? Why was there no attendant in the washroom for little kids? My heart goes out to the small child who is going through this trauma at the moment ”**

**“ I think the guilty must be mutilated and hanged in public like they do in some cases in the Middle Eastern countries so that nobody will ever dare do such a heinous thing in the future ”**



and loss. Our moral values are collapsing, so we must find a way to the spreading of positive values and vibes in society. I shudder to think that an educational institute is sending out a horrible message like this to the world around."

Theatre personality Usha Ganguly said: "The mind set of people is not changing at all. There is no sex education in schools, no safety for our children, no emotion, no respect between humans. What education are we spreading? The school has no CCTV. The principal is trying to hide

the guilty in order to save the name of the school. There are loopholes in the law itself. Where are we headed after all?"

Dance exponent Mamata Shankar was at loss of words. "I'm completely shocked by this incident. I think the guilty must be mutilated and hanged in public like they do in some cases in the Middle Eastern countries so that nobody will ever dare do such a heinous thing in the future. But again I'm scared that people have become so perverted that they won't even hesitate to take selfies with the hanged," she said.

## Garden Reach SS grid to suspend water supply on Sunday

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** The supply of filtered water from the South Suburban (SS) grid of Garden Reach Water Works (GRWW) will be suspended on December 3.

The shutdown will be required to facilitate construction of the elevated road corridor at Budge Road Trunk Road to connect the newly laid pipeline with the existing water mains of GRWW by the KMDA.

## The engineers said normal supply will resume from Dec 4 morning

As a result, the supply of filtered water from the booster stations at Behala, Siriti, Daspara, Bansdrani, Prafulla, Senpalli and Gandhi maidan will be affected after 10 am on December 3. There will be supply till 10 am. It may be mentioned that the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) supplies water in high pressure from 5.30 am to 9.30 am, then again in the afternoon and 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm. The engineers said normal supply will resume from December 4 morning.

The areas that will be affected due to the shutdown include the whole of Behala (Borough XIV and XV), parts of Garden Reach (Borough XVI) and parts of Jadavpur (Borough XI). The engineers regretted the inconvenience caused and said as connection between the existing pipes with the newly connected pipeline is essential, the shutdown will be necessary.

## Map row: WBBSE chief whip files complaint against Raju Banerjee

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** President of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) Kalyanmoy Ganguly on Friday lodged a complaint with the police against BJP leader Raju Banerjee for making a "false statement".

Banerjee had alleged that some state schools had distributed a distorted map of India among Class X students appearing in the pre-board examination. State Education minister Partha Chatterjee, on the sidelines of the convocation at Burdwan University, rubbished the allegations by Banerjee and said that the government is ordering a probe by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in this case.

"The Board never supplied such maps to students and it is a conspiracy by BJP to malign the image of the Bengal government. Those who are trying to

## Raju Banerjee had alleged that some state schools had distributed a distorted map of India among Class X students appearing in the pre-board examination

spread such canards will not be spared. I have already spoken to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in this regard," said Chatterjee.

According to police sources in East Bidhannagar police station where the complaint was lodged, Ganguly alleged that the map which left out Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh, was never supplied to the students by the Board and that the BJP leader had "forged" it to mislead the people.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Headquarters (Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate), K Sabari Raj Kumar, confirmed receipt of the complaint and

said, "We are investigating the matter."

Recently, Raju Banerjee, while addressing a Press conference, claimed that maps of India provided to the students left out J&K and Arunachal Pradesh. "It is unfortunate that the Indian map distributed to students in some state-run schools for the Geography test showed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh as being out of India. I am sure that the Trinamul Congress Teachers' Association is responsible for the blunder. We have sent a letter to the HRD Ministry for immediate intervention," he said.

## UD assistants ransack Swasthya Bhavan, seek ouster of Principal Secy

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Tension ran high at Swasthya Bhavan in Salt Lake when some Upper Division (UD) assistants under the Directorate of Health Services went on a rampage, ransacking a portion of the Principal Secretary's room.

The incident turned violent after one of the employees suffered a heart attack during a demonstration outside the building to protest against the transfer of 67 UD assistants of the health department.

The victim, Kajal Banerjee, who was currently posted at the Directorate of Health Services, delivered a lecture during today's agitation. After delivering the lecture at the protest rally, he suffered a cardiac arrest. Some of his colleagues rushed him to the Bidhannagar



Sub-divisional Hospital where he died. The doctors in the hospital said that the victim had died from a heart attack.

As the news of his death reached Swasthya Bhavan, the agitating UD assistants became infuriated and started marching towards the room of the Principal Secretary of health Anil Verma. They wrecked a portion of his office. A huge contingent of police rushed to

## The incident turned violent after one of the employees suffered a heart attack during a demonstration outside the building to protest against the transfer of 67 UD assistants of the health department

the spot to bring the situation under control.

It was learnt that the health department had issued an order, thereby transferring around 67 UD assistants to various places including districts. The agitators claimed that the department cannot transfer senior employees to the districts and demanded withdrawal of the order.

The situation turned violent when the agitators stormed into Swasthya

Bhavan, reached the Principal Secretary's room and started ransacking the furniture. They also demanded resignation of the Principal Secretary. Police later pacified the agitating mob.

The UD assistants who were transferred, alleged that they had sought appointment of the Principal Secretary regarding the issue but were denied permission. They wanted to submit a memorandum to the secretary, stating their demands.

## Master plan of industrial parks to be available online ahead of Business Summit: WBSIDC

PRITESH BASU

**KOLKATA:** West Bengal Small Industries Development Corporation (WBSIDC) has decided to make a master plan of all its industrial parks available online through GIS mapping, ahead of the Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS). The step has been taken to help investors in the Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSME) sector easily identify a plot as per their need in an industrial park.

It may be mentioned that the Mamata Banerjee government has taken several steps in ensuring ease of doing business in Bengal. The online availability of the master plan will allow an investor to get a clear conception of the entire premises of the industrial parks without visiting the place.

By going through the master plan they can easily identify the total number of plots as well as the vacant ones.

The exact geographical location of a plot along with its exact measurement and roads around it will be available in the master plan.

At present one can see the location of the industrial parks in a GIS map when one logs in to [www.ice.indiagis.org/ice/home.jsp](http://www.ice.indiagis.org/ice/home.jsp) and it shows the nearest railway stations,



airport and information on other facilities including sub-stations, power supply and water supply.

But with the step taken by WBSIDC, with completion of the project to add the component of making the master plan available online, the prospective investors can go for a virtual tour of the industrial estates to finalise which particular plot will suit the unit they would like to set up. They would also get to know what type of industries exist in which industrial parks at present and accordingly they can choose a plot to set up their unit.

According to a senior official the process of uploading the master plan has already started and it is expected to be completed by December. It has to be in place before BGBS, which is going to be held on January 16 and 17 in 2018.

At present there are 40 industrial parks and estates under WBSIDC including three upcoming ones at Khasjungle in West Midnapore, Dabgram in Jalpaiguri and Malda Silk Park on 697 acres of land. A major part of the vacant land is in the new ones at Ambari Falakata, Rejinagar and the three upcoming industrial parks.

## Sivaji Ghosh to continue as OSD for next 2 yrs

**KOLKATA:** IPS officer of 1985 batch Sivaji Ghosh will continue for the next two years as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) and ex-officio Chairman cum Managing Director of West Bengal Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation.

Ghosh retired on November 30 and assumed the office of OSD and ex-officio Chairman cum Managing Director of West Bengal Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation in the rank of Director General (DG) and Inspector General of Police (IGP) on Friday. It may be mentioned that before retirement, he had been continuing as CMD of West Bengal

Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation and the Principal Secretary of Correctional Administration Department. Raj Kanojia, an IPS officer of 1982 batch, has been given the charge of Principal Secretary of Correctional Administration Department.

Kanojia is presently posted as Commandant General and Director General of Home Guard and he is also having the additional charge of Director General (Coastal Security).

At the same time, the period of re-employment of Arvind Kumar Maliwal as OSD (training and Research) in the rank of DG and IGP has been extended for a period of one year from Friday.

MPOST

IN NEW TOWN

## HIDCO scheme to enable vehicle-sensitive street lamps

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO) has taken up a unique pilot scheme to switch off and on one-third of the street lights until a vehicle passes though that stretch as a part of its drive to conserve energy. This is the first time such a project to save energy has been taken up in eastern India.

The stretch selected for the pilot project is Street 333, which is behind Biswa Bangla Sarani near Bagjola Canal and connects major arterial roads near Amity University and Alliah University. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 2 lakh. Senior HIDCO officials, including its chairman Debashis Sen was present when the demonstration was given by the

Engineering wing of HIDCO on Thursday. The system has been working fine, Sen maintained. If successful, the scheme will be replicated in other parts of New Town, which is coming up as a 'green city'. There are 39 light poles, 80 LED street light assemblies and 52 bulbs on the street where the experiment will be carried out.

The main challenge faced by the engineers was to see that a person or cattle should not trigger the lights, which are supposed to be switched on only when a vehicle passes. So, traditional motion sensors, IR sensors or photo electric sensors had to be ruled out.

Also, any pressure sensitive trigger was ruled out because bullock carts can trigger the mechanism. So, they made use of eddy currents,



earth's magnetic field and recalled that vehicles are made of metal.

The sensor is based on a copper loop embedded underneath the sur-

face of the road. One is installed at one end of the road on the entry lane, while the other one is placed on the other side of the road, on the entry lane as well.

When a vehicle enters Street 333, it disturbs the terrestrial magnetism link to the embed coil and generates an eddy current. This is amplified and used to switch on the unlit street lights.

It switches off after 5 minutes automatically through a timer mechanism, it being the average time required for a vehicle to traverse the 1 km length of Street 333.

The energy that is saved will be more than the cost of installation of the project. Once successful, the model will be replicated in other parts of New Town.

## Give copy of report containing threat perception on Roy: HC

**KOLKATA:** A Division Bench of High Court comprising acting Chief Justice Jyotirmay Bhattacharya and Justice Arijit Banerjee on Friday directed the Central government to give a copy of the report containing the threat perception on Mukul Roy. The Court also directed the Centre to file an affidavit to explain why the report could not be disclosed in the affidavit. A PIL was filed against the Ministry of Home Affairs and against the Home department of the state government challenging the misutilisation of CRPF personnel for providing security to Mukul Roy who was given Y+ category security a day after he joined the BJP. Roy had earlier returned Z category security before quitting the TMC. PIL was filed to ascertain the parameters on basis of which the Centre had provided Y+ security.

MPOST

## DEO launches awareness campaign against 'deposit-mobilising firms'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Directorate of Economic Offences (DEO) has taken up a massive awareness campaign in some of the districts after receiving complaints that some "deposit-mobilising companies" are collecting money after promising substantive return in goods and services.

This comes at the time when the directorate has launched its official website, [www.wbdeo.com](http://www.wbdeo.com) to help common people get information on deposit-mobilising companies to avoid being cheated. At the same time, such companies will also have to file their returns and provide all sorts of data through the website.



Chief Secretary Malay De, Director General of Police Surajit Kar Purkayastha, Home Secretary Atri Bhattacharya and Bibhuti Bhusan Dash, Director of Directorate of Economic

Offences were present in the event in which the website was launched.

It may be mentioned that the directorate that had been functioning for almost the past one year, is entrusted with enforcement of West Bengal Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act (WBPIDFE).

Recently, the directorate has received complaints from three to four districts in the state alleging that some companies are collecting money through different schemes after assuring goods and services in return. Earlier, such companies used to assure a high rate of interest to woo more investors.

Besides creating awareness among people of these districts, many were also being arrested and they include owner, director and key persons, who prepare the entire scheme of collecting money from common people.

The directorate is also working to identify all such companies in the districts.

Dash said: "All such institutions have to submit their documents online. An advertisement in this regard will be given announcing the date by which the data related to the company's details have to be submitted to the directorate. Necessary steps will be taken in case there is any delay in submitting the same."

# ADB sanctions loan worth Rs 2,280 crore

Public Health Engineering department likely to start work early in 2018; Bankura, East Midnapore, N-24 Prgns to bid farewell to drinking water woes

TARUN GOSWAMI

KOLKATA: Asian Development Bank (ADB) has sanctioned a loan worth Rs 2280 crore to supply drinking water in the rural areas of Bankura, East Midnapore and North 24-Parganas.

The work will be carried out by the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department. By 2020, the formidable issue of drinking water scarcity in the remote parts of these three districts will be a matter of the past. Tender process has been completed and work is likely to start early next year.

It may be recalled that after coming to power in 2011, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had given maximum stress on supply of drinking water in villages and construction of rural roads. The departments responsible for the jobs are PHE, Panchayats and the Rural Development department. Both the departments are under Subrata Mukherjee.

She had also asked officials of PHE to come up with suggestions so that water scarcity in the villages can be alleviated. It may be mentioned that PHE sends water tankers in the remote areas of Bankura and Purulia districts every summer where vast areas reel under acute shortage of drinking water. In the rural areas, water is being lifted from water



bodies which is then filtered and supplied to the households with the help of pipes. It may be mentioned that it was the British who had introduced this system in Bengal in 1867 and set up Palta Water Works, which lifts water from river Hooghly which is then filtered and supplied to Kolkata by underground pipelines.

The erstwhile Left Front government, which had boasted of rural development, did not take any comprehensive action to resolve drinking water crisis in the drought-torn areas in Bengal.

The PHE had prepared a comprehensive plan to provide drinking water to every household in Bankura, East Midnapore and north 24-par-

### FACT-SHEET

- » Tender process has been completed and work is likely to start early next year
- » PHE, Panchayats and the Rural Development department are to share the responsibility

- » PHE sends water tankers in the remote areas of Bankura and Purulia districts every summer
- » ADB cleared the loan after scrutinising the PHE action plan
- » The scheme will benefit lakhs of people living in these three districts

ganas and approached ADB. ADB had scrutinised the plan and cleared the loan.

The scheme will benefit lakhs of people living in these three districts. Once the firms are elected and jobs assigned, work will be carried out on war footing. Attempts will be made

to meet the deadline. It may be recalled that PHE has taken up a unique scheme, where water is lifted at Deben-drabala Ghat in North Kolkata and taken to New Town where the filtration station is situated, fed by underground pipes covering a distance of over 17 kms.

## Chandrima takes part in rally to observe World Aids Day

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Chandrima Bhattacharya, Minister of State for Health on Friday took part in a programme to observe World Aids Day at Swasthya Bhavan.

She lauded the efforts of the state government in controlling AIDS and spreading anti AIDS campaign. Senior officials of the state Health department were present at the function.

Two cycle rallies, one by men and the other by women, were taken out to create awareness against AIDS. A team comprising 30 men cyclists will go to Rampurhat in Birbhum in three days while the women's team comprising 25 women cyclists will go to Nadia's Mayapur in three days. The programme was organised by West Bengal State Aids Prevention and Control Society. A programme to create awareness against AIDS was held at College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital where principal Dr Hanshi Dasgupta, Dean Dr Aniruddha Neogy and Superintendent Dr Gautam Joardar took part along with students, nursing staff and relatives of the patients. A cultural programme was held where folk and Baul artistes participated. A rally was taken out to create awareness against AIDS.

The work to construct the floating restaurant has begun and the structure on which the restaurant will be set up has already been placed at the spot where it will come up.

## Floating restaurant to come up on Ichamati in Taki



OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: In a bid to attract more tourists in Taki, the state Tourism department is developing a floating restaurant on Ichamati River. It is learnt that this is going to be the second such facility in the state where there will be a floating restaurant.

After coming to power, the Mamata Banerjee government has taken several steps to develop Taki in north 24-Parganas as a tourist destination and the flow of tourists has also gone up in the past few years.

The initiative has been taken by the state tourism department. The project has been funded by the department and Taki Municipality. As per estimate, there will be an expenditure of over Rs 2 crore to develop the restaurant.

The work to construct the floating restaurant has begun and the structure on which the restaurant will be set up has already been placed at the spot where it will come up.

Hundreds of people visit the bank of the river everyday and the footfall will increase in winter. Though the administration had attempted to complete the construction of the floating restaurant and make it functional before this winter, it had not been possible owing to certain technical difficulties. However, steps have been taken to ensure that the work gets completed as early as possible.

According to an official, the floating restaurant will be run by the Taki Municipality. The decision to set up the hotel has been taken after a feasibility study and its financial viability has also been assessed.

If everything goes as planned then there will be special events round the year to ensure optimum enjoyment while visit the floating restaurant.

It may be mentioned that Bangladesh lies on the other side of the river and all necessary steps have been taken in connection with the safety and security of the restaurant.

## Karangapara resident killed in road mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A 42-year-old man was killed in a fatal road accident in Durgapur late on Thursday night. Police said that the victim Raja Banerjee was driving a car when the vehicle lost control and hit a roadside tree. The incident occurred at around 11.30 pm on Thursday night. Local residents told the police that the victim was over speeding when the accident took place.

Banerjee was a resident of Karangapara area under Coke Oven police station in Durgapur. He was a real estate developer who was driving towards Durgapur City Centre from the DVC More. While taking a turn near the City Centre

## Victim was taken to Durgapur Sub-Divisional Hospital where he was declared brought dead

police outpost, the victim lost control over the vehicle, which rammed into a roadside tree.

After being informed, police rushed to the spot and rescued the victim who had multiple injuries on his body. He was taken to Durgapur Sub-Divisional Hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Police said that the incident occurred as the vehicle was moving at top speed. They are also investigating if the victim was in a drunken state. The investigators are waiting for the post-mortem report.

The frontal portion of the car was badly damaged in the accident. Police have seized the vehicle.

According to the preliminary investigation, police suspect that the victim applied sudden brake while taking a turn. As the vehicle was moving at top speed, the driver could not stop the vehicle. Police are also examining the vehicle.

The incident led to traffic congestion in the area. Senior police officers rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Local residents alleged that people often over-speed their vehicles, resulting in the accidents in the area. They also demanded that adequate surveillance in the area be installed to check errant vehicles that flout traffic norms.

## Minor evades abduction in Darjeeling, accused nabbed

DARJEELING: A Class VIII student of a Darjeeling school managed to evade abduction. The person following her was arrested on Friday and booked under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). The 13-year-old girl was being followed by a man since the past few days, following which she apprised her teachers of the issue. "The teachers informed us," stated Nirnay John Chettri of MARG, an NGO working against human trafficking. On Friday morning, senior students and teachers were following the girl from her home to school. The man appeared suddenly and tried to speak to the girl. He even tried to muffle the student, when the teachers and senior students nabbed him. He was then handed over to the police. "We have arrested 41-year-old Vikram Darnal. He has been booked under POCSO. We are investigating," a cop said. MPOST

## 21-year-old kills self after broken marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A 21-year-old girl committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan. The incident triggered tension among the residents at Kumargram village of Katwa in East Burdwan on Friday morning. Locals told the police that she was suffering from depression after a broken marriage.

The victim has been identified as Tanushree Majhi. On Thursday night, she locked herself inside her room and hanged herself from the ceiling fan with the help of a scarf. As she did not open her door on Friday morning, her family members knocked on the door but did not get any reply.

After failing to get any response despite repeated knocks, they alerted local people. Her family members along with the local residents

broke open the door to find Tanushree hanging from the ceiling.

Police reached the spot later and recovered the body. They sent the body to Katwa Sub-divisional Hospital for post-mortem.

Her family members told the police that her marriage had been broken in two previous occasions and this had put her under tremendous psychological pressure.

She was suffering from depression since the last incident took place. Her family members were trying to fix her marriage for the past two years. The family members said that they never expected that she could take such a drastic step. Police have started a probe in this regard. They are also investigating whether she had been instigated to commit suicide.

## Khardah housewife succumbs after attack by husband

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A 34-year-old housewife who was hit on her head with an iron rod by her husband on Thursday night, died in a hospital later.

The incident took place at the Kachaline area of Khardah in North 24-Parganas. The incident sent local residents into a tizzy, who have told the police that the couple squabbled often. The victim's husband has been absconding since the incident.

According to the preliminary investigation, police suspect that the accused had killed the woman on suspicion of an extra marital relationship.

The victim has been identified as Urmila Rajbhar. Police said that Urmila got married to Jitendra Rajbhar, a resident of Khardah around 15 years ago. They had three children.



Local people told the police that the accused used to have frequent quarrels with the woman and also beat her up quite often. The husband alleged that his wife had developed an extra marital relationship with a local youth.

According to the local people, a quarrel broke out between the couple on Thursday night. During a heated altercation the accused took an iron rod and hit her on the head. After hearing screams of the woman, local residents rushed to the spot and found

that she was lying on the floor, bleeding profusely.

Her husband had fled from the spot immediately after the incident.

They rushed the victim to Balaram Seva Mandir State General Hospital in Khardah where she died later. Her body was sent for post-mortem later.

Police are conducting raids to nab the culprit who is still at large. They are also investigating the victims' family members and neighbours in this connection. A detailed probe has been initiated.

## IIT Kgp leaves no stone unturned to become 'Institution of Eminence'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: IIT Kharagpur is leaving no stone unturned to make a strong pitch in its application for Institutions of Eminence status.

If the institution is selected, it will get an additional fund of Rs 1000 crore from the Centre which will be utilised for various projects aimed towards educational excellence. "We will be forwarding our application in this regard by the first week of December," IIT Kharagpur Director Partha Pratim Chakrabarti said.

In September, UGC had started inviting applications from institutions which are keen to make it to the top

100 in global ranking with the government's assistance.

The application window remains open for three months. After the deadline expires, an empowered committee will vet all entries and finalise names of 20 institutions (10 government and 10 private) by March next year, which will be declared as IOEs.

The IOE announcement has come as a glimmer of hope for institutions like IIT as the rejection of the Vishwajeet project - proposed by the Human Resources Development Ministry came as a setback to the premier technological institutes including IIT Kharagpur. "We were supposed to use the funds (Rs 1,250 crore each over a five-year period)

to upgrade our infrastructure, hire foreign faculty members, tie up with international institutions and adopt a host of other measures for improving our global rankings. We had planned to launch some "ambitious" projects with the corpus," a senior teacher at IIT Kharagpur said.

In September, the Centre had junked Vishwajeet, a project that would have resulted in allocation of Rs 8,700 crore to seven top IITs as a part of an ongoing effort to enhance their global standing. IITs in Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Roorkee and Guwahati were picked as the likely beneficiaries of the scheme. "We were supposed to have core

funding for six technology converging areas under Vishwajeet. After it was scrapped, we have separated all the six converging areas from the integrated part," a senior IIT official said.

IIT Kharagpur that has recently signed an MoU with the Ministry of Heavy Industries for building a Centre of Excellence on Advanced Manufacturing Technologies for Heavy Industries, was supposed to get Rs 3,000 crore from the bouquet of Vishwajeet from which Rs 10 crore was to be allocated for the Centre of Excellence. "We are ready to spend Rs 10 crore from our own funds to come up with this Centre," one of the senior officials mentioned.

SL NO	DISTRICT NAME	Centre Name	Agent Name	Contact No
1	East Midnapore	TAMLUK	N.C.Bera	7501493175
		HALDIA	Ayesha Begum,Ranichak	9474306356
		DIGHA	Kamal Lochan Panda	8906868884
2	West Midnapore	MIDNAPORE	Balaram Pandit	9932708271
3	Jhargram	JHARGRAM	Champa Maity	9547230220
4	North 24 - Parganas	BARASAT/NILGUNJ	B N Kundu	9836333630
		BARRACKPORE	Biswajit Ghosh	9830830798
		BASIRHAT	Uttam Biswas	9474574927
5	Bardhaman	BURDWAN	Kamal Mukherjee	9332192230
		ASANSOL	Hiralal Sen	9933662126
		DURGAPUR WARIA	Joy prakash Ray	9563601176 / 7864818860
6	West Bardhaman	NIRSHA	Gopal Chatterjee	9386695330
		BARAKAR	Jai Bhagwan Singh	9334652173
		BAHARAMPUR COURT	Dipak Choudhury	9851612424
7	Murshidabad	KALYANI / KANCHRAPARA	Dey News Agency	9830609355
9	Howrah	HOWRAH CENTRE	Manik Lal Bag	9883393201 / 9732243933
10	Purulia	PURULIA	D.C.Nag	9434130550
11	Jalpaiguri	SILIGURI	Toton Saha	9832046238
12	Hooghly	CHINSURAH / CHANDAN NAGAR	B.Singh	9883108806
13	Birbhum	SHANTINIKETAN	Anita Shaw	9232162151
14	Darjeeling	DARJEELING	Bitta Newspaper Agency	9434131515
15	Cooch Behar	COOCH BEHAR	Jayanta Das	9434217084
16	Alipurduar	ALIPURDUAR	Bablu Saha	9733166169
17	Kalimpong	KALIMPONG	Sandeep Jain	9832016738
18	Uttar Dinajpur	RAIGUNJ	Pradyut Karmakar	9434384154
19	Dakshin Dinajpur	BALURGHAT	Sujan das	8670582892
20	Malda	MALDA TOWN	Ashim Kr.Sarkar	7797919580
Others District List				
21	Jharkhand	RANCHI	Birendra Nath Singh	9431929279 / 8409298763
		TATA NAGAR	Surender Singh	9835170495
		DHANBAD	S.K.Pandey	8409984151
22	Bihar	PATNA	Nandalal Yadav	7765012713

# SC notice to govt on plea to ban convicts from running parties

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday sought the responses from the Centre and the Election Commission on a plea seeking to restrain convicted persons from forming political parties and becoming their office-bearers for the period they are disqualified under the election law.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, while asking whether the court could stop a person from propagating his political views, agreed to examine the constitutional validity of section 29A of the 1951 Representation of the People Act (RPA) which deals with the power of the poll panel to register a political party.

The bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, was informed by senior lawyers Siddharth Luthra and Sajjan Poovayya that under the statutory schemes, the poll panel was empowered to register political parties, but it lacked the authority under the RPA to de-register them.

The bench, however, said it would be against the freedom of



speech and expression to debar a convicted person from propagating political views through a party.

"Can a court restrain a convicted person from forming a political party? Can you stop a man from propagating his political views," the bench asked and fixed the plea for hearing after six weeks. "Why is the Election Commission clothed with the power to merely register a political party, but not to de-register it," it asked while issuing notices to the Centre and the ECI on the plea filed by Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, a lawyer and Delhi BJP spokesperson.

Luthra, appearing for Upadhyay, said if a person on conviction in a criminal case was barred from contesting elections, it would be incongruent to allow such person to form or head a political outfit.

The plea said convicted politicians, who are barred from contesting elections, can still run political parties and hold posts in them, besides deciding as to who will become a lawmaker. The plea has sought a ban on convicted persons from forming a political party and becoming office bearers for the period they are disqualified under the election laws.

## Plea on steps to curb air pollution: SC seeks Centre's reply

MPOST BUREAU

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday sought the Centre's response on a petition asking a series of steps to curb air pollution, including a ban on sale, possession and bursting of firecrackers across the country. A bench comprising Justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan also issued notices to some states, including Delhi, seeking their replies to the plea which has raised the issue of evolving a solution for crop burning, which is a major source of air pollution in the Delhi-national capital region (NCR). The court asked the Centre and states to file their responses in four weeks.

Besides seeking a ban on firecrackers across the country, the petition filed through

advocate Gopal Shankarnarayanan has sought directions for environment-friendly, cleaner fuels and implementation of regulations on dust from construction activities.

The apex court had on October 9 said that no firecrackers would be sold in the Delhi-NCR during Diwali this year while banning its sale till November 1. It had said that its earlier order, temporarily lifting the stay and permitting the sale of firecrackers, would be made effective only from November 1.

The apex court, in its October 9 order, had said November 11, 2016, order suspending licences for sale of fireworks "should be given one chance to test itself" to see whether it had a positive effect, particularly during Diwali.

# India needs to 'cherish and nurture' its Muslims: Obama

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** India needs to "cherish and nurture" its Muslim population, which is integrated and considers itself Indian, former US president Barack Obama said on Friday.

It is an idea that needs to be reinforced, he emphasised at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit here.

Obama touched on a host of topics, including his relationship with Narendra Modi and Manmohan Singh, terrorism, Pakistan, the hunt for Osama bin Laden and his love for Indian dal and keema, during his address and the question-answer session that followed.

Obama, the first African American president of the US, said he had emphasised the need for religious tolerance and the right to practice one's own faith during closed door talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his last trip to India in 2015.

The 44th US president, who held office between 2009 and 2017, had made similar comments during a public interaction on the last day of his 2015 visit, which had come against the backdrop of controversy over religious conversions. Responding to questions



Former US President Barack Obama at the HT Leadership Summit in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

during the interactive session, Obama said his comments there were general in nature and he had repeated it in the US as well as in Europe.

"There's a counter narrative taking place, at all times, but it's particularly pronounced now... You are seeing it in Europe, you are seeing it in the United States and sometimes you see it in India where those old tribal impulses reassert themselves under leaders who try to push back those impulses and under leaders who try to exploit them," Obama said.

The former US president

said it is necessary to make sure that voices which talk about working together are encouraged.

Replying to an India-specific question, Obama spoke of India's "enormous Muslim population", which is successful, integrated and thinks of itself as Indian.

That is unfortunately not always the case in some other countries, Obama added.

Referring to India, he said, "And that is something that needs to be cherished and nurtured, cultivated. It's important to continue reinforcing it."

# NHRC notice to AP govt, HRD on stripping of 88 school students

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Friday issued a notice to Arunachal Pradesh government and Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry over the alleged stripping of 88 schoolgirls as punishment in Papum Pare district of the state. Taking suo motu cognisance of a report that 88 girls were forced to remove their clothes in front of their entire school, as punishment by the three teachers, when they did not confess for having written vulgar words against the head teacher and another



student on a piece of paper, the Commission issued a notice to the State Chief Secretary, asking to file a detailed report in the matter within a month.

The Commission also asked the Secretary of the HRD Ministry to submit a copy of guidelines issued for the protection of the stu-

dents from such maltreatment or humiliation circulated to the States within four weeks. The commission stated that punishment was meted out to them after they refused to confess having written vulgar words against the head teacher and another student on a piece of paper.

"Teachers are always highly respected in the society as they play the role of a true guide and protector for their students. Such an inhuman and insensible act cannot be expected from a teacher. Stripping minor girls, in front of the entire school, is an unethical and cruel act committed by the teachers who were their lawful custodians and protectors, at that time," the Commission said.

"The right to dignity of the innocent minor girls has been grossly violated and it will definitely take time for them to overcome the trauma," the commission added.

# Why public money was 'squandered' in buying power at higher rates: Rahul asks PM Modi

**NEW DELHI:** Continuing his attack against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi on Friday asked him why public money was "squandered" in purchasing power at higher rates from private companies. Asking the third question in the series "a question a day", Gandhi asked Modi why the coffers of four private firms were filled between 2002-2016 by buying power of Rs 62,549 crore.



"My third question to the prime minister. Why were the coffers of four private companies filled between 2002-16 by buying power of Rs 62,549 crore.

"By reducing the capacity

of state power units by 62 per cent, why was power bought from private companies at upto Rs 24 per unit against Rs 3 per unit? Why was public money squandered," he asked the prime minister on Twitter.

Gandhi has sought accountability from the ruling BJP for the promises the saffron party made to the state in previous polls.

"22 salon ka hisaab, Gujarat mange jawaab (Gujarat demands answers for 22 years

of BJP rule," is the tagline of Gandhi's posers to the prime minister. The Congress vice-president previously asked Modi why the people of Gujarat should pay up for the "financial mismanagement" and publicity by him. He also asked whether it will take 45 more years to provide new houses to Gujaratis as the incumbent BJP government in the state has provided only 4.72 lakh houses in the last five years against the promised 50 lakh.

MPOST

# Ex-CJI A S Anand passes away at 81

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** Former Chief Justice of India Justice Adarsh Sein Anand died of a cardiac arrest here on Friday, family sources said.

Justice Anand, 81, is survived by his wife and three daughters.

The sources said he passed away this morning after suffering a massive heart attack.

The mortal remains of the 29th Chief Justice of India would be cremated on December 3 at the Lodhi cremation ground here, they said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief at the passing away of Justice Anand.

"Saddened by the demise of former Chief Justice of India, Justice AS Anand. My thoughts are with his family in this hour of grief. May his soul rest in peace," Modi said in a tweet.

Justice Anand occupied the top-most judicial post from October 10, 1998 till November 1, 2001.

Anand, who was also the Chairman of National Human Rights Commission from 2003 to 2006, had penned the landmark verdict in the D K Basu case, laying down guidelines on arrest, custodial torture and protection of prisoners' rights.

# Cabinet nod to Rs 9k-cr mission to address malnutrition

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** In a major move aimed at addressing malnutrition among newborns and mothers, the Union Cabinet has approved setting up of National Nutrition Mission (NNM) with a three-year budget of Rs 9046.17 crore commencing from 2017-18.

According to Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister Maneka Gandhi, the mandate of the mission is to tackle the problems of under-nutrition, low birth weight and stunting in the next three years. The mission has also set a target to reduce under-nutrition and low birth weight by 2 percent each year and put a full stop on pilferage of funds by making Aadhaar registration compulsory for children availing food under the mission.

"It will strive to achieve reduction in stunting from 38.4 per cent as per the National Family Health Survey-4 to 25 per cent by 2022. It also aims to bring down anaemia among young children, women and adolescent girls by three per cent per year," the WCD Minister said, adding that more than 10 crore people will benefit from the programme.

"Like Beti Bachao Beti Pad-



hao, the NNM is a momentous step. Our government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modiji is striving hard to produce supposhit children," the WCD Minister said.

Hailing the cabinet decision, Union Health Minister JP Nadda said, "Under the nutrition mission both the ministries (WCD and Health) would work in convergence to address the under-nutrition and low birth weight issues through its different schemes under one common platform."

"ASHA, ANM and Anganwadi workers will work together as part of the intervention strategies under the mission to address malnutrition issues. There will be group performance-based incentives for them," Nadda said.

All the districts will be covered under the mission in

a phased manner -- 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 and remaining districts in 2019-20.

To check pilferage in distribution of supplementary nutrition at anganwadis under the Integrated Child Development Scheme, the government has decided to offer incentives to anganwadi workers for using IT-based tools such as smartphones.

Under the mission, various schemes contributing towards addressing malnutrition would be mapped and a very robust convergence mechanism would be introduced. "It would also create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue alerts for timely action, and encourage states/ Union Territories to achieve the targeted goals," the official statement said.

# 10k cows seized along B'desh-Meghalaya border

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**SHILLONG:** The BSF has seized over 10,000 cows worth over Rs 12 crore while being smuggled across the Indo-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya in the past one year. Apart from cows, the border guards also seized cough syrups used as intoxicant, liquor and motorcycles. "During the period from December 1, 2016 to November 30 this year, altogether 10,169 cows worth Rs 12.71 crore were seized at the border," a BSF spokesperson here said.

There had also been efforts to smuggle forest produce such as bamboo and endangered reptile gecko.

Altogether 118 smugglers including 36 Bangladeshis were arrested during this period. The spokesperson said the BSF has been using technology-based solutions to seal the existing riverine gaps along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

"Besides, the Ministry of Home Affairs is being approached for procurement of four Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) as additional authorisation for effective air



surveillance in vulnerable infiltration areas of West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura." The construction of 327.242 km border fence has also been completed in

Meghalaya Frontier while 113.048 km is unfenced due to various problems related to land acquisition, single row fence, marshy land and others, he said.

Government of West Bengal

With the inspiration of  
**Mamata Banerjee**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal,  
the **Bengal Tennis Academy**  
in collaboration with  
the Department of Youth Services & Sports and Bengal Tennis Association

will be inaugurated by  
**Shri Aroop Biswas**, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge  
P.W.D., Department of Youth Services & Sports

in the august presence of

<b>Shri Laxmiratan Shukla</b> , Minister of State Dept. of Youth Services & Sports	<b>Shri Hironmoy Chatterjee</b> , President Bengal Tennis Association; Honorary Secretary General, AITA	<b>Shri Partho Roychowdhury</b> , Vice President Bengal Tennis Association
<b>Janab Sayeed Ahmed Baba</b> , IAS, Principal Secretary, Dept. of Youth Services & Sports	<b>Janab Akhtar Ali</b> , Vice President Bengal Tennis Association	<b>Shri Mihir Mitra</b> , Honorary Secretary Bengal Tennis Association
<b>Shri Sabyasachi Dutta</b> , Mayor Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation	<b>Shri Jaideep Mukherjee</b> , Vice President Bengal Tennis Association	<b>Shri Amiya Bhattacharya</b> , Treasurer Bengal Tennis Association
<b>Shri Sujit Bose</b> , MLA Bidhannagar	<b>Shri Chuni Goswami</b> , Vice President Bengal Tennis Association	

Date: 2nd December, 2017  
Time: 3.30 p.m.  
Venue: Bengal Tennis Association Premises, Bidhannagar, Kolkata

Department of Youth Services & Sports  
Government of West Bengal

ICA - 2456(9)/2017

# 'UP results show people have embraced economic reforms'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Hailing his party's big win in the Uttar Pradesh civic polls, BJP chief Amit Shah on Friday said the results had made it clear that the people had embraced the economic reforms and rejected the politics of casteism, appeasement and dynasty.

In a statement, he also claimed that the people's support for the saffron party would be the same in the upcoming Gujarat Assembly polls and that the Uttar Pradesh results would be repeated on December 18, when the verdict of the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh elections would be out.

"This unprecedented win in the Uttar Pradesh civic polls is another example of the people's unshakable faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and the BJP's politics of performance," Shah said.

In an obvious reference to the Goods and Services Tax (GST), he said it was clear from the poll results that the people had embraced the economic reforms of the BJP-led central government. Shah said the opposition -- the SP, BSP and Congress -- were decimated in the Uttar Pradesh civic polls, while pointing out that



BJP National President, Amit Shah being garlanded at a public rally at Kodinar, Gujarat on Friday

the Congress had lost heavily from Rae Bareilly and Amethi, the Lok Sabha constituencies

of its president Sonia Gandhi and vice president Rahul Gandhi respectively.

## UP results reaffirm people's support for note-ban, GST: Jaitley



OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said that the results of Uttar Pradesh civic polls reaffirmed people's support for the GST which has made doing business "easier" for traders. At a media briefing, he also recalled his party's unprecedented win in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand assembly polls following the demonetisation decision and noted that it had swept "trading hubs" in UP to underline popular support to note ban.

He declined to comment on Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi's 'dharam ki dalal' barb at the BJP. "There is no need to answer to this," Jaitley said. The ruling BJP on Friday forged ahead of its rivals, leading on 14 of the 16 mayoral seats in Uttar Pradesh where the civic bodies polls were held in three phases, according to trends from these seats in the first four hours of counting of votes. The Congress has used GST glitches and note ban to attack the BJP in Gujarat polls. "GST has made doing business and trade very easy. The market size for every trader has grown. Now the whole country is his market," Jaitley said.

## RK Nagar bypoll; Dhinakaran declares Rs 74 lakh as assets

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI: Sidelined AIADMK leader T T V Dhinakaran, who is contesting the December 21 RK Nagar bypoll, on Friday declared movable and immovable assets valued at Rs 74 lakh, a tad higher than his earlier declaration in April.

Dhinakaran, who had contested the April 12 bypoll to the constituency as then AIADMK (Amma) candidate backed by Chief Minister K Palaniswami, had at that time declared assets valued at Rs 68 lakh.

In his affidavit submitted to the Election Commission along with his nomination papers on Friday, Dhinakaran said his movable and immovable assets totalled Rs 74,17,807, with movable assets valued at Rs 57,44,44k. His movable assets were Rs 16,73 lakh, the 53 year-old former MP said.

Further, the gross total value of movable assets of his spouse and a dependent was around Rs 6.87 crore and Rs 1.17 crore, respectively, he declared in the affidavit.

Among the cases taken cognisance of by court was the one regarding the alleged bribery of an Election Commission official as part of the Two Leaves dispute, he said.

Delhi Police had earlier filed the case against him and the sidelined leader is now on bail, with the other accused being one Suresh Chandrasekar.

Four FIRs were pending against him on other matters, Dhinakaran added.

Dhinakaran's challenger and AIADMK nominee E Madhusudhanan declared movable and immovable assets valued at over Rs 1.49 crore.

The 75 year-old veteran, who took on Dhinakaran as the candidate of the rebel O Panneerselvam camp in April, also mentioned he had no pending cases against him.

# Ockhi intensifies into severe cyclone; to hit Lakshadweep

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI/ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Heavy rains continued to batter coastal areas of Kerala and south Tamil Nadu today, crippling normal life, even as Cyclone Ockhi lay centered about 80km north-northeast of Minicoy in Lakshadweep.

The death toll in the two states in rain-related incidents rose to 12 on Friday.

As the toll due to Cyclone Ockhi in Kanyakumari district mounted to five today, a low pressure system over the South Andaman Sea is expected to turn into a depression in the next 48 hours, which may bring more rain to Tamil Nadu.

The deaths occurred in cyclone-related incidents in the district. Chief Minister K Palaniswami announced a solatium of Rs 4 lakh to the kin of



A fisherman being taken to a hospital in Thiruvananthapuram after being rescued by the defence personnel from the sea, following the cyclone

each of the victims, an official release said.

A report from Thiruvananthapuram said as many as 218 fishermen from Kerala, stranded in the sea off the coast due to inclement weather conditions, were brought safely to the shore today even as the

death toll rose to seven in the state.

In Chennai, Palaniswami took stock of the situation in the wake of the havoc wrought by the cyclone.

An official release said over 1,200 persons affected by the heavy rain in Kanyakumari and

# Custodial death case: CBI submits status report in Himachal HC

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SHIMLA: The CBI on Friday submitted in the Himachal Pradesh High Court a status report on its probe into the custodial death of an accused in the rape-and-murder of a teenage girl in Kotkhai in Himachal Pradesh in July.

In the status report submitted before a bench of Acting Chief Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice Sandeep Sharma, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said that it had already filed charge sheet against eight police personnel, including an inspector general-rank officer, in connection with the custodial death.

It said that the investigation was continuing and that a supplement charge-sheet would be filed if more people were found involved in the case, according to CBI counsel Anshul Bansal.

The bench asked the agency to file another status report by December 20. The CBI registered two cases on the direction of the Himachal Pradesh High Court in July this year to probe the rape-and-murder of the 16-year-old girl and the second related to the custodial death of an accused, Suraj Singh, arrested by a special investigation team (SIT) of the Himachal Pradesh Police.



## On November 16, CBI arrested then Superintendent of Police (SP) of Shimla D W Negi

by another accused in the case at Kotkhai police station on the intervening night of July 18 and 19, triggering a massive public outrage.

Singh, a 29-year-old labourer from Nepal, was among six people arrested by the SIT which was initially probing the rape case. The remaining five accused in the rape-and-murder case have been released on bail.

On August 29, the CBI arrested then Inspector General of Police (IGP) Z H Zaidi, who was heading the SIT, then Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) of Theog Manoj

Joshi, the then Station House Officer of Kotkhai, one Assistant Sub-Inspector, three head constables and one constable in the custodial death case.

On November 16, the agency arrested then Superintendent of Police (SP) of Shimla D W Negi.

In its charge sheet filed in a special court on November 25, the CBI said there was no evidence against the person who the state police claimed had killed Singh.

The CBI also included the names of ASP Bhajan Negi and DSP Rattan Negi, both members of the disbanded SIT, in its charge sheet.

The CBI charge-sheet mentioned that Suraj Singh died due to severe torture.

The Class X student had gone missing on July 4 and her naked body was recovered from Haliala forests in Kotkhai on July 6.

## NATION BRIEFS

### MUSLIMS COME FORWARD TO CREMATE DESTITUTE HINDU FOUND DEAD

RAISEN: In a noble gesture, Muslims from a local cultural organisation on Friday came forward and cremated a Hindu man who was found dead in Beganganj tehsil of the district. The body of 50-year-old destitute Prem Singh Sahu was found by a resident named Farooq Baig in the Narayan Das Tekri area. With no one stepping forward to cremate Sahu, the resident informed Shakeel Ahmed, the president of the Muslim Tyeohar Committee, Beganganj. The committee is a Muslim organisation that conducts religious and cultural activities. Ahmed said that Sahu's body was taken to the crematorium after police was duly informed. "The mortal remains of Sahu was consigned to flames as per Hindu rituals after informing Begumganj police station inspector Alok Shrivastava," he said. Ahmed added that the urn containing the ashes of Sahu would be immersed in the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh and the Ganges at Allahabad.

### CBI TAKES OVER INVESTIGATION IN GOMTI DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

NEW DELHI: The CBI has taken over the investigation into alleged irregularities in the Rs 1,500 crore Gomti river front development project in Lucknow by registering an FIR against eight engineers, officials said on Friday. The Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government in Uttar Pradesh had constituted an inquiry into the beautification project of the Gomti river front carried out by the former Samajwadi Party government. The Adityanath government wanted the matter referred to the CBI, which took over the investigation on Thursday. It asked for an investigation into irregularities committed with a "criminal intent" in the implementation of the 'Gomti River Channelization Project' and the 'Gomti River Front Development' by the state's Department of Irrigation. The CBI has filed an FIR against then chief engineers Gulesh Chandra, S N Sharma, Qazim Ali, then superintendent engineers Mangal Yadav, Akhil Raman, Kamaleshwar Singh, Roop Singh Yadav and executive engineer Surendra Yadav. Gulesh Chandra, Shiv Mangal Yadav, Akhil Raman and Roop Singh Yadav have now retired, officials said.

### FIR AGAINST HARDIK FOR HOLDING RALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

RAJKOT: A complaint has been registered against Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) leader Hardik Patel and his aide Tushar Nandani for allegedly violating the election code of conduct by holding a rally without permission. Rajkot (West) election officer P R Jani, in his application to the Malaviya Nagar police station, said that despite the district authority denying permission, Hardik Patel addressed a rally in Rajkot on November 29. Jani alleged that Nandani had sought a permission to hold a "get-together" for Patidar residents of ward number 8,9 and 10. "However, it was brought to our notice that on the same day, at the same time and at the same venue, PAAS had sought a permission to hold 'Maha Kranti rally'. We rejected both the applications citing (apprehension of) law and order disturbance," Jani said. "Despite the rejection, PAAS organised a rally, which was attended by over 15,000 people and Hardik Patel addressed it," the complaint said.

### CHARGESHEET AGAINST CUSTOMS' EX-DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FILED

NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation has filed a chargesheet before the special judge, CBI Cases, Ahmedabad against then Deputy Commissioner of Customs, Mundra and a private person in a bribery case. The CBI had registered a case against Deputy Commissioner of Customs, Mundra and a private person on September 18, 2017 for demanding a bribe of Rs 30 lakh from the complainant, who was working as customs house agent (CHA).

## Fadnavis has tea with NCPs Jaydatt Kshirsagar, raises eyebrows



OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: A cup of tea by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) legislator from Beed, Jaydatt Sonajrao Kshirsagar, at the latter's Beed residence has raised political temperatures ahead of the December 11 winter session of Maharashtra legislature.

Kshirsagar has downplayed the incident and blamed the media for drawing unnecessary inferences out of a personal visit. He was minister for Public Works (state PSUs) in the previous Congress-NCP led government.

The visit however raised the hackles of state NCP president Sunil Tatkare who said, "It is well within the rights of the Chief Minister as to whose house he should visit or not. However, in the last 10 months, 161 farmers have committed suicide in Beed district. Had the chief minister visited the homes of any of the families of those farmers it would have been much better."

official tour of Beed district, where he attended the Golden Jubilee celebrations of district's oldest Marathi daily "Zunzar Neta". The event was attended by his cabinet colleagues Girish Mahajan, Pankaja Munde, former BJP MLC Pasha Patel, BJP MLC Vinayak Mete, BJP Lok Sabha MP Dr Pritam Munde and others.

An NCP leader, requesting anonymity, said Kshirsagar has of late been sulking against the party ever since his nephew Sandip Kshirsagar was entrusted with the reins of the party in Beed district.

In the recent zilla parishad and panchayat samiti elections, the uncle-nephew duo had clashed, with nephew Sandip Kshirsagar lodging a complaint against his uncle Jaydatt Kshirsagar.

**Digha Sankarpur Development Authority**  
Digha :: Purbia Medinipur :: Phone : (03220) 266-001/227

**E-NIQ/E-Tender Notice**  
NIOT No. E-028 to E-035/DSDA/2017-18 dated : 01.12.2017  
E-tender is invited from reliable, Bonafide experienced Firms/Agencies/Contractor for different types of Civil works.  
Last date of submission online: 15.12.2017 upto 3.00 PM  
NIQ No. 010 to 011/DSDA/2017-18 dated : 01.12.2017  
E-NIQ is invited from reliable, experienced Firms/ Agencies/ Contractor for const. of pandal, stalls, stages and inst. of electrical works including D.G. Set etc. for Bengal Beach Festival at Digha  
Last date of submission online: 06.12.2017 upto 3.00 PM (NIQ - 010)  
Last date of submission online: 11.12.2017 upto 3.00 PM (NIQ - 011)  
For details : www.wbtenders.gov.in

**The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited**  
A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise  
Corporate Identity No. U01004WB1985SGC039154  
Sagarighi Thermal Power Project  
P.O. Monigram, P.S. Sagarighi, Dist. - Murshidabad, Pin - 742237

**EXTENSION OF DATES**  
Ref. No.: WBPDC/ Tend-Adv/CC/17-18/279/Sg/TPP Dated: 26.09.2017  
The Bid Submission End Date for Notice Inviting E-Tenders published in this newspaper vide above mentioned Ref. No. for the below mentioned NITs is hereby extended to: 11.12.2017 at 02.00 pm.

Sl. No.	Ref. NIT No.	Job Description
1.	WBPDC/Sg/TPP/ NIT/E/1051/17-18	Supply & delivery of External Nozzle Ring for coal Mill ZGM123N for Sagarighi Thermal Power Project, WBPDC
2.	WBPDC/Sg/TPP/ NIT/E/1052/17-18	Supply & delivery of Different Sealing Ring & asbestos Gasket for Sagarighi Thermal Power Project, WBPDC

Contact Person: S. K. Ghosh, Sr. Manager (Purchase). Tel. No.: 03483-237085. E-mail: sgppsp@gmail.com For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in  
ICA/T 58883(2)/2017

**KOLKATA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
NIT No. KMDA/HOUSING/EE/DIV-I/Circle-I/NIT-148/2017-2018  
Exe. Engr., Division-I, Circle-I, Housing Sector, KMDA (Erstwhile KIT), DJ-11, Sector-II, 1st Floor, Block-A, Unnayan Bhawan, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700091 invites tender from reliable, resourceful, bonafide and experienced firms/companies/individual contractors/Joint Ventures/Consortium for the works. S.L.No., Name of work; Estimated Value & Earnest Money are as follows: (1) Repairing and renovation of chajja, surface drain around the open land market area with other works at Lake Gardens Super Market under scheme no.114A; ₹4,84,941/-; ₹9,700/-; (2) Development and upgradation of land with flooring works at open land market area with other allied works of Lake Gardens Super Market under scheme no.114A; ₹4,84,973/-; ₹9,700/-; (3) Supplying, fitting, fixing & commissioning of Glow Sign (LED) Board, LED light fixtures including accessories of sound system at Ahindra Mancha, Chetla in KIT Scheme no.106; ₹4,85,239/-; ₹9,705/-; (4) Electrical works, sound system, LED light fitting & HSD oil at Ahindra Mancha, Chetla in KIT Scheme no.106; ₹4,51,336/-; ₹9,030/-; (5) Rejuvenation/ Redevelopment of 12.5 m High MAST for Chaplin Park, Kolkata (Electrical Works); ₹4,95,103/-; ₹9,905/-; (6) Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of 10 HP Submersible pump motor set including electrical works for operation of pump motor set in KIT Scheme No.XV.M(s); ₹1,42,462/-; ₹2,850/-; Time of Completion: 2 Months (for S.L.No. 1 & 2); 15 Days (for S.L.No.3 & 4); 10 Days (for S.L.No.5) & 1 Month (for S.L.No.6). Cost of Bid Documents : ₹750/- (for S.L.No. 1 to 6 each). Bid Submission Last Date & Time: 18.12.2017 up to 12.00 Noon. For details please contact the above office or visit our KMDA Websites. KMDA-798/A/TCP(3)/17-18  
www.kmdaonline.org

**KOLKATA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
NIT No. 20/KMDA/EM/EE-IIT-1 OF 2017-18  
Sealed tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division-II, EM Sector, KMDA, Block-D, 2nd Floor, Unnayan Bhawan, Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700 091 from the reliable, resourceful and bonafide, electrical licensed contractors for the works: Name of Work; Estimated Cost; Earnest Money: (1) Street lighting installation on diverted portion on EM Bye Pass; Rs. 2,70,243/-; Rs. 5,405/-; (2) Replacement of old 250 watt. SON luminaries by new 400 watt. SON luminaries for enhancement of illumination on 4 no. Bridge; Rs. 4,85,119/-; Rs. 9,702/-; (3) Micro tunneling, supply & laying of different size cable and GI pipe for service connection to street light pole, high mast at different places on EM Bye Pass; Rs. 4,73,802/-; Rs. 9,476/-; Time of Completion: 05 days for S.L. No. 1 & 2 and 07 days for S.L. No. 3. Cost of Tender Documents: Rs. 850/- each. Last date & time limit of receiving application for tender paper: 19.12.2017 up to 3:00 p.m. For details contact the above office or visit our website. KMDA/T-801/A-Contd(2)/2017-18  
Visit Website : www.kmdaonline.org

**Government of West Bengal**  
North Bengal Development Department  
Branch Secretariat Uttarkanya, Fulbari, Jalpaiguri

**ABRIDGED e-NIT**

e-NIT ref. no.	Name of work	Estimated Amount	Last date of Bid submission
NIT-82-SL-02 (2nd Call) OF 2017-18	Construction of Community Hall at Bharnobari T.E. & Satali T.E. in Malangi G.P., Meckhpara T.E. in chuapara G.P. and Gangutia T.E. in Garopara G.P. within Kalchini Block in the district of Alipurduar.	₹ 2,61,86,113.00	26/12/2017 up to 15:00 Hours
NIT-110 OF 2017-18	Construction of Marketing Sheds in Samuktala Hat (G+1) under Alipurduar - II PS within District Alipurduar	Rs. 3,75,69,554/-	26/12/2017 up to 15:00 Hours

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer  
North Bengal Development Department  
Details can be seen in the Official Website www.wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in  
For all details and online tender submission visit https://wbtenders.gov.in

**HOOGLY RIVER BRIDGE COMMISSIONERS**  
St. Georges Gate Road, Kolkata-21  
Tele fax no. - 033-2248-6787

**Abridged N.I.E.T. NO. HRBC/JPM (W)/SR/6/17-18**  
Online bids are invited by J.P.M (Works), HRBC for the following work "Development of existing steel crash barrier on Lock Gate Cossipore Flyover at "At Grade" portion to avoid road accident" from bonafied and resourceful agency having credential of similar nature of work as per Government rules. Starting date of submission of bid 02.12.2017 at 10.00 am. Last date submission of bid (online) will be on 16.12.2017 at 10.00 am. Other details may be seen from the website http://tender.wb.nic.in & www.hrbc.in  
Sd/-  
Joint Project Manager (Works)

# Good news pouring in: PM on GDP, UP poll results

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**AHMEDABAD/NEW DELHI:** Buoyed by the latest GDP growth figures and the BJP's landslide victory in the Uttar Pradesh civic polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday good news is pouring in from all sides, and despite the criticism from various quarters, India is moving ahead with confidence.

To reach out to party workers in the state ahead of the Assembly elections, he spoke to over 7,500 women BJP workers in Gujarat in a video conference through NaMo App.

"After we took the decisions of the note ban and GST (roll out) some people had started claiming that India is now finished. They said that India has entered a dark age."

"People claiming to be economists entered into a competition to give statements against these decisions," the prime minister said, according to a release by the state BJP.

"Amid that hue and cry, India has once again started moving forward with confidence. Yesterday, it was announced that our GDP has grown by 6.3 per cent. Just when we were relishing that



moment, people of UP did wonders. We are getting good news at regular intervals now," he said. Referring to the BJP's impressive showing in UP civic polls, Modi said these results are important in many ways.

"Yogi-ji (Yogi Adityanath) became the chief minister after the people of UP gave three-fourths majority to the BJP."

That victory had come amid negative propaganda against our decision of demonetisation. This time, some people created a huge uproar against the GST, claiming that the BJP would never come to power due to this decision," the prime

minister said.

"Be it our stand on triple talaq or our decision to implement the GST, the country's voters want progress and India's well-being. And, as we know, as soon as winter sets in in UP, Gujarat too feels that cold air after some time. That air has already reached here," he said, implying that his party would do similarly well in Gujarat elections.

He also mentioned several other "good news" such as improvement in the ease of doing business ranking by the World Bank and ratings by Moody's recently.

## Congress attacks PM again over Rafale deal

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**AHMEDABAD/NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Friday again attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Rafale fighter jet deal with France and questioned his silence, saying there were serious concerns over a "huge loss" to the public exchequer.

Accusing the NDA government of playing with national security, the Congress also asked why it was hesitant in making public the fighter plane's renegotiated price.

"Rafale fighter jet deal smacks of corruption. Even after serious concerns over a huge loss to public exchequer became public, Modi government continues to maintain a conspiratorial silence in the entire matter," Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala told reporters in Ahmedabad.

"There is a huge discrepancy in the deal made by the Modi government for the

purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets from the French company Dassault Aviation SA," he alleged.

Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi had earlier targeted the Modi government over the Rafale deal.

The government has rejected the Congress' allegations of irregularities in the Rafale deal, saying it was "politically motivated" and "shameful".

Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari asked the government to make public the details of the renegotiated deal for the public to draw a comparison on whether the deal negotiated now is better than the one done during the party-led UPA rule.

He said public interest and public probity overrides any confidentiality clause that "may have been inserted for reasons bonafide or malafide", saying the money for purchase of the Rafale aircraft belongs to the people of the country.

## SC to hear PIL to treat two ECs at par with CEC after 3 weeks

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday said a copy of the plea seeking treatment of two Election Commissioners at par with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) in the matter of removability, be served upon the Attorney General of India.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud said it may seek the assistance of Attorney General K K Venugopal in dealing with the matter and ordered listing of the PIL for hearing after three weeks.

Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, lawyer and Delhi BJP spokesperson who has filed the PIL, was earlier asked to provide the copy of the plea to the poll panel also.

The petition has sought direction to the Centre not to remove the two Election Commissioners (ECs) from their office, except in a similar manner and grounds provided for removing the CEC.

"The element of independence sought to be achieved under the Constitution is not exclusively for an individual alone but for the institution. Hence, autonomy to the ECI can only be strengthened if the ECs are also provided with the similar protection as that of the



CEC," the plea said.

The plea pointed out that Article 324(5) of the Constitution protects the CEC from removal, except if the manner and grounds of removal are the same as a judge of the Supreme Court.

It said the reason for giving this protection to the CEC was in order to ensure autonomy to the ECI from external pulls and pressure but the "rationale behind not affording similar protection to ECs is not explicable."

It said the CEC and ECs enjoy the same decision-making powers, which is suggestive of the fact that their powers are at par with each other.

"However, Clause(5) of the Article 324 does not provide similar protection to the ECs and it merely says that the ECs cannot be removed from office except on the recommenda-

tion of the CEC," the petition claimed.

It also sought steps to provide an independent secretariat to the ECI and declare its expenditure as charged on the Consolidated Fund of India on the lines of the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha secretariats.

"Direct the Central Government to take appropriate steps to confer rule making authority on the ECI on the lines of the rule making authority vested in the Supreme Court of India to empower it to make election related rules and code of conduct," the petition said.

It has sought a direction to the Central Government to take appropriate steps to confer rule making authority on the ECI on the lines of the rule making authority vested with the Supreme Court to empower it to make election related rules and code of conduct.

## SC allows withdrawal of plea for probe in Rajkot suicide

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday allowed withdrawal of a plea seeking investigation into a four-year-old incident in which five members of a Nepalese family had set themselves ablaze and died in Gujarat's Rajkot.

The top court gave its nod after petitioner Rajkot resident Kaushik Chandrakantbhai Vyas who claimed to be an eyewitness to the 2013 incident said he had received a call from senior police official of Gujarat assuring him security.

A bench of Justices Adarsh Kumar Goel and U U Lalit said prayer made in the plea has been addressed and petitioner is permitted to withdraw the plea.

Vyas has sought an independent investigation into the suicide committed by Bharat Mansinhbhai Vishwakarma and his four family members.

He had also sought security cover claiming threat to his life and recording of his statement in the case.

The plea, filed through advocate Pyoli Swatija, alleged that one of the victims in his dying declaration had alleged that the Gujarat chief minister was "indirectly responsible" for the incident and the police had not probed his alleged role.

In 2013, the five had committed suicide at the Rajkot Municipal Corporation office premises fearing eviction from the society they had been living in for over three decades.

The corporation had issued them notices for eviction.

## HC asks govt to consider plea to ban some social media apps

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Friday asked the Centre to consider a representation seeking ban on social networking sites and mobile applications through which abusive and vulgar messages were being sent by hiding the sender's identity.

The court passed the direction while hearing a petition seeking to ban Saudi Arabia-based social networking website -- 'Sarahah.com and sarahah' through which the alleged uncivilised, abusive and anonymous offensive messages were being sent, causing cyber bullying and insult to the recipient.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice C Hari Shankar also asked Central Government Standing Counsel Monika Arora to treat



the petition as a representation to inquire into the matter and if required, action taken.

"If any action is being taken, it should be done expeditiously and the order passed by the government, the action taken be communicated to the petitioner within one month," the court said, adding that it was not expressing any views on the merit of the plea.

The bench disposed of the plea in which petitioner advocate Shadab Husain Khan

claimed that despite requests made to the authorities for their intervention, no action has been taken in the matter.

The plea had made the ministries of electronics and information technology and home affairs as parties.

Besides this website, the plea has also sought banning of other such websites and mobile apps, saying there was a threat to safety from cyber crime, mental peace, dignity and self-respect of people.

## India's only nuclear-powered sub INS Chakra suffers damage

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Navy's only nuclear-powered submarine, INS Chakra, has suffered a damage and a board of inquiry has been ordered into it, Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba said on Friday.

"There has been some damage to her sonar domes where two panels have been dislodged. A board of inquiry has been instituted," he said.

INS Chakra is a nuclear-

powered submarine which was taken by India on lease from Russia in 2012 for a period of 10 years. Lanba said a joint team of Indian and Russian experts has already examined the submarine to assess the damage. "It was a joint team of Indian and Russian experts who examined the submarine. We have already ordered the panels," Lanba told a press conference ahead of the Navy Day on December 4.

He hoped that the subma-

rine will be back into action "sooner than later".

INS Chakra is propelled by a 190 MW nuclear reactor. The submarine had suffered the damage around two-and-a-half months back.

Lanba also categorically rejected Russian media reports that the Navy had allowed a technical team from the US to visit the submarine.

"No US official has even seen it from close quarters," he said.

## Cong downplays UP civic poll loss, says ruling party normally wins such elections

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Friday downplayed its loss in the Uttar Pradesh civic polls saying such elections are contested on local issues and are normally won by the state's ruling dispensation.

Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari said the party will analyse the results and draw lessons for improving its performance in the future.

He, however, said the results could have been different had these polls been held under the supervision of the Election Commission instead of the State Election Commission.

"Local bodies elections are contested on local issues and the people of the country know very well which are national, state and local issues. As far as local bodies elections are concerned, everyone knows that... it goes in favour of the party in



Counting of Aligarh civic polls taking place in Aligarh on Friday PTI

power, to help get small works done," Tewari said.

On the effect of GST and demonetisation in the civic polls, the Congress leader said, "As far as noteban and GST is concerned, their effect will surely be seen in Gujarat

elections."

Tewari said due to demonetisation and GST, maximum loss was caused to the informal sector as it comprises 40 per cent of the economy, and the effects will be seen in Assembly elections like in Gujarat.

"If these elections (UP civic polls) were held under the supervision of the Election Commission rather than the State Election Commission, then the results would be different.

"As far as these results are concerned, it is our responsibility to analyse the results. We will analyse these results in detail and draw lessons from them. We also take the responsibility of the loss. Our attempt is to draw lessons from the losses and improve the party's performance," he said.

The BJP swept the Uttar Pradesh civic polls on Friday, pocketing 14 of the 16 mayoral seats as Yogi Adityanath emerged on top in his first major electoral test after taking over as chief minister in March. The Congress faced the embarrassment of losing in its bastion Amethi, the Lok Sabha constituency of its vice president Rahul Gandhi.

## HC asks Omar to participate in maintenance case without delay

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Friday directed former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to participate "without any delay" in the maintenance proceedings involving his estranged wife in a family court here.

Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal said Omar should address the arguments in the matter before the family court on December 12 and "would not seek any adjournment and without any delay".

The court passed the order on Omar's plea challenging the maintenance proceedings involving his estranged wife Payal Abdullah.

It had earlier reserved its order on Omar's plea which had claimed that the petition



moved by Payal and their two sons seeking maintenance from him, was not maintainable.

Payal's counsel had vehemently opposed Omar's plea and said the National Conference leader's wife has been deserted for over a year and "left to beg to pay the fees" of their two sons.

Omar's lawyer had argued before the high court that Payal had her own business and a house in the national capital and therefore she has to first establish that she cannot maintain herself to be entitled for the relief.

The lawyer had also contended that their two sons were

adults now and therefore, they too cannot seek maintenance.

In his plea, Omar had sought directions to the family court here to first decide the maintainability of Payal's plea before it decided on the issue of interim maintenance.

He has also challenged the family court's September 9, 2016 order issuing summons to him in the maintenance case.

The next date of hearing before the family court is December 12, the lawyers had told the high court.

On August 30 last year, a trial court had dismissed Omar's plea seeking divorce from Payal, saying he had failed to prove irretrievable breakdown of their marriage.

His appeal in the high court against the trial court decision is still pending.

**WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED**  
(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise)  
Registered Office: Vaidya Bhawan, 21, Sector-II, Beharaganga, Kolkata-700091  
CIN: U40101WB2007SGC13474 • web: www.wbsetcl.in

**WBSETCL**  
Abridged Notice Inviting e-Tender

Notice Inviting NIT No. 16 of 2017-18 of CE. (O&M) - II WBSETCL for the work of 'Construction of (i) Permanent Boundary Wall for Balanced Portion (ii) Temporary Fencing towards road and DVC side at Purulia 132/33 KV Sub-Station under Purulia Area Office, WBSETCL'. Bid submission start date (online): 22.12.2017 from 3:00 A.M. Closing date (online): 28.12.2017 at 03:00 P.M. Interested bidders may visit the following websites for detail NIT published in: <https://wbenders.gov.in>, <https://etender.wb.nic.in> and <http://www.wbsetcl.in>. ICA/T 5920(2)/2017

**E Tender Notice**

E Tender Notice is being invited by the E.E./PWD/NBCD, Siliguri, for the following work, details of which may be had from this office during the office hours or at <http://etender.wb.nic.in> or at [www.pdwb.in](http://www.pdwb.in)

**Tender Ref No :** WB/PWD/EE/NBCD/NIT/13/2017-18  
**Tender ID :** 2017\_WBPWD\_140757\_1  
**Bid submission End Date for all the following works :** 08/12/2017 at 3 pm

**Name of work :** Repairing and maintenance Kharibari-Phansidewa to Chaterhat with a link to Bajurigoach Road in stretches from 0.00 km to 5.50 km of in the district of Darjeeling under PWD Siliguri Construction Sub-Division No-II, under North Bengal Construction Division, Siliguri during the year 2017-18.

**Eligibility :** Bonafied Contractors  
**Note :- Any subsequent corrigendum if necessary will be published on website only**

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (PWD)  
North Bengal Construction Division

**TENDER NOTICE**  
GOVT OF WESTBENGAL  
NIT No 29e of 2017-18  
OF S.E. N.B.H.C.  
(Under Plan head)  
email - [seshe@wb.nic.in](mailto:seshe@wb.nic.in)  
Phone No-0353-2468527

- Nayahat - Gopalpur Road from 1.20 Km to 2.74 Km. Strengthening work under Coochbehar Highway Division in the district of Coochbehar during the year 2017-18. Rs. 6,71,73,679.00
- Bhaberhat to Masanerddham road from 0.00 Knp to 1.78 Km. Strengthening work under Coochbehar Highway Division in the district of Coochbehar during the year 2017-18. Rs. 2,86,04,370.00

The detailed NIT is available at <https://etender.wb.nic.in>  
Sd/-Superintending Engineer,  
North Bengal Highway Circle  
Siliguri

Government of West Bengal  
North Bengal Development Department  
Branch Secretariat Uitarkanya, Fulbari, Jalpaiguri

ABRIDGED -e-NIT

NIT ref. no.	Name of work	Estimated Amount	Last of bid submission date
NIT-14(EL)/EE/2017-18-2nd Call	Electrification Work of Suhas Chandra Talukdar Memorial Community Hall at Shantinagar Housing Complex, Jabrabhita near FCI Godown and IOC Terminal, NJP, Dist-Jalpaiguri.	14,86,796.00	18/12/2017 up to 12:00 Hours

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer (Elect)  
North Bengal Development Department

Details can be seen in the Official Website [www.wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in](http://www.wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in)  
For all details and online tender submission visit <https://wbenders.gov.in>

Government of West Bengal  
O/O The Superintending Engineer PWD South Western Electrical Circle  
Sahid Mangal Pandey Sarani, Midnapur-721101

ABRIDGED NIT

**Retender Notice Inviting e-Quotation No.- WBPWD/SE/SWEC/NIQ20/2017-18/Retender**

**Tender ID:** 2017\_WBPWD\_140813\_1

**Name of Work:** Construction of circuit house at Jhargram in the district of Jhargram --Electrical Installation work for Gr. Floor and 1st floor.

**Work Site :** Jhargram

**Last date of submission of bid :-16/12/2017 up to 15:00 Hrs.**

Further details can be seen in the above mentioned office during working hours or in Official Website [www.pdwb.gov.in](http://www.pdwb.gov.in)  
For all details and online tender submission visit <https://wbenders.gov.in>

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
North Bengal Development Department

Details can be seen in the Official Website [www.wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in](http://www.wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in)  
For all details and online tender submission visit <https://wbenders.gov.in>

Government of West Bengal  
North Bengal Development Department  
Branch Secretariat Uitarkanya, Fulbari, Jalpaiguri

ABRIDGED -e-NIT

Quotation Ref.	Name of work	Estimated Amount	Last date of bid submission
Notice Inviting Quotation No. - 91 SI - 01 OF 2017-18 (2nd Call)	Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for "Construction of Composite Bridge on the Road of Koradaha Hat to Shibdangi Hat under Japan Block in the district of Dakshin Dinajpur. (Total width 5 mtr.)"	As quoted	15/12/2017 up to 14:00 Hours
Notice Inviting Quotation No. - 91 SI - 02 OF 2017-18 (2nd Call)	Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for "Construction of Composite Bridge at Paschim Nimpur Khari with approach road under Japan Block in the district of Dakshin Dinajpur. (Total width 5 mtr.)"	As quoted	15/12/2017 up to 14:00 Hours
Notice Inviting Quotation No. - 91 SI - 03 OF 2017-18 (2nd Call)	Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for "Construction of Composite Bridge at Shree Rampur to Krishnabati with approach road under Japan Block in the district of Dakshin Dinajpur. (Total width 5 mtr.)"	As quoted	15/12/2017 up to 14:00 Hours

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
North Bengal Development Department

Details can be seen in the Official Website [www.wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in](http://www.wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in)  
For all details and online tender submission visit <https://wbenders.gov.in>

## EDITORIAL

## In no mood to back off



SUBHASH CHOPRA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday remarked at a media event that he is ready to pay a 'big political price' to change India. What he meant was that he would not hesitate in taking unpopular decisions, which may be in fact in the best interest of the nation. The PM's resolve to take such politically risky decisions, for example, the move to demonetise high-value currency notes in 2016, comes in the wake of upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections where his party BJP is locked in a multi-cornered contest amid anti-incumbency jitters. A victory for the BJP in the PM's home state is important, if not crucial, for the party and the PM himself.

Besides demonetisation, implementation of GST (Goods & Services Tax) was the other major decision of his government, which impacted people on a large scale. Did these decisions make him unpopular? And will the electorate in Gujarat, and Himachal Pradesh where assembly elections were conducted last month and whose results will be declared together with Gujarat Assembly election results, express their displeasure through their votes? But more importantly, if the BJP wins the elections in the two states, will it stand vindicated and ready to unleash more of those politically risky decisions as the Prime Minister has spoken in no uncertain terms?

Going by major economic indicators, the current state of the country's economy is healthy with GDP posting a growth for the last quarter at 6.4 per cent and international credit rating firm Moody's giving an upgrade to India. After harsh criticism of his government's handling of the economy from his party men Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, these positive indicators lend the government the moral authority needed to continue with its policies. PM's assertion that he will continue to take politically risky decisions to bring about irreversible changes comes in the backdrop of these recent positive economic indicators.

Fighting corruption and black money has been a key agenda of the Modi-led NDA government at the Centre. Demonetisation has thrown up a huge amount of data about companies and people who need to be probed for the unaccounted wealth they have accumulated. Income-Tax Department, Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation are taking actions based on data generated through demonetisation.

The probing agencies have new leads to work on. And, this can lead to a cleaner economic environment, where every monetary transaction is made formally through the banking system. While this behavioural change may sound great as an idea, implementing it to the last details need time and a totally revamped workforce. Until then, this great idea may cause inconvenience to the common people and in turn, would dent PM's popularity.

His government's resolve to expose *benami* properties and take action against people who are holding such land banks and real estate pieces across the country is another move in fighting corruption and black money. But at the moment, this is a non-starter and one needs to wait to see how the government takes this drive forward.

Apart from these measures which go on to punish people in the name of reforms and public good, the Modi government has been awfully short of initiatives on developmental and social fronts. The coming together of young Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi and the much younger Hardik Patel in Gujarat Assembly polls will strike a chord with the youth in the state. Low economic growth in key sectors which provide maximum employment has left an army of young people without a job. This segment of youth voters, neglected and bereft of opportunity, may upset the BJP's apple cart in Gujarat. The BJP is keenly aware of this possibility and perhaps that's why it has launched a scheme called, "Each booth, 25 youth".

When the PM says he is ready to pay a big political price to bring about systematic and irreversible changes, does he mean this would alienate some sections of the society and make them hostile to the government?

The critics of the Modi government often cited the presence of non-entities in his cabinet who are not able to chalk out and execute independent plans for their ministries. Experts find it disconcerting that key ministries like finance, defence and foreign affairs are run in what they call ad-hoc manner. The youth brigade is conspicuous by their absence from the Modi cabinet. The youthful energy of young talents is not on the forefront of the NDA government.

It is in this backdrop that Rahul Gandhi's emergence as the top favourite of the electorate looks imminent. Or so the thinking goes in the BJP circles. PM's latest remarks may also be aimed at fighting off this sense of insecurity among the BJP workers.

**The Punjab government led by Captain Amarinder Singh is setting up 400 plants in a time-bound manner to make use of paddy and other crop stubble which is traditionally burned, causing air pollution and other health problems**

## Steps to stop stubble burning

*Punjab has come out suo motu to tackle the burning issue of crop stubble fires with a long-term initiative costing it Rs 10,000 crore*

Air Pollution is a hydra-headed invisible djin that no magic wand can shoo away. Nor is there a single cure to deal with all its deadly viruses that find their way into our very lungs and innards, making normal breathing a matter of life and death. It's not just the mega cities like Delhi, Kolkata, and Bengaluru that are in the thick of it, but smaller cities could be equally in its grip.

Every city, state or the wider region has to do its share of work to tackle pollution which is assuming epidemic proportions with schools being ordered to cut down open air games and activities and doctors advising people to stay indoors for as long as possible. Delhi for instance, has had its worst early winter spells for over 50 days, with some reprieve in sight thanks to the wind and sun in the last few days.

Delhi, Haryana and Punjab have had their slanging matches blaming each other for pollution clouds with the central government watching from the sidelines. However, one state, namely Punjab, has come out suo motu to tackle the burning issue of crop stubble fires with a long-term initiative costing it Rs 10,000 crore. It is putting its money where its mouth is, while other states are still busy with talks and photo opportunities.

The Punjab government led by Captain Amarinder Singh is setting up 400 plants in a time-bound manner to make use of paddy and other crop stubble which is traditionally burned, causing air pollution and other health problems. In a path-breaking move, the state government has inked an agreement or MOU with an engineering company to establish these plants over the next ten months, well in time before the next crop stubble season at a cost of Rs 10,000 crores.

The multi-plant construction project is led by Dr T Shivakumaran of Chennai based Neway Engineering Company, who told *Millennium Post* that the first 50 or more plants would be ready by early next year, very likely in February or March. A doctor-turned hands-on technocrat, described as the 'inventor' of stubble plant technology by one of his Chennai colleagues, Shivakumaran is confident of delivering the project well ahead of schedule. His Neway company is already run-



A farmer burning crop stubble

ning a similar plant in Chennai for the past one year. The Chennai plant is converting municipal solid waste into bio-energy with its patented technology. Its 'pollution-free Zero Residue Technology' is said to leave behind no residue at the end of the process, doing away with any landfill requirements and other problems.

The Punjab venture, evidently miles away from Shivakumaran's Chennai conditions and years away from his medical orthopaedic skills, poses huge logistical problems of collecting stubble from big and small farms, and transporting them to 400 plant locations and finally deliver-

ing the loads to National Thermal Power Corporation plants whose crucial cooperation has been sought and obtained. A range of combustible and non-combustible byproducts are promised at the end of the operation. The highly saleable carbon-rich fuel produced by the conversion of paddy straw will find application in diverse industries, including cement, iron and steel, sugarcane, paper, thermal power plants and methanol/ethanol production.

Shivakumaran will oversee the setting up of 400 cluster units where nearly 20 million tonnes of paddy straw generated by Punjab every season will be treated.

Each unit will have the capacity to process 50,000 tonnes through the year, or 150-175 tonnes per day.

The state government will allocate seven acres of land for each cluster point, of which four to five acres would be used for storing 50,000 tonnes of paddy straw through the year, over a concession period of 33 years. The state government will also provide power to the company at subsidized tariff rate, along with some other incentives under its new industrial policy.

A mega bonus of the entire operation is expected to be the creation of nearly 30,000 skilled and semi-skilled jobs for the youth.

## Quote martial

**Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience**

MARY WOLSTONECRAFT

## PLIGHT OF THE ROHINGYAS

*In an age and day of cooperation and harmony, it is extremely sad to see how the Rohingya refugees in Khayerpur are facing such horrible atrocities. While I understand that a country needs to be careful about who they let in, it is also important to note that the Rohingyas in Tripura said they wanted to cross the border because they wanted jobs. It breaks my heart to see how they are suffering to make ends meet. To understand the plight of a fellow human is a quality that we all need to adapt to.*

ARUSHI RATHORE Via email

dear EDITOR

millenniumpost.in

Log on to write letters to the editor or send them to [letter2editor.mp@gmail.com](mailto:letter2editor.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

## Is this the age of women?

*Far from the glitz and glamour of GES 2017 is the real India where women are either threatened to be beheaded or are placed on a pedestal; this gap must be bridged first*



SHUTAPA PAUL

**While Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Union Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj waxed eloquent about the confident strides taken by the nation, and PM Modi spoke of the eminence of women in India, protests against actor Deepika Padukone and her film, 'Padmavati' continued**

Discussions surrounding women empowerment and increasing their participation in the labour force has been gaining momentum, and with the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) organised jointly by India and US in Hyderabad this week, the need for more women entrepreneurs has been the talk of the town. With the Global Gender Gap Report 2017 by the World Economic Forum (WEF) placing India firmly at the 108th position out of 144 nations, the GES' focus on women was welcome. The summit's theme of 'Women First, Prosperity for All' resonated all the way from Hyderabad to the rest of the world.

As a fledgling woman entrepreneur, I felt hopeful listening to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of an impending basket of goodies aimed at a helping hand towards women folk. PM Modi said that in the coming days there would be a special initiative to promote entrepreneurship skills among women and foster mentorship to provide a fillip to economic growth. There are indeed lessons to be learnt from the US where the number of firms owned by women has increased by 45 per cent in the last 10 years, while 8 in 10 new women-owned businesses have been started by minority women. Over 11 million American women own businesses and contribute over \$1 trillion in revenue, and provide almost 9 million jobs. However, in developing nations, 70 per cent of women bosses of small and medium-sized businesses have been



Mitra Robot greets PM Modi and Ivanka Trump at Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2017; Suraj Pal Amu (right)

denied access to capital, with almost \$300 billion annual credit deficit for women entrepreneurs.

We do need all the support that we can muster to break the glass ceiling, push open the boardroom doors and take our rightful place in the world. Greater participation from women would mean providing equitable opportunities to all. It would also mean enabling increased penetration of education and making available vocational training to Indian women. A safe and gender-conducive work environment would also boost the number of women who step out of their homes to earn a livelihood. Working graveyard shifts or remaining in a job even after having children should be

facilitated. Most importantly, it is time to bid adieu to regressive mindsets.

In a recent column, I had mentioned that it is imperative that we shatter all stereotypes in order to bridge the gaping gender divide in India, and that this onslaught would have to be led both by men and women. It is heartening, therefore, to see the PM leading the way and hopefully, others will also take up the cudgels to encourage their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters to work, build, and create. India sent a strong, progressive message to the world as PM Modi spoke of the intrinsic role played by women in India. He invoked Shakti, the goddess of power, spoke of Gargi, the ancient phi-



osopher, mentioned the valour of warrior queens, Rani Lakshmbai and Rani Ahilyabai Holkar, and hailed the achievements of Kalpana Chawla, Sunita Williams, PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, and Sania Mirza.

It all looked so peachy at GES 2017; timed perfectly with Ivanka Trump's changing ensembles. But I wonder if Trump Junior had a chance to hear about the otherwise crappy week that women in India have had. We have very few 'good' days, but the irony of this week was startling. While women were being encouraged at GES

2017 with the PM himself showing the way, every kind of right and freedom awarded to Indian women was grotesquely flouted in the country in the same week.

While India's first female Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Union Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj waxed eloquent about the confident strides taken by the nation, and PM Modi spoke of the eminence of women in India, protests against actor Deepika Padukone and her film, *Padmavati* continued. The BJP's Haryana leader Suraj Pal Amu had earlier thought nothing of announcing a Rs 10 crore bounty to be presented to anyone who would behead *Padmavati*'s leading actor, Deepika Padukone. This week, the Supreme Court freed Hadiya from her parents' custody, only to send her off to study, completely disregarding an adult woman's wish to be with her husband. Also in the same week, a news report said that rape videos in Uttar Pradesh continue to be circulated unabated; louder the screams, more the price of the videos.

Maybe Trump Junior did not hear of these cases that shows either the dichotomy or hypocrisy of India or perhaps both. This too is India; far from the glitz and glamour of the stage, the real India is where filth gathers and festers, proving to be obstacles to a woman's progress. The nation is caught between threatening to behead us and putting us on a pedestal; this is the chasm that we must bridge first.

(The writer is a journalist and media entrepreneur)

# 'SFAC mobilises farmers at grass-roots'

Sumanta Chaudhuri, Managing Director of SFAC, discusses the unique features of the SFAC model



DHIRENDRA KUMAR

The concept of FPOs is aimed at empowering farmers – socially and financially. It is proving helpful in doubling the income of farmers as FPOs comprise of a group of 800-1,000 farmers, so when they procure seeds and fertilisers collectively, their input cost get reduced and they get better price of their produce

Please tell us about the prime objectives of Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC).

The fundamental objectives of the SFAC are to promote agri-business and catalyse private investment apart from forming and developing farmer producers organisation. Also, the SFAC has now become the implementing authority for the electronic national agriculture marketing (eNAM) platform.

Please explain how the concept of farmers' collectivisation would help in improving the standards of farmers.

The country has experienced a huge success in the dairy sector just because of farmers' collectivisation concept. It's our firm belief that the same level of success can also be achieved in the agriculture sector. Given that farmers grow traditional crops, there is a huge scope in this sector and the concept of formation of Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) and Farmer Producer Companies (FPC) is a move in this direction.

The FPO formation initiative was kick-started in 2011-12 to give strength and momentum to farming sector in this country. In 2013, the Department of Agriculture had brought out a policy and process guidelines for FPOs which is still the basis for the formation of FPOs by many entities, including the SFAC, which was designated as single window agency for the promotion of FPOs.

Now, the SFAC has been able to promote about 8 lakh smaller and marginal farmers by forming 750 FPOs out of which around 675 are already registered while the remaining would get registered during this financial year.

What are the attractive features of SFAC model?

There are several unique features of the SFAC model and all are not coincidental, but deliberate which has been developed after a well thought out consultation process. In the case of FPOs promoted by SFAC, the minimum number of farmers should be 800 to 1,000. The prime reason behind this feature is that the benefits of economies could only be achieved through aggregation. It's a fact that any dilution to the numbers might lead to the formation of more number of FPOs; but our purpose is



Sumanta Chaudhuri, Managing Director, Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC)

not to increase the number of FPOs, we want to make them sustainable and viable and convert them into business entrepreneurs. It's for that reason that we have decided not to compromise on the quality.

There are some FPOs which are being promoted by NABARD, state governments and other entities, but they don't have a minimum number of farmers' criteria in their models.

The other important feature of the FPOs formed by the SFAC is that they are registered under the protection of Companies Act, which means all FPOs are companies. All the FPOs are subject to corporate compliances, proper accounting procedures and they have to con-

stitute a Board of Management. The head of the FPO is known as a CEO, which is of course not equivalent to a CEO of a private company, but the head of the FPO should be a local person with the required knowledge to run a 'company'.

What are the challenges being faced by SFAC in the making FPOs and FPCs a viable entity?

There are several challenges that SFAC is facing in making FPCs a profit-making entity. The three-year handhold period is insufficient to convert FPOs into profiteering body. We start from the grass-roots level, which is difficult as aggregating 800-1,000 people into one common

objective by contributing fair capital is a challenge in itself. Given that SFAC has no equity in it, the FPCs are companies owned and contributed by farmers only.

It's the SFAC that mobilises farmers at grass-roots – right from the village level, panchayat level, to block level. We struggle to build consensus among conflicting groups, conflicting interests and conflicting associations. So bringing them to a common platform is a challenge.

Convincing them to form FPOs and assuring them that these FPCs would help in doubling their income, adds to the list of challenges faced by agribusiness consortium.

How would the FPOs help in doubling farmers' income by 2022?

The concept of FPOs is aimed at empowering farmers – socially and financially. It is proving helpful in doubling the income of farmers as FPOs means a group of 800-1,000 farmers, so when they procure seeds and fertilisers collectively, their input cost get reduced and they get better price of their produce.

The other key component of FPOs promoted by SFAC is custom hiring, which is essentially hiring of all farm equipment. In this case, numbers are important as individual farmers cannot afford to hire costly equipment. When an FPC

hire a needed equipment, it does two things – it allows all its individual members to use the equipment in terms and after that, the FPC can also rent out the equipment to other farmers who are not members of FPOs and earn some money.

Under this model, the FPCs are empowered to run a retail outlet by themselves and there are many such FPCs which run retail outlet and have huge turnovers.

It's a hard fact that financing institutions don't show much interest in providing loans without any collateral. How is SFAC dealing with finance issue?

The access to finance was really a great challenge, but SFAC offers Equity Grant Scheme (EGS) and Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS) to FPCs to improve the availability of working capital and development of business activities.

Under the EGS, the SFAC give a matching grant of Rs 10 lakh to the FPCs, which is a part of their share capital and is distributed proportionately among their members. The CGS run by SFAC provides a guarantee cover (up to Rs 1 crore) to financial institutions for lending FPCs without any collateral.

What are the new initiatives taken by the SFAC?

The SFAC has introduced FPOs in the fisheries sector; a pilot project involving the formation of 21 Fish Farmers Producer Organisations (FFPOs) in the major fish producing states has been submitted. For the northeast region, SFAC and Spice Board are working with North Eastern Council (NEC) to form spice-based FPCs in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

The SFAC has taken several other new initiatives such as advanced training programme for the board of directors and CEOs of FPC; professional handholding of FPCs; strengthening of infrastructure through dovetailing with central/state government programmes; promotion of Fish Farmers Producer Organisations; fertilizer dealership for the FPCs.

We have also collaborated with National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad; and MANAGE, Hyderabad; for agribusiness. Similarly, we are also tying up with other institutes of similar mandate to meet different requirements of FPOs/FPCs.

## India's IT sector needs more women

Greater women representation in the IT workforce is important from the point of view of financial inclusion and purchasing power



PRADIPTO CHAKRABARTY

As a society, we need to understand, accept and implement the belief that women are in no way less than men in knowledge, skill and ability. Unfortunately, a large swath of our men is still seeped in the traditional outlook of gender equality

The disparity in numbers between men and women is perhaps nowhere starker than in India's IT workforce. For all the talk about gender justice and equality, women are still woefully underrepresented in this field. The disparity begins early – fewer girls than boys opt for STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) streams after secondary education – and is carried all the way to the university and professional level.

There's no denying that the IT sector in India needs more women. This isn't about promoting women; it's about a level playing field, with a diverse workforce. Diversity increases innovation and creativity in the workplace. Bringing more women into IT would mean increasing the talent pool. A better gender parity in the IT workforce could translate into big gains – up the diversity of talent and productivity and bridge both social and gender divide. Not just that, gender diversity could make the workplace more dynamic. Women bring different skills and qualities to the table – multi-tasking, customer-focus, team spirit and most importantly quality consciousness that complement men's abilities. Modern HR outlook is more in line with qualities women generally possess: compassion, empathy, inclusiveness and understanding. In fact, these soft skills among women go a long way in effective resource and manpower management skills, which they can bring to the table.

Their representation in the IT workforce is also important from the point of view of financial inclusion and purchasing power. Given the fact that half the users of technology products and websites are women who have a far greater influ-



Soft skills among women go a long way in effective resource and manpower management skills

ence (85 per cent according to one study), than men, on purchase decision, having more women not just on the staff, but in decision-making positions, is good for promoting a company's financial interests. While this is not to suggest that all women working in information technology are experts in create products for women, the company could certainly benefit from her ideas and perspectives of needs of the largest single consumer category.

Greater women representation in the IT workforce is desirable from another standpoint as well. Several empirical studies show that diverse teams often do better than the best team just on the basis of diversity of perspective and problem-solving approach. And women definitely have a different way of looking at things. There are several examples where women have demonstrated that they can be a driving force for innovation and ideas in technology. Women tech icons and the plethora of data showing the tangible benefit of having more women in the team will hopefully change things over time. This

also seems to be the inevitable progression. Most job profiles today and increasingly more in the future, will have a strong IT component. Women need to arm themselves with this valuable skill to compete in the job market.

With PM Modi's focus on 'Digital India', the IT sector is more likely to witness business expansion than other sectors of the economy. The government needs to do a better job of exposing women to IT. You never know, women may turn out to be better than men in leading a technology start-up!

So how can the IT sector improve gender diversity? Initiation must begin early. Schools must invest in exposing girl students to new and emerging technology. Parents must encourage daughters to get interested in this field. A supportive home environment can make all the difference in helping girls see IT as a viable career choice. Unfortunately, families often perpetuate the stereotype that logic and numbers are for men and the creative domains are for women.

By the time they finish school most girls (at least in

big cities and towns) are into Facebook and Instagram. We need to whet their appetite for IT with more interesting exposure. The media can play a big role here. Programs that focus on educating women on the benefits of joining the industry workforce are critical. TV shows on women in technology they can look up to could help girls get inspired for a career in IT. There are lots of incredibly inspiring women who are doing a great job in IT whose achievements need to be highlighted. Young women aspirants need to be told that there are so many facets to technology now that they needn't have to work in a male-dominated set-up; if they are willing to take risks, they can start their own venture. While the achievements of Gates, Jobs and other men tech leaders are well celebrated, how many young people today know of Sheryl Sandberg, Susan Wojcicki, Meg Whitman and Ginni Rometty, CEOs of big businesses such as YouTube, Hewlett Packard and IBM?

There are parity issues that could spoil sport. Take for instance the fact that women

are often paid less than their male counterparts or that there are few women at the top in IT firms. The key is to identify the barriers at each rung of the ladder and eliminate them. Companies need to ensure gender parity in pay, policies and programmes. In addition tech companies, especially in India should be open to the thought of a parallel yet distinct growth trajectory for men and women. While things are changing in terms of this understanding, the pace of acceptance is very slow and lots need to be evangelized around this message.

Women who are already in the field need to be vocal and supportive of other women and help junior colleagues feel more confident and move up the ladder. This is possible only if they themselves find their job satisfying, exciting and intellectually stimulating. They need to know they are making a difference and that they are noticed and appreciated. It is in the interest of IT companies to hire more women. At the end of the day, if the IT sector is to progress, it has to be diverse and gender-balanced. The most important aspect of this issue is of course the gender inequality mind-set that pervades India. This needs to change drastically. As a society, we need to understand, accept and implement the belief that women are in no way less than men in knowledge, skill and ability. Unfortunately, a large swath of our men is still seeped in the traditional outlook of gender equality. The future of technology will be bleak if we continue to think this way. (The writer is Regional Director, CompTIA, the voice of the world's information technology industry. CompTIA is dedicated to advancing industry growth through its educational programs, professional certifications and public policy advocacy)



tweet  
RETWEET



NARENDRA MODI  
@narendramodi

On the occasion of their Statehood Day, I convey my greetings to the people of Nagaland. This state is blessed with immense natural beauty and industrious citizens. I pray that the state scales new heights of development in the times to come.



SMRITI IRANI  
@smritiirani

While campaigning in Gujarat, received news of @BJP4India's stupendous victory in UP Civic Polls 2017. Congratulations to @myogiadityanath ji & @BJP4UP's karyakartas for taking forward PM @narendramodi ji's mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.



ARUN JAITLEY  
@arunjaitley

Saddened by the demise of Former CJI, Justice Adarsh Sein Anand, he was a visionary constitutional expert & known for making inexpensive justice accessible to people. My thoughts & prayers are with the bereaved family, may God render peace to the departed soul.



HARBHAJAN SINGH  
@harbhajan\_singh

Prayers to those affected by #CycloneOckhi! Stay indoors, stay safe!

## Fate of jailed Catalan leaders to be decided on Monday



**MADRID:** A Spanish Supreme Court judge will decide Monday whether or not to release 10 separatist leaders who were jailed pending a probe into their role in Catalonia's independence drive.

Any release on bail would mark a turn in the campaign for regional elections on December 21, particularly for separatist parties who have repeatedly accused Madrid of taking "political prisoners" and "repression" after their attempt to declare unilateral independence failed.

"State repression is the mobilising element of the independence movement right now," said Oriol Bartomeus, politics professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. "Once they no longer have political prisoners, they will have to change their campaign."

After questioning them on Friday, Judge Pablo Llarena of the Supreme Court, in charge of the case, said he wouldn't take his decision until Monday, said a judicial source who refused to be named.

Catalonia's sacked vice-president Oriol Junqueras was the first to be questioned behind closed doors by Llarena - a meeting that lasted just 20 minutes, according to a court source.

By early afternoon, Llarena had already seen the seven

other former regional ministers and was about to question the leaders of two pro-independence civic associations.

Llarena has taken on the investigation into the Catalan leaders, most of whom are accused of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds.

Until last week, Spain's National Court, which takes on major criminal cases, had been in charge of the case and had sent to jail Junqueras, his former ministers and the two leaders of the pro-independence ANC and Omnium Cultural associations.

However, Llarena of the Supreme Court decided the members of Catalonia's parliament he had been investigating on similar charges could remain free as the probe continues.

Now he has taken on the probe of the other separatist leaders, they hope he will make the same decision for them.

Ester Capella, a national lawmaker for Junqueras's ERC party, said they were ready with the money if the defendants were ordered to post bail.

"We've planned everything so that they can post bail, so that they can be freed immediately," she told reporters at the Madrid court.

The jailing of separatist leaders has caused outrage in Catalonia. AGENCIES

# 12 killed as militants disguised in burqas attack Pak college

**PESHAWAR:** Three burqa-clad Taliban militants on Friday stormed an agriculture training institute in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar and opened indiscriminate fire, killing at least 12 people, half of them students, before being shot dead by security forces.

The heavily-armed militants, who arrived on an auto rickshaw, attacked the students' hostel of the Directorate of Agriculture Extension on the University Road in the city, the capital of the restive Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.

The institute was closed for the Eid-e-Milad holiday, but about 70 students were present in the hostel.

The militants stormed the building by firing automatic weapons, creating panic, officials said.

The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack.

Police chief of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Salahuddin Mehsud said 12 people including six students, a security



A computer lab after the shooting at Directorate of Agriculture Institute in Peshawar

guard and five civilians, were killed and 32 others injured in the attack.

Aerial surveillance of the operation was carried out by the army aviation division

whereas armoured vehicles of security forces were also called on site. He said three terrorists were killed by security forces after a gunfight which lasted for an hour. Police are trying

to ascertain the identity of a dead person.

Bullets holes in building walls, broken glass scattered and blood stains could be seen on TV footage.

## Pope Francis ordains 16 priests for B'desh Church

**DHAKA:** Pope Francis held a mass attended by tens of thousands of worshippers here during which he ordained 16 new priests for the small church of the country which has less than 400 priests.

The pontiff arrived in Dhaka on Thursday from Myanmar and said in his address to Bangladeshi authorities that his priority for the visit was to show closeness with the country's small Catholic community of less than 500,000 people. Efe news reported.

While riding in his Pope-mobile later, the Catholic leader was greeted with cries of "Long live the Pope!" from thousands of followers who came from all parts of the country, some having travelled overnight.



Authorities stated that 100,000 people had gathered for the mass. Among the attendees was a Spanish priest Benjamin Gomez who works as a missionary in a tribal area of northern Bangladesh.

He arrived with three buses, one of which was filled with 40

orphans.

The Pope dedicated a few words thanking them for their generosity in these sacrifices. "I know some of you have come after travelling for two days. Thank you for your generosity, this indicates the love you have for the church, the love you have in Jesus Christ."

He then asked the faithful to pray for the priests of Bangladesh, especially those who will receive the sacrament on Friday.

The local Catholic Church considered the gesture of the Pope, who during the ceremony ordained 16 priests -- 10 were diocesan, one from the Oblates of Mary and five from the Congregation of the Holy

Cross -- as a gift.

All of the priests were students from the Holy Spirit Major Seminary, the only one in the country, which currently has about 400 seminarians.

One of the new priests is young Jashim Murmu, a native of the Dinajpur diocese who will be the first priest from his village, all the inhabitants being from the Santhal tribe, reported the Vatican agency Asianews.

In Bangladesh, where 90 per cent people are Muslims, the Catholic Church has an archdiocese, seven dioceses with 34 religious congregations, of which there are 380 priests and 1,500 nuns, according to Asianews data. AGENCIES

## Two Indians held with explosive materials in Nepal

**KATHMANDU:** Two Indian men were arrested here on Friday for possessing materials used in preparing improvised explosive devices (IED).

The police detained the men from a bus en route to Kathmandu from Kakarbhitta during a security check, the Kathmandu Post reported.

All the IED paraphernalia and raw materials were handed over to the Army, said a police official. Authorities declined to reveal the names of the suspects.

Ahead of the second phase of parliamentary and provincial elections on December 7, attacks on candidates and their rallies have gone up in the country.

Four people were injured in a bomb blast at an election rally of the ruling Nepali Congress on Thursday in Itahari city.

On Wednesday, a police recruit injured in an IED blast died in Dang district while a National Congress candidate was among seven people who were seriously hurt in a blast in Udaypur. AGENCIES

## Trump considers recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump was considering recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a gesture that majority of the international community rejects. This recognition would serve to compensate for the delay of one of Trump's main promises during the election campaign, the transfer of the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, reports Efe news. On June 1, Trump extended the moving of the embassy by six months in compliance with the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, a decision that is expected to be repeated Friday once that time limit has expired. That law stipulates the transfer of the US embassy to Jerusalem, but also includes an amendment by which the president can extend the transfer for six months based on US "national interests". AGENCIES

## Turkish Prez helped Iran evade US sanctions



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

**NEW YORK:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan personally intervened in a scheme that allowed Iran to dodge US and UN sanctions, a gold trader with ties to Ankara claimed in a court testimony here. It is the first time Erdogan has been named in the closely-watched US criminal case over Iran's violations of international sanctions and movement of billions of dollars, reports CNN.

The case's central figure, Reza Zarrab, an Iranian-Turkish gold trader, was arrested in Miami last year and has since been the case's top named defendant. There are eight other defendants facing similar charges.

He cut a plea deal last month and admitted to defrauding the US, money laundering, and bank fraud, according to court documents.

On Thursday, Zarrab testified in the federal court about Erdogan's alleged role in his scheme, which involved laundering funds from Iranian oil and gas sales through Turkish banks, including the state-run bank, Halkbank.

Zarrab testified that when the amount of money illegally flowing through Turkey's Halkbank became too much to handle, Erdogan approved getting two more Turkish banks involved: VakifBank and Ziraat Bank, CNN reported.

Zarrab said he received this information from the government official he claims to have bribed to take part in the scheme, former Turkish Economy Minister Zafer Caglayan.

Caglayan has denied all allegations. Later on Thursday, Erdogan responded to Zarrab's testimony, saying Turkey "did the right thing". AGENCIES

## Afghanistan wants direct negotiations with Pakistan

**BAKU:** Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Friday said Kabul is desirous of holding negotiations with Islamabad directly for regional security and peace efforts. He made the remarks at the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process 7th Ministerial Conference underway in Baku, Azerbaijan, Geo News reported.

President Ghani claimed that Afghanistan had destroyed the hideouts of the Islamic State on its territory and restricted the militants to mountains. He lauded the US revised

**President Ghani claimed that Afghanistan had destroyed the hideouts of the IS on its territory**

policy towards the longstanding Afghan war and said it would help in defeating the Taliban.

Ghani pointed out the work done by Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism and the steps

taken towards ensuring the country's development.

Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process is a regional platform for political dialogue and close regional cooperation aimed at promoting stability, peace and prosperity in the Heart of Asia region and for enhancing Afghanistan's connectivity with the entire region. Participating states include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan among others. AGENCIES

## Zimbabwe military officials given key jobs in post-Mugabe Cabinet



**HARARE:** Zimbabwe's new president has announced a fresh cabinet with key roles given to veterans of the ruling Zanu-PF party and senior soldiers, and no posts for the opposition.

Emmerson Mnangagwa took power after a military takeover and popular protests ousted Robert Mugabe last week. Many hoped the 75-year-old would give leading opposition politicians significant roles in an "inclusive" government in line with his promises to reach out to all "patriotic Zimbabweans".

Analysts said the decision was "a negative pointer", while opposition figures and activists reacted strongly to the announcement overnight. Tendai Biti, a former

**4 charged in \$3.5 mn-fraud 'likely' linked to India: US prosecutor**

**NEW YORK:** Four men of Indian descent have been charged in a \$3.5 million-fraud in which they pretended to be tax officials and collected money by allegedly threatening over 7,300 people, a federal prosecutor has announced.

Gregory J Haanstad, the Wisconsin Eastern District prosecutor, on Thursday said the scheme was "likely originating from India".

Moin Gohil, 22, was picked up by law enforcement authorities in Georgia on November 24, and Pratik Patel, 26, Parvez Jiwani, 39, and Nakul Chetiwala, 27, were arrested on Tuesday by federal authorities, Haanstad said.

According to the prosecutor, their fraud is known as an "IRS impersonation scheme". Participants in the scheme based "likely in India" call victims in the US pretending to be officials of the federal tax agency, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and typically claim they owe taxes.

They then threaten and intimidate the victims saying they would face arrest or legal action if they did not send money through services like MoneyGram and Western Union or provide gift cards with cash value.

Members based in the US, who are known as "runners" use fake identification to pick up the money or the cards. AGENCIES

## Russian MPs to vote on banning US media from Parliament

**MOSCOW:** Russian lawmakers will vote next week on measures banning all US media from the lower house of parliament, a deputy said on Friday, in response to the US Congress stripping state channel RT of its credentials.

A senior United Russia party lawmaker Olga Savastyanova said the Russian Duma will vote on the ban on December 6. It is unlikely that the proposal would be rejected by the overwhelmingly pro-Kremlin assembly.

"The ban will impact all American media," she said, according to the Duma's official website. There are 21 American media outlets accredited to work in Russia, according to the website of the foreign ministry which keeps the register and issues documents to journalists.

"After the decree regarding closing access for American journalists to the Duma building is passed, we will work out



Russian Parliament

all organisational and technical issues with the foreign ministry," Savastyanova said.

The ban would apply to US media rather than journalists from other foreign countries, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"Such outrageous attacks on foreign media, in particular Russian media, go against the international practice of freedom of speech and unfortunately flourish in full Technicolor in the US," he said.

The ban would be the latest

development in tit-for-tat fallout from Washington's forced registration of RT as a "foreign agent" in the US.

Washington views the channel as a propaganda arm of the Kremlin, which is accused of interfering in the presidential elections last year.

The congressional committee of journalists which regulates who is accredited to cover the legislature said Thursday they voted unanimously to withdraw RT's press pass. AGENCIES

## Lebanon's political crisis over, says Lebanese President

**ROME:** Lebanon's recent political crisis has come to an end, its President Michel Aoun said on Friday after a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni.

Aoun underlined the importance of Lebanon's "national unity and economic stability and its security", thanking Gentiloni "for the Italian government's support to Lebanon".

He also drew attention to Italy's "key" participation in the UNIFIL peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, which was established in 1978.

Aoun is attending the Mediterranean Dialogues summit in Rome during a visit to Italy this week. On Wednesday, he told Italian daily La Stampa in an interview that Saad Hariri would "certainly" remain Prime Minister. Hariri announced he was stepping down as premier. AGENCIES

## Japanese Emperor Akihito to abdicate in April 2019: Imperial House Council

**TOKYO:** Japanese Emperor Akihito is set to abdicate on April 30, 2019, after a nearly 30 years reign and marking an end of an imperial era, the Imperial House Council announced on Friday.

The 10-member Council including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and members of the Imperial family, made the announcement following a closed-door meeting to deliberate the 83-year-old Emperor's abdication, reports The Japan Times.

Akihito's elder son Crown Prince Naruhito's succession will take place on May 1, 2019. The last emperor to abdicate was Emperor Kokaku in 1817 in the later part of the Edo Period. In general, Japan's monarch is not allowed to step down under the country's legal framework.

Following the Emperor's rare video message aired in August 2016 in which he



Japanese Emperor Akihito

signaled his desire to retire, Japan's parliament enacted a law this June to allow Akihito to pass the Chrysanthemum Throne on to his 57-year-old son.

The law requires the Prime Minister to hear opinions from the Imperial House

Council, which is a national deliberative body summoned to discuss important issues concerning the Imperial family, such as marriage of male family members and the loss of Imperial status.

It was last held in 1993 to approve the Crown Prince's

marriage to Masako Owada. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga is expected to hold a press conference later on Friday to provide details of the meeting, The Japan Times reported.

After his abdication, Emperor Akihito will be called "joko" (a title for an emperor who abdicates in favour of a successor) and Empress Michiko, 83, will be given the title of jokogo.

Emperor Akihito ascended to the throne soon after the death of his father Hirohito in January 1989.

The Japanese Constitution defines the Emperor, once considered divine, as "the symbol of the state" with no political power.

His abdication will mark the end of the Heisei era. Akihito is a direct descendant of Japan's first emperor Jimmu, believed to reign around 660 B.C. AGENCIES

## Saudi Arabia intercepts second Yemen missile



**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia on Thursday intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile fired from war-torn Yemen, state media reported, the second such attack this month claimed by Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

The missile targeted the southern Saudi city of Khamis Mushait, with authorities reporting no casualties, just hours after the rebels threatened to retaliate over a crippling blockade on Yemen.

Earlier this month Saudi Arabia's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said arming Yemen's Huthis could be considered an "act of war", provoking a heated war of words with Tehran.

Iran denies it is supplying the Huthis with arms. Saudi Arabia and a coalition of mainly Sunni Arab allies launched air strikes in March 2015 against the Huthis and later sent ground troops to support pro-government forces.

The conflict has claimed more than 8,600 lives since the Saudi-led coalition joined the government's war against the rebel alliance.

More than 2,000 people have also died of cholera this year. British Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday implored Saudi leaders to ease the blockade to "avert a humanitarian catastrophe", her office said, echoing urgent appeals from the United Nations.

May met both Saudi King Salman and Prince Mohammed in Riyadh during a Middle East tour, with the worsening Yemen crisis topping her agenda. The UN on Monday urged the Saudi-led coalition to do "much more" to ease the blockade impeding shipments of aid and fully reopen the key rebel-held Red Sea port of Hodeida.

The Huthi rebels this

month warned that they considered "airports, ports, border crossings and areas of any importance" in Saudi Arabia, as well as its ally the United Arab Emirates, legitimate targets.

The coalition, which accuses the rebels of being a proxy for regional nemesis Iran, justifies the blockade saying it is meant to stop the flow of arms to the rebels from Tehran.

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The Huthi rebels this

# Suu Kyi meets Xi Jinping amid Rohingya crisis

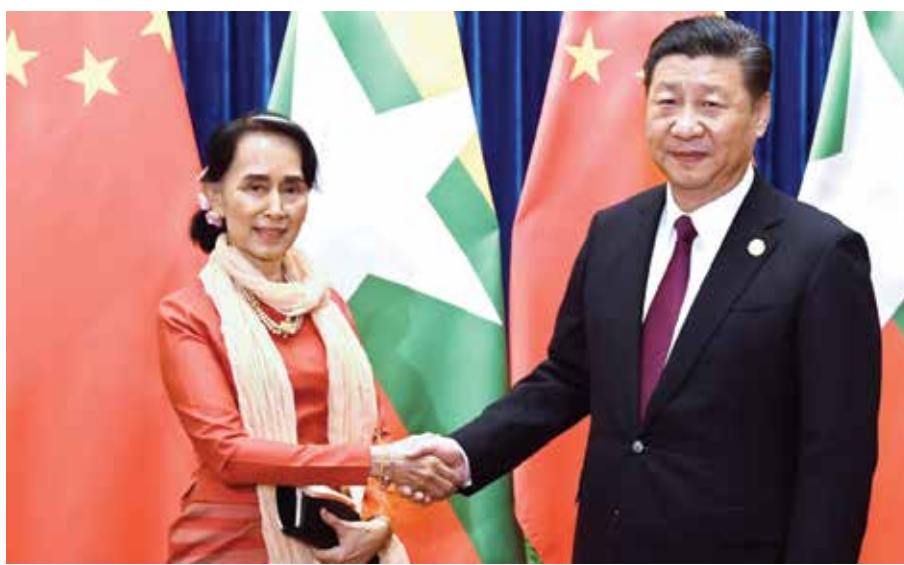
**BEIJING:** Myanmar's civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi met on Friday with President Xi Jinping on a visit to friendly neighbor China as international criticism over her country's persecution of Rohingya Muslims continues to grow.

China has studiously avoided criticizing the crisis and the official Xinhua News Agency did not say whether the issue came up in the meeting. China is also expected to push for Myanmar to restart a dam project suspended after overwhelming local opposition.

Suu Kyi is in Beijing to attend a gathering of delegates from more than 200 political parties from around the world hosted by China's ruling Communist Party, which last month reappointed Xi to a second five-year term as its leader.

Xi also delivered a speech to the gathering's opening ceremony and met with Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen, Xinhua said.

China was a longstanding friend of Myanmar during the Southeast Asian country's isolation from the West, and has been helping shield it from criticism over the crisis that



Aung San Suu Kyi with president Xi Jinping

has seen more than 620,000 Rohingya flee Myanmar over the last few months.

Myanmar's military has conducted a scorched earth campaign against the Rohingya that the United Nations and United States describe as "ethnic cleansing".

Refugees living in squalid conditions in camps in Bangladesh have described indiscriminate attacks by Myanmar

security forces and Buddhist mobs, including killings, rapes and the torching of entire villages.

Suu Kyi, who spent 15 years under house arrest during the nation's long era of military rule, has come under widespread criticism for not speaking out against the violence, with some calling for her Nobel prize to be revoked. While Myanmar

elects a new civilian government in 2015 led by Suu Kyi, the military continues to wield ultimate power.

China's interests in Myanmar include the security along its southern border and access to natural resources.

A recently opened pipeline running through Myanmar carries oil from the Middle East and the Caucasus to China's landlocked Yunnan prov-

ince, allowing it to bypass the Malacca Strait. The pipeline starts at the Bay of Bengal in Rakhine state in western Myanmar, the epicenter of the anti-Rohingya violence.

Chinese projects have been blamed for uprooting villagers and harming the environment, factors that led Myanmar in 2011 to suspend the \$3.6 billion Myitsone dam primarily funded by Chinese energy interests. The suspension remains a sore point and China is eager to see resumption of work on the project.

Although Suu Kyi's delegation includes the country's minister of electricity and energy, real progress on the dam issue is unlikely, said prominent Myanmar political analyst Yan Myo Thein.

"There is only a small possibility that this particular dam project will be implemented under a Suu Kyi-led government because it's a controversial national project," Thein said.

Instead, the two sides may discuss alternative projects such as a road serving the Kuming-Mandalay-Yangon-Kyaukphyu economic platform, he said. AGENCIES

## Pope says 'Rohingya' for first time in public

**DHAKA:** Pope Francis asked for forgiveness on Friday from refugees in Bangladesh for all the hurt and indifference they have endured, demanded their rights be recognized and pronounced the word he had so assiduously avoided only days earlier in Myanmar: "Rohingya."

In a deeply moving encounter, Francis greeted and blessed a group of Rohingya Muslim refugees, grasping their hands and listening to their stories in a show of public solidarity amid Asia's worst refugee crisis in decades. He apologized for the "indifference of the world" to their plight and then pronounced the name of their ethnic group to a gathering of Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian leaders.

"The presence of God on Friday is also called 'Rohingya,'" he said. The 16 Rohingya—12 men, two women and two young girls—had travelled to Dhaka from Cox's Bazar, the district bordering Myanmar where refugee camps are overflowing with more than 620,000 Rohingya who have fled what the UN says is a campaign of ethnic cleansing by Myanmar's military. The campaign has included the burning of Rohingya villages and fleeing Rohingya have described rape and shootings by Myanmar soldiers and Buddhist mobs that left them no option but to make the dangerous. AGENCIES

## Trump's ex-NSA Flynn charged for lying about Russia links

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump's former national security advisor Michael Flynn has been charged with making "false, fictitious and fraudulent" statements to the FBI over possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia during last year's US presidential polls. Flynn, 58, a retired general, is scheduled to plead guilty to "willfully and knowingly" making before a court on Friday, US media reported. Flynn is the first Trump administration official and the fourth connected to the campaign to be charged as part of an investigation into possible collusion between the Russian government and members of Trump's team, as well as potential obstruction of justice and financial crimes. Former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director Robert Mueller, who is investigating allegations of Russian interference in last year's US presidential elections as a Special Counsel, on Friday announced that Flynn was charged with "willfully and knowingly" making "false, fictitious and fraudulent statements" to the FBI about his conversations with Russia's then ambassador to the US Sergey Kislyak. AGENCIES

## Tillerson to remain as Secretary of State: WH

**WASHINGTON:** The White House has dismissed reports that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is about to be replaced.

The US top diplomat "continues to lead the state department", White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said on Thursday, BBC reported.

Also, a state department spokeswoman said the reports "were not true".

The denials come amid reports from several news organisations, citing unnamed administration officials, that plans are being drawn up to replace him with CIA chief Mike Pompeo.

President Donald Trump and Tillerson have disagreed on foreign policy issues and are said not to get on.

The reports first emerged in the New York Times and Van-



Rex Tillerson

ity Fair, which quoted government sources.

According to several reports citing sources, Pompeo would be replaced at the CIA by Republican Senator Tom Cotton, and the reshuffle could take place as soon as December or in January.

However, it is not yet clear whether Mr Trump has given final approval to the move, the New York Times says.

## Chinese couple found carrying 200 live cockroaches

**BEIJING:** Customs officials at a Chinese airport found 200 live cockroaches in an elderly couple's luggage. According to the *Beijing Youth Daily*, security at southern Guangdong's Baiyun International Airport noticed movement in the couple's luggage when they placed their bags through an x-ray machine on November 25.

"There was a white plastic bag with lots of black items moving inside," security guard Xu Yuyu told *Kankan News*.

"One of the staff opened their luggage and a roach crawled out of it. She almost cried," the guard added. Asked why they were transporting the cockroaches, the husband told officials that they were an ointment for his wife's skin, the BBC reported on Thursday. AGENCIES

## Ex-US marine jailed for rape, murder in Japan

**TOKYO:** A Japanese court on Friday sentenced a former US marine to life imprisonment for the rape and murder of a woman on the southern island of Okinawa, in a case that sparked anti-US protests in Japan.

The Naha District Court found Kenneth Franklin Shinzato, 33, guilty of killing 20-year-old Rina Shimabukuro in April last year. The court ruled that the April 2016 crime was committed with "selfish motivation, which left no room for leniency", reported Japanese news agency Kyodo.

The defendant, a member of the US Navy between 2007 and 2014, who was working as a civilian at the Kadena base in Okinawa at the time of the incident, had admitted to the charges of rape resulting in death and abandoning the body of the victim, but denied intent to murder, the BBC reported.

According to the indictment, Shinzato stabbed the girl in the neck and hit her on the head with a rod so that she would not resist, killing her as a result. However, the defendant said at the trial that he "did not intend to cause such a result".

The case once again triggered public outrage and intensified public resentment against excessive US military deployment and the crimes committed by US servicemen in the region.

The most serious of these cases occurred in 1995 when three soldiers from an Okinawa base kidnapped and raped a 12-year-old girl, prompting some 85,000 people to protest.

In 2013, two US sailors admitted to raping a woman. AGENCIES

## 'Denuclearisation of Norea Korea priority, not a regime change'

**WASHINGTON:** The Trump administration is focused on denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula an anything beyond that is not a priority at this point, the White House said on Friday.

"This administration is focused on one big thing when it comes to North Korea. And that's denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. That's our number one priority."

That's what we're focused on. Anything beyond that is not the priority at this point," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders told reporters while responding to a question if this administration now advocates regime change in North Korea.

According to Sanders, US President Donald Trump has spoken several times this week to his administration official and world leaders, specifically about North Korea. "And he's



Kim Jong-un

going to continue to do that, and continue to talk to all of the relevant stakeholders," she said in response to another question. The State Department welcomed Germany's decision to downsize its diplomatic mission in Pyongyang and require North Korea to reduce its presence in Berlin.

"That is something that is a part of our maximum pressure campaign to take money out of North Korea, to try to choke of

the money that goes into North Korea, that goes into ballistic and nuclear programs," State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert told reporters at her news conference.

The world, she said, recognises what a regional global threat North Korea is.

"So many countries in the world are on board with this campaign, on board with the maximum pressure campaign. But countries have to make their own decisions about what will work best for them," the spokesperson said.

The US has called on countries across the world to join it in the maximum pressure campaign in reducing the size of their missions in North Korea. "If they would be willing to close their missions in North Korea altogether, I think that is something we would be supportive of."

A spokesperson for Britain's Department for Exit-

## 'EU and Britain agree settlement post Brexit'

**BRUSSELS:** The European Union has agreed a financial settlement with Britain, a senior EU official told Reuters on Thursday, under which London has committed to paying a set share of EU budgets after Britain has left the bloc.

Following reports of British offers in recent days, EU negotiators have insisted publicly that work is continuing on the financial deal, as both sides also push to reach accords on two other key divorce conditions before a crunch meeting on Monday.

"The official offer has not been submitted, but unofficially it has been agreed to such an extent that if no one decides to stage a last minute complete turnaround everything will be OK," the official said.

A spokesperson for Britain's Department for Exit-

ing the European Union was not immediately available for comment.

Overall, the EU side was "optimistic" that agreement could be reached on the conditions to allow EU leaders to agree during a Dec. 14-15 summit to open talks on post-Brexit relations.

The British government dismissed as "speculation" on Wednesday reports in British newspapers that it had more than doubled its offer to the EU to very roughly 50 billion euros.

The EU official said there was no precise figure discussed because the amounts to be paid in future will depend on many imponderable variables, ranging from whether loan guarantees had to be exercised to the vagaries of the sterling-euro exchange rate and relative growth in the British and EU economies. AGENCIES

## Syrian Kurds hold local elections with autonomy plans

**QAMISHLI:** Kurdish-led authorities held local elections on Friday in the swathes of northern Syria they seized with US help, pushing ahead with autonomy plans opposed by both Turkey and Damascus.

Kurdish forces and their political allies now hold the largest part of Syria outside the control of President Bashar al-Assad's government. They have captured vast territory from Islamic State with the support of US arms, jets and ground advisers, although Washington opposes their autonomy drive.

Kurdish leaders say their goal is to establish self-rule



within Syria, not secession. But their influence has infuriated Ankara, which considers the Kurdish YPG militia to be an

offshoot of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has run a decades-long insurgency in Turkey.

Assad has vowed to recover every inch of the country, as his territorial grip expanded rapidly over the past two years with help from Russia and Iran. Damascus has more forcefully asserted its claim to territory held by Kurdish-led forces in recent months.

Since Syria's conflict began more than six years ago, the dominant Kurdish parties have been left out of international diplomacy in line with Turkish wishes. They were excluded again from UN-led peace talks which reconvened in Geneva this week. Hadiya Yousef, a senior Kurdish politician, said

the Kurdish-led administration would not be bound by decisions taken in its absence.

"We are not present in these meetings, and therefore we are developing the solution on the ground," Yousef told Reuters. Peace talks would not "arrive at solutions" so long as they do not involve those running 30 percent of the country, she added.

Voters are picking from close to 6,000 candidates for town and city councils on Friday, the second part of a three-stage process that will culminate in electing a parliament early next year. AGENCIES

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3. Maintenance of Dozers/ Heavy Equipments in CHP. (BINO. 40084160) - DCB
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The last date of receipt of request for issue of tender documents/ downloading of Tender documents from NTPC website shall be upto: 16.12.2017:17:00 hrs.

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No. MMTCL/STEL/CC/17-18/EoI-2  
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Notice Inviting Expression of Interest from Suppliers supplying coking coal to SAIL and RINL both Members of Empowered Joint Committee

MMTCL Limited (MMTCL), a Govt. of India Enterprise, having its Corporate Office at Core-1, Scope Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi-110 003 invites "Expression of Interest (EOI)" from Overseas Coking Coal Miners and Suppliers for entering into Long Term Agreement with MMTCL for three years. MMTCL Limited shall buy Coking Coal on behalf of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NILI), a 1.1 Million MT integrated Iron & Steel Plant set up by MMTCL Ltd in joint venture with Govt. of Odisha at Kalinga Nagar, Duburi, Distt.-Jajpur, Odisha. The applications should be submitted by 22nd December, 2017 till 1700 hours. Complete details of the Expression of Interest are available at MMTCL's website [www.mmtclimited.com](http://www.mmtclimited.com) and/or <http://eprocure.gov.in/cppp>

# India's Nov mfg PMI sees fastest pace of growth since Oct 2016

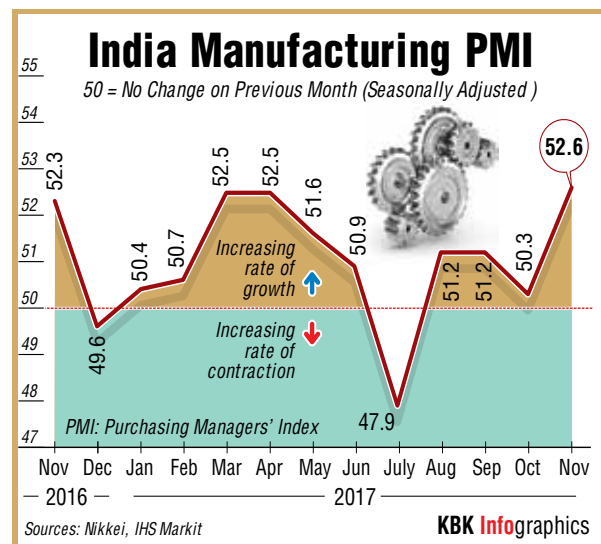
**NEW DELHI:** India's manufacturing sector in November recorded the strongest improvement in business activity in 13 months as new orders picked up supported by reduction in GST rates and strong demand conditions, a monthly survey said on Friday.

The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 50.3 in October to 52.6 in November, indicating substantial improvement of operating conditions in the country's manufacturing sector.

This is for the fourth consecutive month that the index has come in above 50 point mark that separates expansion from contraction.

Survey respondents said a combination of higher order book volumes and a decrease in GST rates largely contributed to greater production.

"Growth in output and new



orders picked up to the fastest since October 2016, reportedly supported by reductions in GST rates and stronger underlying demand conditions," said Aashna Dodhia, Economist

at IHS Markit and author of the report.

However, the headline PMI remained below the average seen since the inception of the survey in March 2005.

**The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 50.3 in October to 52.6 in November, indicating substantial improvement of operating conditions in the country's manufacturing sector**

Moreover, stronger factory production levels translated into the fastest rate of employment creation since September 2012. Besides, export growth rose for the first time in three

months as overseas demand for Indian goods improved.

On the price front, input cost inflation quickened to the fastest since April, but firms were unable to fully pass on higher cost burdens to price-sensitive clients.

"Underlying data indicated that the central bank is less likely to adopt an accommodative stance as input cost inflation intensified to the fastest since April," the report noted.

Dodhia added that the current phase of expansion led to a pick up in business sentiment as "growth momentum seems likely to continue over the near-term".

Reversing a five-quarter slide in GDP growth, Indian economy bounced back from a three-year low to expand by 6.3 per cent in July-September as manufacturing revived up and businesses adjusted to the new GST tax regime.

# GST made doing business easier for traders: Jaitley

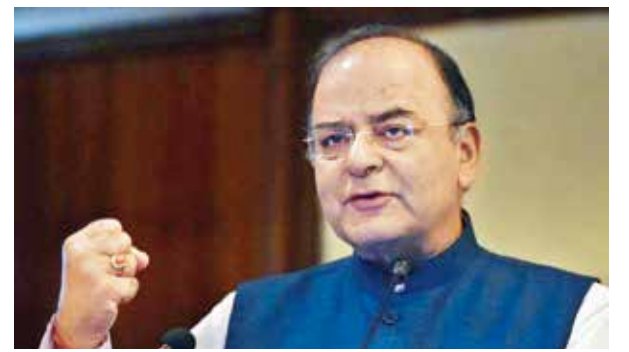
**NEW DELHI:** Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Friday said the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has made doing business easier for traders by expanding the market place and reducing tax compliance burden.

He further said that the two structural reforms – GST and demonetisation – will benefit the economy in the medium and long-term.

"GST has made doing business and trade very easy. The market size for every trader has grown. Now whole country is his market," Jaitley said while responding to questions regarding the second quarter economic growth estimates.

Reversing a five-quarter slide in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, the economy bounced back from a three-year low to expand by 6.3 per cent in July-September as manufacturing revived up and businesses adjusted to the new GST tax regime.

The economic growth rate



had slipped to three-year low of 5.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2017-18 financial year.

The GST, the minister said, has also reduced the compliance burden on traders as under the new regime a trader is not required to file multiple tax returns.

The tax rates too are being rationalised and a trader will no more be required to confront inspectors, he added.

Jaitley further said that impact of demonetisation of high value currency notes of Rs

500 and Rs 1000 in November last year was limited to one or two quarters.

The impact of GST was limited to one quarter, mainly because of de-stocking by corporates.

"The GST impact was only for one quarter mainly because of destocking. That was our assessment. The (GDP) figures indicate that. Structural reforms benefit in the medium and long term. Both these steps will benefit the economy," Jaitley said.

# Auto makers record healthy double-digit sales growth in Nov

**NEW DELHI:** Auto majors, including Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Mahindra and Toyota, posted healthy double digit sales growth last month, overcoming post festive season lean phase.

Various factors, including robust demand in rural markets and good response to new models, helped in driving the sales, the companies said.

The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its domestic sales were at 1,45,300 units, up 15 per cent from 1,26,325 in November last year.

The sales were mainly driven by compact segment comprising Swift, Dzire and Baleno, which jumped by 32.4 per cent to 65,447 units last month.

Utility vehicle sales, including Gypsy, Grand Vitara, Ertiga, S-Cross and compact SUV Vitara Brezza, increased by 34 per cent to 23,072 units in November from 17,215 in the same month of 2016, MSI added.

However, mini segment cars, including Alto and WagonR, witnessed a 1.8 per cent decline to 38,204 units during



File photo of Maruti Suzuki's new sedan 'Dzire'

the month under review, from 38,886 in October 2016, the automaker said.

Rival, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) reported a 10 per cent increase in domestic sales at 44,008 units in November.

Commenting on the sales, HMIL Director (Sales and Marketing) Rakesh Srivastava said driving during the last month has been achieved due to the strong performance of next gen Verna Gen Verna along with Grand i10, Elite i20 and Creta.

"Due to strong pull of festive demand on the strength of buoyant rural markets, we

ally a lean period post the festive season," M&M President Automotive Sector Rajan Wadhwa said.

Ford posted sales increase of 13.1 per cent at 7,777 units in the domestic market in November, driven mainly by recently-introduced new edition of compact SUV Ford EcoSport.

Similarly, Toyota Kirloskar Motor also reported a 13 per cent rise in domestic sales at 12,734 units in November. It had sold a total of 11,309 units in the same month of last year.

In two-wheeler segment, Bajaj Auto reported 21 per cent increase in total sales in November at 3,26,458 units as against 2,69,948 units in the same month last year.

Royal Enfield, the two-wheeler division of Eicher Motors, said its domestic sales were at 67,776 units in November as against 55,843 units in the year-ago month, up 21 per cent.

Suzuki Motorcycle India also reported domestic sales at 42,722 units in November as against 30,830 units in the same month last year, a growth of 38.6 per cent.

"We are happy to be in a positive growth phase for November 2017, which is usu-

# Sensex shrugs off GDP rebound, sinks 316 pts

**MUMBAI:** Markets nursed losses for the fourth straight session on Friday as upbeat second quarter GDP numbers failed to dispel concerns over a widening fiscal deficit.

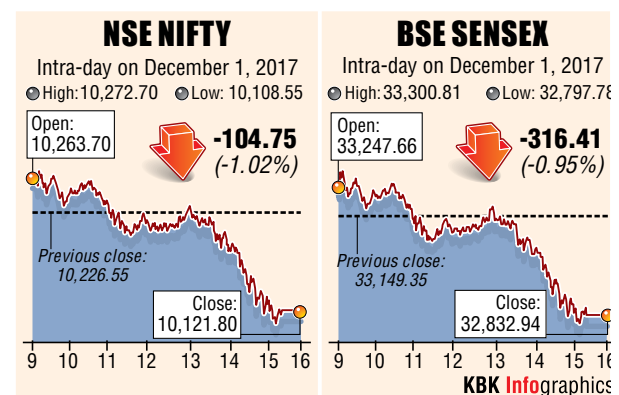
The BSE benchmark Sensex dived 316 points to close below the 33,000-mark, while the broader Nifty declined 104.75 points to 10,121.80.

It was a forgettable week for both the key indices, with the Sensex recording a fall of 846.30 points, or 2.51 per cent and the NSE Nifty losing 267.90 points, or 2.57 per cent.

"Despite data pointing to an improvement in the macro-economic environment, participants remained cautious and chose to sell stocks in the latter half of the trading day," said Karthikraj Lakshmanan, Senior Fund Manager Equities, BNP Paribas Mutual Fund.

The 30-share benchmark, after scaling a high of 33,300.81 in early deals, slipped into the negative zone to touch 32,797.78, before settling at 32,832.94, down 316.41 points, or 0.95 per cent.

This was its weakest closing since November 15, when it had finished at 32,760.44



The 50-issue NSE Nifty too cracked the 10,200-mark and hit a low of 10,108.55 before finishing 104.75 points, or 1.02 per cent down to 10,121.80.

Reversing a five-quarter slide in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, the economy bounced back from a three-year low to expand by 6.3 per cent in July-September as manufacturing revived up and businesses adjusted to the new GST tax regime, data released after market hours yesterday showed.

However, participants remained risk-averse as India's fiscal deficit at the end of October hit 96.1 per cent of

the budget estimate for 2017-18, mainly due to lower revenue realisation and rise in expenditure.

Meanwhile, foreign portfolio investors sold shares worth net Rs 1,500.76 crore, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought shares to the tune of Rs 1,202.57 crore yesterday, as per provisional data.

Small and mid-cap indices fell 1.16 per cent and 0.95 per cent in Friday's session, respectively. The session saw buying in select auto stocks such as Maruti Suzuki, TVS Motor and Ashok Leyland, buoyed by encouraging sales data for November.

# Retail inflation for industrial workers up 3.24% in Oct

**NEW DELHI:** Retail inflation for industrial workers has risen marginally to 3.24 per cent in October mainly account of surge in price of food items.

The year-on-year inflation measured by monthly CPI-IW, consumer price index for industrial workers, stood at 3.24 per cent for October, 2017, as compared to 2.89 per cent for the previous month (September 2017) and 3.35 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year," a Labour Ministry statement said.

Food inflation stood at 2.26 per cent against 1.30 per cent in September and 2.99 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year.

Food group contributed 1.94 percentage points to the total change.

The All-India CPI-IW for October, 2017 increased by 2 points and pegged at 287.

At the centre level, Darjeeling and Tiruchirappalli reported the maximum increase of (10 points each) followed by Munger-Jamalpur (8 points) and Pudukcherry (7 points).

Among others, 6-point increase was observed in 2 centres, 5 points in 8 centres, 4 points in 7 centres, 3 points in 8 centres, 2 points in 19 centres and 1 point in 14 centres.

On the contrary, Mercara recorded a maximum decrease of 4 points followed by Goa and Bhavnagar (3 points each). Among others, 2 points decrease was observed in 1 centre and 1 point in another 6 centres. Rest of the 6 centres; indices remained stationary.

The indices of 33 centres are above All-India Index and 43 centres' indices are below national average. The indices of Madurai and Amritsar centres remained at par with All-India Index.

# Ericsson showcases nearly 1000x faster 5G networks

**MUMBAI:** Days after pegging the 5G technology to be a \$27.3-billion opportunity for the domestic telcos by 2026, mobile technology major Ericsson on Friday demonstrated the new technology, delivering a speed of 5.7 gigabyte per second.

The prevalent 4G networks in the country are found to be offering an average speed of 6.13 megabytes per second in a report released last month. The government wants to introduce 5G by 2020.

The telecom regulator Trai had issued a consultation paper in August seeking industry views on spectrum auctions in the future, which may see the debut of 5G airwaves being sold. Ericsson claimed this is the first-ever live demonstration of 5G network in the country which was done using its 5G test bed and 5G NR radio.

"The demonstration using Ericsson's 5G test bed delivers a throughput of 5.7Gbps and ultra-low latency of 3 milliseconds," it said in a statement.

Ericsson's head for South-east Asia Nunzio Mirtillo said they are getting ready for 5G play given the government vision to introduce the new generation services by 2020.

The company had recently come out with a report saying India will have over 10 million 5G subscriptions by 2023 and had also pegged the total revenue potential to be \$27.3 billion by 2026.

This will be over and above a \$63-billion revenue estimated to come from traditional ser-



vices, it said. "Introduction of 5G technology will bring a new level of performance and characteristics to the telecom networks enabling new services and creating new ecosystems.

New revenue streams will open for operators as they go beyond being connectivity and infrastructure providers to become service enablers and service creators," Ericsson India managing director Nitin Bansal said.

The largest opportunity

will be in sectors like manufacturing, energy and utilities followed by public safety and health sectors, the company said.

Agriculture will be a \$400-million opportunity from 5G with applications like field monitoring and mapping, livestock routing and monitoring, it said. Retail will be a \$1.15 billion opportunity by 2026 as 5G can be used for revolutionizing customer experience and increase operational efficiencies, it said.

# Don't blame Jio for industry's losses: Mukesh Ambani to Sunil Mittal

**NEW DELHI:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Friday hit back at Bharti's Sunil Mittal for blaming his telecom venture Jio for the industry's losses, saying businesses must stop looking at regulators and governments to guarantee their profits.

Calling Mittal a "friend", he said profits and losses are risks businesses take and it is more important to find out if the country and the consumers gained after Jio.

Addressing the HT Leadership Summit here, he said that after the entry of Jio, India has become the world's No.1 mobile broadband market, consuming more data than users in the US and China.

"For all of us in the industry, I think profits and losses are risks that we take. I don't think we can rely on governments and regulators to guarantee our profits or losses," Ambani maintained.

This was in response to a query on Mittal's reported comments – who runs India's biggest telecom firm Bharti Airtel – that all telecom companies had put together writ-

ten down USD 40-50 billion of investments due to Jio's entry. "To me, what is most important is did we move the country forward and does the consumer gain," Ambani said.

"The question... you should be thinking about is even if there are profits and losses, who gains and who loses. And as long as the consumer gains and the country moves forward, it is worth taking those losses... Some of us are big boys, we can afford that," he added.

A little over a year ago, Ambani, Chairman and MD of Reliance Industries, launched Jio, a new fourth-generation wireless service that disrupted the telecom industry by offering free calls and cheap data on mobile phones.

Older players such as Airtel and Vodafone were forced to cut tariff, but still continue to charge for voice calls and text messages, which are free on Jio. This together with dirt cheap data has helped it attract 138 million users. According to Ambani, Jio is ahead of schedule on turning profitable.

"Jio results are declared



every quarter now. You can see the trend. You watch the next few quarters. You will learn in January and you will learn in March," he replied to a question when will the telecom venture break even.

Not elaborating, he said, "I don't want to predict, but I think we are ahead of our schedule in terms of the returns that we are generating."

In the July-September quarter, Jio had reported a pre-tax profit of Rs 261 crore, its first ever operating profit, on standalone revenue of about Rs 6,147 crore. But it had a net loss of

Rs 270.5 crore for the three months to September.

Asked if competition motivates him, Ambani said, "Our DNA is that we are very focussed. We always believe in the principle of saying that if you focus on the goal, you will overcome all obstacles. If you focus on the obstacles, you will never achieve your goal."

"At Reliance, we want to be the best in the world," he asserted. "I am sorry if it appears competitive."

The RIL chairman predicted that India will be ahead of the US in terms of data infra-

structure by 2019. "As we move forward, we think of more difficult issues that create value.

Agriculture is difficult, education is important, and healthcare is most difficult and we will think about what we can do in each one of these areas," he added. He also said money never meant much to him and he has never carried money since childhood, adding that "I have somebody around who pays for me".

Ambani, India's richest man, went on to say India was ranked 150th in the world for mobile broadband adoption, but "now, it is number 1, after the launch of Jio".

"Today, Indians consume more mobile broadband data than users in the USA and China," he said. "If Data is Destiny, New India is well and truly ready for its new Tryst with Destiny."

India, Ambani suggested, can use digital technology to leapfrog in all sectors of the economy – be it financial services, commerce, manufacturing, agriculture, education and healthcare.

# 'India's GDP to double to \$5 trillion in next 7 years'

**NEW DELHI:** Mukesh Ambani, Asia's second-richest man, on Friday said India's GDP will double to \$5 trillion in the next seven years and hit \$10 trillion by 2030 as it will elbow out China by the middle of 21st century.

Speaking at the HT Leadership Summit, Ambani, Chairman and MD of Reliance Industries Ltd, recalled that he in 2004 had predicted that India – then a \$500-billion economy – will get to the mark of \$5 trillion in 20 years.

"Today, that prediction seems certain. Indeed, it will be achieved well before 2024," he said, adding that the Indian economy will triple to \$7 trillion in the next 10 years to become the third-largest economy in the world.

He went on to say that by 2030, it can cross the \$10 trillion milestone, and India can

"most certainly" become the most prosperous nation in the world overtaking the US and China within this century.

"By the middle of the 21st century, India's rise will be higher than China's rise. And more attractive to the world," Ambani asserted. "India will provide a superior and different development model (which) creates equitable and inclusive growth based on technology, democracy, good governance and a society-wide culture of empathy."

Delivering a talk on the theme 'India will become a global economic leader', Ambani said the first Industrial Revolution used coal and steam power to mechanise physical activity, the second used electricity and oil for mass production and distribution and the third used electronics and IT to increase

productivity and automation. According to Ambani, while India remained on the fringe in the first two industrial revolutions, it started catching up in the computer-driven third revolution.

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution is now upon us. The foundation of this revolution is connectivity, computing, data and artificial intelligence," he said. "It's my firm conviction that India can not only participate in the 4th Industrial Revolution, but has the opportunity to be a leader."

What manufacturing was for China, super intelligence will be for India, the RIL chief predicted. "We have the opportunity to not only rapidly grow our own economy, but also to be the provider of intelligent services to the rest of the world," he added.

## Commerce Secretary for review of import duty on gold

**NEW DELHI:** Commerce Secretary Rita Teotia on Friday made a case for reviewing the import duty on gold with a view to curb arbitrage opportunities resulting from FTAs without impacting the genuine requirement of businesses. "I think the real issue on why free trade agreements tend to be leveraged is the issue that we have been raising again and again and that is the (import) duty on gold. This is a matter that the government of India is seized of. "There are implications on both sides and I think we will have to work to come to some sort of balance on the duty issue. It certainly needs to be addressed because as long as there is arbitrage there will be people who will try to game the system," Teotia said.

Her statement comes against the backdrop of surge in gold imports from South Korea. India and South Korea have in place a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) since January 2010.

The government in August restricted imports of gold and

silver items from South Korea in a bid to check spurt in inbound shipments of the precious metals from that country.

Gold import from South Korea jumped to \$338.6 million between July 1 and August 3 this year. The figure for the corresponding 2016-17 period was only \$70.46 million.

Addressing the Gold Summit here, GJEPC Chairman Praveenshankar Pandya highlighted the need for reducing import duty on gold to 4-5 per cent from 10 per cent, saying it encourages smuggling of the yellow metal.

He also pointed out that the FTAs need to be "examined very carefully", citing the example of the agreements with South Korea and Indonesia.

However, responding to him, Teotia in her address asserted that India does not go into FTAs in a vacuum.

Besides, the Commerce Secretary observed that the GST-related issues flagged by the industry and the department of commerce have been substantively addressed. **PII**

# Organised retail sector should grow together with old players: Prabhu

**NEW DELHI:** The organised retail sector should not displace mom & pop stores but help create more employment opportunities besides offering wide range of products at reasonable price, Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu said on Friday.

Addressing a CII conference here, the minister said the government is in the process of making policies to boost growth of every sector, including retail.

He said the retail trade has a huge potential and this industry will play an important role in the growth of manufacturing, agriculture and even services sectors.

"Retail business must take into account the social issues. The organised retail should be done in a manner that it does not affect the social challenges. They should create more employment, should not displace the retailer who already are in business for years," Prabhu said.

Organised retail should add value to the business and must create employment, he said,

adding that they should provide customers varied choice and offer good price.

Prabhu said when big corporates entered the retail sector, there was fear that it will create conflict.

"There is a need to understand complementarity between the so called organised retail and large scale retailers working in India from a long time...They must grow hand in hand, without creating conflict," Prabhu said.

He emphasised on adopting policies that will help create an ecosystem for retail business to expand and grow at even faster pace.

Stating that there are huge opportunities in retail trade, the minister said the organised retail with huge capital and unorganised retail should partner to create win-win situation for growth of the entire sector.

He also favoured competition among retailers as this would benefit consumers.

Prabhu observed that the retail sector in India has been in private hands from centuries



and they are driving growth.

The minister said the growth in retail sector would also boost manufacturing, agriculture and even services sector as retailers market all the products.

Prabhu asked the retail industry to focus on creating proper supply chain and cited example of huge loss of fruits and vegetables due to lack of

cold storage.

He said the government is planning to create a hub from where vegetables and fruits can be exported, and mentioned that the ministry is in talks with Civil Aviation Ministry for this purpose.

On growing e-commerce sector, Prabhu said online trade has immense opportunities and could be a game changer. **PII**

## 'Institutional mechanism to up jewellery export'

**NEW DELHI:** Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu on Friday made a strong point for setting up an institutional mechanism to drive up jewellery exports.

Exports of gems and jewellery had declined by 24.5 per cent to \$3.3 billion in October, from 4.38 billion in the year-ago period.

Addressing a summit on gold here, Prabhu suggested that efforts should be made to bring in the best global designer in the jewellery sector to compete in the international market.

"... with the organised support that the industry as well as the government can provide, we can create an institutionalised mechanism that is necessary to increase exports of the gold jewellery," the Commerce and Industry Minister added.

Prabhu also favoured a suggestion of the industry to set up 'gold board', which "could be looked into".

India's annual export of gold and gold ornaments is only about \$7 billion.

Later in the day, while interacting with reporters on the sidelines of a retail summit, the Commerce and Industry Minister said his ministry is in the process of drawing up policies for growth of different sectors of the economy.

"Aggregation of all these economic activities of different sectors will amount to increase in GDP over a period of time, he said.

Prabhu is "very bullish" that in the next three years, "you would see India GDP numbers even far far better than what they are today". **PII**

## Govt looks to auction 34 mineral blocks in Dec-Mar

**NEW DELHI:** The government is looking to line up 34 mineral blocks for auction in the remainder of 2017-18 and up to 70 in 2018-19 as changes in bidding rules are expected to lead to wider participation and a smoothening of the process.

"We had rounds of discussions and have brought out the amendments in auction rules which we feel will go a long way in smoothening the process," Mines Secretary Arun Kumar told reporters here.

The secretary expressed hope that the changes will translate into fewer failures and quicker disposal of assets.

"We have just got four months left in this year. Real benefits of these rules will happen in 2018-19... Around 60-70 blocks will go on auction (in the next fiscal). And I think they (the states) will garner at least Rs 1,25,000 crore.

Going forward, we think of Rs 75,000 crore in these four months," Kumar said.

So far, 33 mineral blocks have been bid out, he said, adding that revenue to the states over the lease period from the auctioned mines has been estimated at Rs 1,28,000 crore.

"This fiscal, so far 12 mineral blocks have been auc-



tioned, which brought a revenue of Rs 48,000 crore over a lease period of 50 years," he added.

Prior to the changed guidelines, the process of auction used to get scrapped if there were less than three bidders and this process was carried out for at least three rounds and flexibility was allowed only in the fourth round.

Each round of auction went on for a minimum of three months, which saw many blocks getting annulled time and again.

While a minimum of three bidders is still required in the first attempt to auction, under the amended rules now, the states have the flexibility of allocating the block in the sec-

ond round itself even if there are less than three bidders.

"This will make the auction process less cumbersome and will help states auction mineral blocks quickly," the secretary reasoned.

"The amended rules have also provided adjustment of the upfront premium to be adjusted against the due payments of miners at the earliest," he said.

Earlier, the states used to prescribe end-use conditions on miners that were very rigid. This amounted to inefficient mining.

Under the new rules, such miners will be able to dispose of 25 per cent of such dumps that are not used for captive purpose. **PII**

## Nand Lal Sharma appointed CMD of SJVN Ltd



**NEW DELHI:** State-run power producer SJVN Ltd on Friday announced the appointment of Nand Lal Sharma as its Chairman and Managing Director for a five-year term.

Nand Lal Sharma has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of SJVN Ltd, a BSE filing said.

According to the statement, the appointment is for a period of five years or till the date of superannuation or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

It said subsequent to Sharma's appointment as CMD, he has relinquished the post of Director (Personnel) of the company from December 1, 2017.

Besides, the company said Ramesh Narain Misra has ceased to be the Chairman and Managing Director with effect from November 30, 2017 on attaining the age of superannuation. **PII**

## DoT outlines SIM re-verification process for NRIs, foreigners

**NEW DELHI:** The telecom department on Friday outlined detailed procedure for telcos to undertake mobile re-verification of foreign nationals and NRIs, and instructed the process for these subscribers by January 1, 2018.

The procedure has been spelt out for re-verification of mobile connections of foreign nationals, as well as NRI subscribers who either do not have Aadhaar or their mobile number is not registered with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has also given re-verification procedure for senior citizens who are above 70 years not having Aadhaar, are unable to do biometric authentication or are physically challenged.

The licensees must ensure that...subscribers should "be able to re-verify their mobile connections through these alternative methods by January 1, 2018", the DoT said in an order today.

It said that various representations had been received from Non Resident India (NRIs) and Overseas Indians and foreign nationals citing difficulties being faced by them in



re-verification of their Indian mobile connections.

The difficulties arose because this set of subscribers did not have Aadhaar and nor were they eligible to enrol for the 12-digital biometric identifier.

The DoT has also informed operators about the procedure for IVRS-based One Time Password (OTP) authentication of telecom subscribers whose mobile number is registered with Aadhaar.

Industry body COAI said that while the new processes notified today would benefit subscribers, the procedure for NRIs and senior citizens was "complex".

"...the notified process for NRIs and senior citizens is still very complex and we would work with DoT to ease it for the consumers and subscribers," Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Director General Rajan S Mathews said in a statement.

Mathews also expressed disappointment over the telecom department only issuing an IVR-based process for OTP authentication.

"We had submitted an option of a web-based process as well and that could have also been allowed, in line with the process for NRIs and senior citizens for greater consumer ease," Mathews said. **PII**

## PFC mobilises \$400 million through maiden green bond

**NEW DELHI:** State-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has raised \$400 million through its maiden green bond issue. The funds will be used to promote renewable energy in the country. "The bond issuance saw diverse participation from high quality investors across Asia and Europe. PFC has successfully priced this 10-year Reg S Green Bond at a fixed rate coupon of 3.75 per cent," a PFC statement said.

According to the statement, the pricing of this bond saw the tightest ever spread of 157.5 bps (basis points) over 10-year US Treasury by any Indian issuer for the inaugural 10-year transaction. The bond is Climate Bonds Initiative certified and is being listed on the London Stock Exchange and the Singapore Stock Exchange.

During the last 3 years, PFC saw a significant jump in its renewable business, with loan disbursements growing five times. One of its objectives is to support renewable and sustainable energy-led expansion.

According to the company, the money raised will promote renewable energy and help achieve the government's target of 175 GW of green capacity by 2022. PFC is the principal financier of Indian power sector funding the entire value chain. This green bond also helps in PFC's strategy of diversifying its source of funding.

Additionally, PFC tapped the foreign currency syndicated loan market recently for raising \$300 million.

PFC Chairman and MD Rajeev Sharma said, "Diversifying our funding sources remains a core component of PFC's fund raising strategy. This bond offering is one of the many issuances to come and PFC would look to regularly tap the offshore markets to diversify the borrowing portfolio and support its loan growth, going forward." **PII**

# Air India's domestic, global ops to be sold together: Sinha

**NEW DELHI:** Air India's domestic and international operations will be sold together, Union minister Jayant Sinha said on Friday.

The government has initiated the process for strategic divestment of debt-laden Air India as part of efforts to revive the national carrier.

Sinha's comments assume significance against the backdrop of some players expressing their interest only in certain verticals of Air India.

So far, IndiGo is the only airline that has formally expressed

interest in the national carrier's divestment process. However, the budget carrier is interested only in Air India's international operations and subsidiary Air India Express.

"What we will be offering through the bidding process is the integrated airline (Air India), which means both domestic and international operations (together)," Sinha, the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, said here.

On the divestment process, he said the government is still in the process of identifying



which subsidiaries of Air India should be offered separately. He added that a bidder can participate in different bids for the airline's flight operations and its

different subsidiaries.

"The goal here is to provide flexibility to bidders so that they can bid even if there are individual bids (for differ-

ent subsidiaries of Air India). And, if you want to reintegrate (them) you can do that."

Air India has several subsidiaries including Air India Air Transport Services Limited (AIATSL), Air India Charters Limited, IAL Airport Services Limited, Airline Allied Services Limited and Air India Engineering Services Limited.

In June, after the Cabinet gave its nod for Air India divestment, IndiGo wrote to the ministry of civil aviation with an eye on the airline's international operations. "Kindly

treat this letter as our expression of interest in acquiring the international airline operations of Air India and Air India Express. Alternatively, we are equally interested in acquiring all of the airline operations of Air India and Air India Express," IndiGo President and WholeTime Director Aditya Ghosh wrote in the letter.

Aviation services providers Bird Group and Celebi have also shown interest in the ground-handling subsidiary AIATSL.

Sinha said that it has

appointed consultancy group EY as its transactional advisor, which will prepare a confidential information memorandum which will invite multiple bids for the integrated airlines as well as different subsidiaries which will be available for independent bids. He added that awarding of bids will be completed in six-eight months.

On whether the private player who is awarded the bid for the airline will get to keep the Air India brand, Sinha said that matter is still being considered.

## DLF promoters to infuse ₹11,250 cr; board okays QIP

**NEW DELHI:** Realty major DLF's board on Friday approved issue of debentures and warrants to promoters in lieu of Rs 11,250 crore equity infusion into the company, as part of its objective to reduce net debt significantly.

The board also gave its nod to selling shares through public issue or private placement to institutional investors.

The company is estimated to raise more than Rs 3,500 crore through this process.

In late August, the promoters had sold the entire 40 per cent stake in rental arm DLF Cyber City Developers Ltd (DCCDL) for Rs 11,900 crore and proposed to invest proceeds into DLE.

This deal included sale of 33.34 per cent stake in DCCDL

to Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC for Rs 8,900 crore and buyback of remaining shares worth Rs 3,000 crore by DCCDL.

In a filing to the BSE, DLF on Friday said its board has approved the preferential offer and issue of upto 37.97 crore compulsorily convertible unsecured debentures (CCDs) to the promoters for cash.

The debentures would be converted into equivalent number of equity shares at Rs 217.25. That apart, the board approved the preferential issue of up to 13,80,89,758 warrants to the promoters being convertible into shares at the same price. Upon completion of the issue of debentures and warrants and conversion into equity shares, "the total addi-

tional amount of promoter/promoters group's equity contribution to the company will be approximately Rs 11,250 crore."

The board also approved the offer and issue upto 17.30 crore equity shares to eligible investors, in one or more tranches, in India or overseas, by way of public issue or a private placement or a qualified institutional placement.

It approved increase of authorised share capital of the company from Rs 500 crore to Rs 1,000 crore. The board also approved the appointment of Ashok Kumar Tyagi and Devinder Singh as Whole-Time Directors (WTDs) of the company for a period of five years with effect from December 1, 2017. **PII**

### CORPORATE KALEIDOSCOPE



In association with GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment) Council, an autonomous body jointly set up by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), AAI organized the launch of 'Chhaya' - a tree plantation drive at Kendriya Vidyalaya AAI, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi. Rakesh Kalra, Regional Executive Director (NR), AAI, Sanjeev Jindal, GM (CSR), AAI, Ajay Mathur, DG (TERI), Sanjay Seth, CEO GRIHA Council, Principal K V AAI, Rangpur, Shabnam Bassi, Secretary, GRIHA Council and other senior officers of AAI were also present on the occasion



Ministers during the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity in Berlin



**SAURAV GHOSAL JUMPS TO NUMBER 16 IN WORLD SQUASH RANKINGS**

**CHENNAI:** India's Saurav Ghosal jumped five places in the world squash rankings to move to No.16 as per the latest list released on Friday. There are two Indians in the women's top 20 with Joshna Chinnappa at 15 and Dipika Pallikal-Karthik at 20. Ghosal made the biggest jump of five rungs from 21 he was placed last month, said a SRFI press release here.

**FORMER ENGLAND STRIKER HESKEY TO PROMOTE FOOTBALL IN INDIA**

**MUMBAI:** Former England forward Emile Heskey, who represented his nation in the 2002 and 2010 FIFA World Cup will arrive here on December 8 to unveil plans for promoting football in India. The former Liverpool and Leicester City player scored 7 goals in 62 appearances for England from 1999 to 2010.

**DIKSHA WINS AT HERO WOMEN'S GOLF TOUR**

**GURUGRAM:** Amateur Diksha Dagar completed a wire-to-wire victory after a third successive sub-par round in the final leg, while Gaurika Bishnoi claimed the Order of Merit of the Hero Womens Pro Golf Tour on Friday. The 16-year-old left-handed Diksha carded a round of two-under 70 and took her three-day total to 9-under 207, winning by 11 shots over the three golfers who tied for the second place.



# Happy opening dilemma as India aim to seal series against Sri Lanka

# Mary Kom quits boxing national observer post

**NEW DELHI:** An infinitely superior India will be eager to carry out yet another demolition act on a below-par Sri Lanka when the two teams clash in the third and final Test starting here on Saturday.

India's dominance has made the series a lopsided affair and the aspect which will be most interesting to observe on Saturday is the opening combination that the home team would pick.

After the batting debacle in the first innings of the first Test, Indian openers Shikhar Dhawan and KL Rahul enjoyed a fruitful second innings with scores of 94 and 79 respectively.

Murali Vijay, who was surprisingly kept out of playing XI for the first Test, came into the side in the second game in Dhawan's absence to score 128.

Now with Dhawan back in the squad, it is indeed a happy problem for skipper Virat Kohli, who has to choose two quality openers among three.

Had Kohli himself opted out of the third Test, then it would have been easier to fit in all three knowing that Rahul can also play at the No.4 position.

But with Kohli playing, it would mean that one of the openers will have to sit out. If Karun Nair's example is taken, he had to sit out because first-choice middle-order batsman Ajinkya Rahane was making a comeback to the side.

If that policy is followed, then Dhawan and Rahul have a better chance but Vijay's tighter technique also makes him a strong contender. A bold deci-



Virat Kohli during a practice session in New Delhi on Friday

PIC/PTI

sion could have been to drop an out-of-form Rahane from the playing XI and accommodate all three but that could be detrimental to the Indian vice-captain's confidence as he will be a vital cog in the wheel for India in overseas conditions.

India are 1-0 up in the series which could have easily been 2-0 had Kohli and his men got an extra 45 minutes on the final

day of the rain-curtailed first Test that ended in a draw.

With skipper Kohli himself questioning the need for such series in a roundabout manner, the unequal balance between the sides has been all too evident.

No wonder, India would be ideally hoping to put up another dominant show, aiming for a finish inside four days. One aspect of this encounter which could

be of some relevance is the fact that this will be India's last Test match at home for quite some time as the young team would embark on the toughest journey of their cricketing careers come 2018.

Starting with three Tests against South Africa followed by the two marquee away series -- five matches against England and four against Australia at the

back-end of 2018 will define the character of Kohli as a leader and also the ability of his team.

Therefore it will be a good chance for the likes of Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara and Ravichandran Ashwin to rack up some more enviable numbers which will do a world of good to their confidence. Facing a Sri Lankan side, which has been nothing short of an embarrass-

ment, is not the greatest of challenges but for world's No 1 Test side, it will be an opportunity to get some much required match practice, which they unfortunately won't get in South Africa save a two-day game.

Add to it, the absence of their injured veteran left-arm spinner Rangana Herath has left the island nation look like a rudderless ship.

Herath, with figures of 1/81 in 39 overs, was the only bowler who the Indians treated with respect during their innings and 239-run win in the second Test at Nagpur.

Even worse, Angelo Mathews, who was supposed to take Sri Lanka cricket to the next level, has been woefully out of form.

The Feroz Shah Kotla track may not be as flat as the one at Jamtha, where India scored 610/6 declared but it also won't be a green top like the one they got at the Eden Gardens.

Ishant Sharma, who had a match-haul of five wickets, would like to retain his place in the side even if Mohammed Shami gets injured.

The last time a Test match was held at the Kotla in 2015, it was rated as the best pitch as the match against South Africa went deep into the fifth day.

But the current Sri Lanka side does not possess the kind of guts and gumption that Hashim Amla, Temba Bavuma and AB de Villiers displayed, which precisely is the reason that all and sundry are bracing for a quick finish. AGENCIES



**NEW DELHI:** Five-time world champion M C Mary Kom has resigned as the national observer for Indian boxing after Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore made it clear that active sportspersons will not be considered for the position.

"I resigned as national observer 10 days ago after having a word with Mr Rathore. I had been requested to take up the position, it was not something I had asked for," Mary Kom, who claimed her fifth Asian Championships gold medal last month, said.

"I had inquired about the rule on not having active athletes as observers with the then Sports Secretary Injeti Srinivas when it was offered to me," she explained, reacting to insinuation that her appointment smacked of conflict of interest given that she is still an active national camper.

"But at that time, I was told that I should nonetheless accept the position. I did so on insistence of the Ministry and I don't want unnecessary controversies

about something that I had not asked for." The 35-year-old Olympic bronze-medallist was among 12 national observers appointed in March by the then Sports Minister Vijay Goele.

The list also includes the likes of Olympic-gold-medallist shooter Abhinav Bindra, double Olympic-medallist Sushil Kumar and former Commonwealth Games gold-medallist Akhil Kumar among others.

Of these, Sushil and Mary Kom are still active in their respective sports. Akhil, on the other hand, is no longer a part of the national camp after giving up amateur boxing. He has already rejected the conflict of interest charge, saying that he is neither a beneficiary of government schemes nor a part of the national camp. "I was never interested in this but accepted the position because I had been requested. I have my hands full with a lot of things. I am happy to let it go and have no complaints," said Mary Kom. AGENCIES

**'Pujara should be in top bracket of central contracts'**

**NEW DELHI:** India's chief coach Ravi Shastri feels that Test specialist Cheteshwar Pujara should remain in the top bracket when the BCCI and Committee of Administrators (COA) thrash out the revised central contracts based on new remuneration structure. Pujara is currently in the Grade A of Central Contracts alongside Virat Kohli, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ajinkya Rahane and Murali Vijay.

During a panel discussion on journalist Rajdeep Sardesai's new book 'Democracy's XI', Shastri said: "It is very important that someone like Cheteshwar Pujara is kept in the top bracket of central contract." Shastri, along with Kohli and Dhoni, met CoA chief Vinod Rai to discuss the revised compensation package and Future Tours & Programme calendar. There have been discussions in BCCI circles that players will be bracketed as per who plays the maximum number of international matches across formats in a particular calendar year. AGENCIES

# Chandimal dig: India preparing for South Africa on flat tracks

**NEW DELHI:** "I am not sure they are preparing for South Africa," said Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal as he took a dig at the Indian team's claims of asking for bouncy tracks in the ongoing Test series to be ready for the tough assignment against the Proteas next month.

Starting from skipper Virat Kohli, each and every Indian player, during interactions with media, spoke about how pitches against Sri Lanka have been prepared keeping the tour of South Africa in mind.

"I am surprised they are saying they are preparing for South Africa but they are giving these pitches," Chandimal's sarcasm was not lost on anyone.

"If you look at the wicket here (Kotla), I am not sure they are preparing for South Africa! It looks like a Nagpur pitch (where 610 runs were scored). The Kolkata pitch was similar to South African pitches but these two are not like that. We never underestimate any team and we need to give our best."



When asked if the Sri Lankan team felt disrespected that the discussions were only about South Africa, Chandimal said, "They are thinking about the next series but we as a team are thinking about this series, and we are thinking about each and every game. About how we can win. We can't control what they think. As a team we can control what we can control."

Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal on Friday came to under-fire Angelo Mathews' defence, making it clear that not only him but all other top

order batsmen also need to perform.

Asked if the senior pro needs to step up, Chandimal replied: "Mathews is a senior batsman we have got in our batting line up but it's not only him there are other senior batsmen also. And even for the youngsters, they all have to take the responsibility when they are out there in the middle."

"So it's not only about Angelo but also about others, who have to stand up and perform in the middle," he added. AGENCIES

# Windies reeling from Wagner's 7-wicket barrage

**WELLINGTON:** Neil Wagner's career best seven-wicket haul saw New Zealand seize the honours on day one of the first Test against the West Indies in Wellington on Friday.

The South African-born left-arter, a fiery short-ball specialist, claimed seven for 39 as the West Indies crumbled to be all out for 134 in a first innings that lasted a mere 45.4 overs.

In reply, New Zealand were 85 for two at the close of play with Jeet Raval on 29 and Ross Taylor on 12.

Tom Latham (37) and Kane Williamson (one) fell in quick succession before Raval and Taylor cautiously added 17 in 8.3 overs through to stumps.

Although Williamson's batting skills deserted him, he did have luck on his side at the start of the day when he won the toss and put the West Indies into bat on a green wicket.

After the tourists safely progressed to 59 without loss, Wagner engineered a collapse that saw all 10 wickets fall in 22 overs for only 75 runs.

He was twice on a hat-trick as he posted his first seven-



**New Zealand's Neil Wagner celebrates West Indies' Roston Chase being caught on the first day of their first Test match, at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Friday**

wicket haul and bettered his previous best of six for 41 against Zimbabwe last year.

The West Indies were full of confidence going into the match on the back of a recent series win over Zimbabwe and a Test victory against England, and the confidence grew as openers Kieran Powell and Kraigg Brathwaite progressed steadily passed the half-century mark.

But while New Zealand's new-ball pair Trent Boult and Matt Henry were unable to generate swing or seam move-

ment on a cloudless summer's day, Wagner found bounce in the ripe conditions. By digging the ball in short and angling it towards the rib cage he had his first success in his third over when Brathwaite went for 24. Two overs before lunch, when the tourists looked to be recovering at 75 for one, Boult took a leaf out of Wagner's book, using a short-ball to account for the West Indies top scorer Powell who made 42.

Wagner then hit a purple patch as he ripped through the

West Indies' new generation of specialist batsmen in the space of four balls.

Shimron Hetmyer went for 13 in the last ball before lunch, rising star Shai Hope fell on Wagner's second ball after play resumed and debutant Sunil Ambris stepped back on his stumps with the first ball he faced in Test cricket.

Roston Chase and Shane Dowrich mounted a short-lived revival with a 17-run partnership before Wagner was back in the action again with a rising delivery to Chase (five) that was steered to Jeet Raval at leg slip. With Wagner's first five wickets all from short deliveries, new batsman Holder stood tall for the first ball he faced, only for Wagner to switch to a yorker which bowled him, and 59 without loss had become 97 for seven.

Dowrich was run out at the non-striker's end for 18 and Boult bowled Miguel Cummins for one. Kemar Roach (not out 14) put on 29 for the last wicket with Shannon Gabriel (10) before Wagner had Gabriel caught in slips to wrap up the innings. AGENCIES

# Lajong seek to build winning momentum against Churchill

**SHILLONG:** Having begun their I-League campaign with a win, Shillong Lajong would look to build a winning momentum when they take on Churchill Brothers in their second home fixture here on Saturday.

Lajong beat I-League debutants Gokulam Kerala FC 1-0 on November 27 in their opening match at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium but assistant coach Alison was not impressed with the performance of his players.

"It was good football but not attractive football (in the first match). For the next match, I expect my boys to play better and focus more on attacking," Alison said.

He said his boys have gained confidence after the first win and have been training hard to make it two in two in their opening two home fixtures.



"After the win on Monday, the boys have gained more confidence. But now our main focus is the next match against Churchill. The boys have recovered well from the first match and we have been training hard. We are ready for our second home match," Alison added.

Churchill will be playing their opening match and for the newly appointed head coach Shevchenko, tomorrow's match will be his first.

Asked about his strategy against the home team, Shevchenko preferred not to disclose much and stated that his team would play according to a plan tomorrow.

"We have not had too much time to prepare as the foreigners arrived late but for the Indian players, the preparation has been good," Shevchenko said.

"It is a fresh team and we will get better game by game," he added. AGENCIES

# Delhi Dynamos seek winning start at home against NEUFC

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Dynamos would look to bounce back from their heavy defeat in their last match when they take on NorthEast United FC in their first home game of the season here on Saturday.

The Dynamos began their ISL season on a winning note with a 3-2 victory over FC Pune City but suffered a 1-4 drubbing at the hands of tournament new-comers Bengaluru FC in their second away match on November 26.

The Dynamos would look to forget that defeat and try to notch up a win in front of their home supporters at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium which will be hosting its first match after the FIFA U-17 World Cup.

One area of concern for the Dynamos in the two matches they have played has been their defensive frailties as the Delhi side have conceded six goals so far while scoring four. "It's a problem conceding

six goals in two matches. But it's not just about our defence. Rather, it's about the way we have been defending as a team. I don't like it. Our philosophy is to press well and we have not been doing that and I'm worried about that," Dynamos head coach Miguel Angel Portugal said at the pre-match press conference.

Coach Portugal will have a first taste of his home venue which will also see big support for NorthEast United as many football-mad people from that part of the country stay in the National Capital.

"I know my stadium. Our support, I think, will be the difference because it's good to have fans supporting your team through the entire game. But that will be the only advantage we have in the match. We'll have to play the game the same way as we did in the first two matches," the Spaniard said. AGENCIES

# Novak Djokovic names Radek Stepanek as coach

**BELGRADE:** Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic on Friday announced the Czech Republic's Radek Štěpánek as his new coach.

"We have a new official member of the #TeamDjokovic guys. #NoleFam please welcome Radek Stepanek to our team," the 30-year-old tweeted.

Stepanek will begin working with Djokovic in the following days in Monte Carlo, as Novak prepares for the next season and upcoming tournaments, after the break due to an elbow injury.

"Radek is one of my very close friends on the tour and I was always impressed with his level of determination, passion and love for the sport. The fact that he just recently retired at the age of 37 speaks volumes of his love for the game.

"He has lot of experience and knowledge, and he has



played on a high level for many years. I am excited to join our forces together and cannot wait to compete again having a new team to back me up," the three-time Wimbledon champion said in a statement released on his official website.

Stepanek and Agassi will travel and work alongside Novak, depending on the schedule they make, and on the calendar for 2018 which is yet to be confirmed. "On Andre's suggestion I

pursued Radek, therefore I am sure the two of them will work well together. The new season is about to start and there is a long way to go back to where I left off. We are aware that I need to go step by step, not hurrying anything. I feel much better now, and I can't wait to play matches again," Djokovic added.

The 39-year-old recently announced his retirement from the sport after 21 years on the professional tour. AGENCIES

# Impressive but misfiring India hold Australia 1-1

**BHUBANESWAR:** India produced an impressive display but wasted chances galore as they held defending champions and world number two Australia to a 1-1 draw in their opening pool match of the Hockey World League Final here on Friday.

Playing in front of a partisan crowd at the floodlit Kalinga Stadium, India by far were the better side on display and outplayed Australia in terms of ball possession.

The Indians got off to an attacking start and scored the opening goal of the match through Mandeep Singh's field strike in the 20th minute. But it was equalised soon after when Jeremy Hayward converted a penalty corner for Australia (21st minute).

The Indians started on a bright note and played above their weight to create numerous scoring chances in the match but the forwards, especially Gurjant Singh and Akashdeep, were off colour on Friday.

India almost took the lead with the first move of the game. It was S V Sunil who started the move and set it up for an unmarked Gurjant inside the circle but the young striker's reverse was saved by an agile Tyler Lovell in front of the Australian goal.

Two minutes later, Lovell came to his side's rescue again as he made a double save to deny the hosts. First, he blocked Akashdeep's effort from close range and then made another fine save to deny Gurjant for the second time in quick succession.

India played a high intensity game in the first quarter and kept up the pressure on Australian defence with continuous forays. In the process, they earned the first penalty corner of the match in the



India's Mandeep Singh in action during the Men's Hockey World League Final match against Australia in Bhubaneswar on Friday

sixth minute but comeback man Rupinderpal Singh flicked the ball straight to Lovell, who blocked it with his left hand.

Australia's lone scoring opportunity of the quarter came in the 12th minute from a penalty corner but Indian custodian Akash Chikite dived to his right to keep the ball away.

The Indians continued in the same vein in the second quarter and had another great scoring chance in the 17th minute only for Akashdeep to hit wide from a Sunil assist that fell in front of his stick after getting an Australian deflection.

It took a splendid field goal from India to break the deadlock in the 20th minute that was set up by skipper Manpreet Singh, who was outstanding in his 200th international cap.

Manpreet first gathered the ball from deep inside Indian

half and then gave an inch-perfect midfield splitting reverse hit pass to Lalit Upadhyay who in turn sent the ball forward to Mandeep inside the Australian circle and the striker did the rest to send the capacity crowd into a frenzy.

But India's lead was short-lived as Australia drew level in the very next minute through a penalty corner conversion by Jeremy Hayward.

Thereafter, Australia earned another penalty corner when Amit Rohidas was found guilty of high stick inside his own circle but the Indian defence stood tall to thwart the danger and go into the breather locked at one goal apiece.

Missed chances continued to haunt India as they wasted two more penalty corners minutes into the second half.

The Indians also wasted their only referral when Rupin-

der asked for an Australian foul inside the opposition circle.

The Australians pressed hard in the third quarter and in the process earned two more short corners, the first of which was brilliantly kept away by local hero Birendra Lakra, who made an overhead goal-line save.

The Kookaburras pressed hard in the third quarter and secured two more short corners but the Indians defended stoutly to deny their rivals.

It was a hard fought final quarter as both the teams went hard in search of the winner and the Indians came close at least twice, the second of which was their fourth penalty corner, which the hosts wasted as they could not stop the push.

India will play England in their next pool match on Saturday, while Australia will be up against Germany. AGENCIES

## Germany beat England to make winning start in HWL Final

**BHUBANESWAR:** Mats Grambusch and Christopher Ruhr struck a goal each as four-time Olympic champion Germany started their Hockey World League (HWL) Final campaign with a convincing 2-0 win over England in the opening match of the elite eight-nation tournament, here on Friday.

After a slow opening 15 minutes, world no. 5 Germany got their act together and scored both their goals in the second quarter to register full points from the match in front of a capacity crowd at the Kalinga Stadium.

It was England who started on a promising note but the Germans took control of the game after the first quarter.

England had the first shot at the goal but Mark Gledhill's try from inside the box didn't have enough power to trouble German goalkeeper Tobias Walter in the seventh minute.

Thereafter, the Germans slowly and steadily got into their groove and scored the first goal of the tournament in the 19th minute through Grambusch who slotted home a Niklas Bruns assist from inside the circle past skipper George Pinner in front of the England goal.

In the 25th minute, the Germans doubled their lead through another field strike from Ruhr to go into halftime with a comfortable lead.

The Englishmen were expected to make a strong comeback after the change of ends but the Germans did not allow that. AGENCIES

# India's campaign ends at World Team Squash

**NEW DELHI:** India bowed out of the WSF World men's team squash championship after a 0-3 defeat against defending champion and second seed England in Marseille on Friday.

India No.1 Saurav Ghosal put up a good fight in the opener and stretched the world number six Nick Matthew to five games but eventually the British National prevailed.

At two games all and 9-9 in the final game it could have been anybody's match but a wonderful boast by Nick put him ahead and then a 'stroke' felled Ghosal.

The final score read 11-6, 6-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-9 in Matthew's favour.

Harinder Pal Sandhu, who took the court next, could do little against experienced campaigner Daryl Selby. The Englishman gave little away and posted a convincing 11-2, 11-4, 11-2 win to seal the tie for England.

In the dead rubber, James Willstrop doused the enthusiasm of Vikram Malhotra 11-4, 9-11, 11-8.



India will now play for the 5-8 placings matches.

Late last night, Mahesh Mangaonkar did the star turn to help eighth-seed India upset seventh seeded Germany 2-1 to qualify for the quarterfinal.

Mahesh, 23, had come on to the court when the score read 1-1 and everything depended on him if India was to progress. Facing an unsure opponent in Valentin Rapp, Mahesh controlled the volleys and varied the drives to eventually carve out a comfortable 11-6, 11-7, 11-4 win on Thursday in 31 minutes

to bring joy to the Indian camp. After Vikram Singh had put India one up with his fluent 11-8, 11-1, 11-8 win over Rudi Rohrmuller, the focus shifted to the clash between the two number one players Saurav Ghosal and Simon Rosner.

It was a close battle with fortunes oscillating either way. Both players traded two games each and in the decisive fifth game, Ghosal looked a spent force. Rosner ran away with the game and the match 11-9, 4-11, 11-5, 6-11, 11-3 to restore parity. AGENCIES

## Porel returns to Bengal Ranji team for quarter-finals

**KOLKATA:** The 19-year-old Bengal pacer Ishan Porel returned to the 16-member squad for their upcoming Ranji Trophy quarterfinals against defending champions Gujarat in Jaipur from December 7-11.

The lanky pacer was named in place of Sayan Ghosh in the only change to the Manoj Tiwary-captained side.

Porel is currently representing India Green in the Challenger Trophy Under-19 one-day tournament that will conclude in Mumbai on Saturday. Bengal's two India representatives, Wriddhiman Saha and Mohammed Shami, will not be available for Ranji duty even as the third and final Test against Sri Lanka in New Delhi ends on December 6. **The Squad:** Manoj Tiwary (captain), Sudip Chatterjee (vice-captain), Abhimanyu Easwaran, Shreevats Goswami, Anustup Majumdar, Abhishek Raman, Aamir Gani, Pradipta Pramanik, Ashok Dinda, Ishan Porel, Mukesh Kumar, Kanishk Seth, B Amit, Wittick Chatterjee, Ritwik Roy Chowdhury and Saurabh Kumar Singh. AGENCIES

## Shiva Keshavan wins gold in Asian Luge Championships

**NEW DELHI:** India's veteran Winter Olympian Shiva Keshavan on Friday won a gold medal at the Asian Luge Championships at Altenberg, Germany.

The sole Indian participant and defending Asian champion retained his title with a time of 55.60 seconds.

Due to technical reasons, the Asian Luge Championships took place at Altenberg in Germany. In a race that was full of surprises, Keshavan started slow but recovered the lead after the second corner. There was a tense moment in the Infamous Curve 11-12 combination, also known as the 'Labyrinth', where Keshavan's sled started a sideways skid, but the Indian was able to bring it under control and retain the lead.

Last year's silver medalist from Korea, Kim Donghyeon, crashed in this same technical portion, but luckily came away with only minor injuries.

Shiva was followed by Lien Te-An of Taiwan (56.12 seconds) and Kim Dong Kyu of Korea (56.50 seconds) who bagged the silver and bronze medals respectively.

"I am so proud to bring the gold medal back to India for the fourth time. The track is



one of the most difficult in the world and I have had a few bad crashes here in the past. So it was a challenge on many levels. I want to thank all my sponsors and supporters, without who I really would not have made it this far," said Keshavan after the race.

The race, which was originally scheduled in Nagano, Japan, was shifted to the Eis-Kanal in Germany due to technical issues at the Nagano Sports Venue that had adverse safety implications for the fastest Olympic sport on ice.

Keshavan will represent India at the 2018 Winter Olympic Games at Alpensia Sliding Centre at Pyeongchang in South Korea for his record sixth Olympics. AGENCIES

## Atwal stays in lead, Chawrasia, Kapur move up the leaderboard

**MAURITIUS:** Arjun Atwal of India stayed in the lead at the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open after shooting a one-under-par 70 in the second round on Friday.

The eight-time Asian Tour winner totalled 10-under-par 132 to hold a one-shot advantage over Dylan Frittelli (66) of South Africa and Laurie Canter (66) of England at the Euro one million (approximately USD 1.07 million) event sanctioned by the Asian Tour, Sunshine Tour and European Tour.

SSP Chawrasia added a bogey free 67 to get to six-under and T-13, while Shiv Kapur made a smart move up with a 69 and he is now T-25.

The only other Indians making the cut were Shubhankar Sharma (72) at T-37 and Gaganjeet Bhullar (71) at T-54th.

Honey Baisoya, Ajeetesh Sandhu, Rahul Gangjee, Khalin Joshi, S Chikkarangappa, Chiragh Kumar, Himmat Rai and Sujjan Singh missed the cut, which fell at one-under 141.

Chawrasia, who is gunning for the Order of Merit, said, "It was a bogey-free round so I am very happy. I started with a bogey-bogey on Thursday then I fought back very nicely. It was a good comeback and on Friday I just continued from where I left off. AGENCIES

## First loss for Sethu FC in IWL qualifying event

**KOLHAPUR:** Tamil Nadu's Sethu Football Club went down 0-5 to Indira Gandhi AS&E (Puducherry) for its first defeat in three matches in Qualifying Group A of the AIFF-Indian Women's League here on Friday.

The Madurai-based club, the only team from Tamil Nadu in the premier women's competition, will meet Rising Student

Club (Odisha) on December 3 in its final outing of the five-team all-play-all group.

With only the winners qualifying for the main draw, Sethu FC, Rising Student Club and Indira Gandhi AS&E are all in contention from Group A. Sethu FC will not only have to win by a big margin, their chances will also rely on the outcome of Indira Gandhi

AS&E's last match.

"It turned out to be a bad day for us," said coach Kalpana Dass.

"It's all part of the learning curve for the girls. The Pondy side opted to attack as a form of defence and we also missed a lot of scoring opportunities. I'm sure we will come back strongly in the last game," she added.

Indira Gandhi AS&E went up 4-0 at half-time through goals from R Sandhiya, Pradeepa, Nathiya and Nikhila as Sethu FC goalkeeper Rumpa Malik struggled and was replaced by Soumyia.

Pradeepa scored her second goal in the second half. Sethu FC beat Baroda FA 16-0 and CM's XI J&K State Sports Council 2-0 in its previous matches. AGENCIES

## Three more Russians banned for Sochi doping

**LAUSANNE:** Three more Russian athletes were suspended for life on Friday by the International Olympic Committee for doping at the Sochi Winter Games in 2014.

The Oswald Commission, which is investigating allegations from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) of systematic state-sponsored doping by the Russians at the Games they hosted, announced that it had banned two cross-country skiers and a biathlete.

The only one of the trio to win a medal in Sochi was biathlete Olga Zaitseva who was part of the team that came second in the relay. That medal had already been stripped after the Commission's ruling on Olga Vilukhina on Wednesday.

Zaitseva also won golds in the relay in Turin in 2006 and Vancouver four years later and silver in the mass start event in 2010. Zaitseva, who is 39, retired

early in 2015.

The two cross-country skiers are Yulia Chekaleva and Anastasia Dotsenko. Chekaleva was in the Russian team that came sixth in the 4x5 kilometer relay. Dotsenko was part of the duo that also finished sixth in the team sprint. The two results had already been rubbed out after the Commission banned Yulia Ivanova, who was on both teams, in November.

The IOC said in a press release that the Commission is still investigating 36 possible doping cases using additional findings from the re-analysis of tests and the forensic examination of sample bottles, which WADA said had been manipulated by the Russians.

The statement added that the Oswald Commission plans to complete all the hearings on athletes who are still competing and could qualify for Pyeongchang, before the Games start. AGENCIES

## Minerva beat newcomers NEROCA 2-1

**LUDHIANA:** Minerva Punjab beat debutants NEROCA FC 2-1 in a thrilling I-League match here on Friday.

After Felix Chidi (18th minute) put NEROCA FC in the lead but Chencho (24th) and Lago (45+2) scored to secure all three points for the hosts.

Manipur side NEROCA started the match with high pace and intensity which both-ered Minerva's defence for much of the first 20 minutes.

Minerva goalkeeper Arshdeep had to pull up his socks in the third minute itself when he dived to his left to save a brilliantly taken curling shot.

Chencho had a good chance in the 16th minute but NEROCA captain and goalkeeper Lalit Thapa somehow thwarted it.

Meanwhile, Minerva's back four stood firm until the 18th minute when a superb solo run by Chidi resulted to the first goal of the match. NEROCA did not get much time



to celebrate as Minerva struck back six minutes later through Chencho who beat his marker on the left corner of the penalty box and then hit the ball in the far right corner of the goal.

Minutes later, NEROCA won a free kick just yards outside the penalty area but Akhliadin's effort went over the

crossbar. Minerva would have taken the lead in the 39th minute when Chencho found himself one on one with the keeper but he simply could not hit the target.

Just as the first half was about to end, Lago Bei found the net from Abhishek's cross. Lago took a touch and then

slotted the ball into the left corner from four yards out. This vital goal just before half-time changed everything. The second half was more about Minerva sitting back to allow NEROCA attack and hitting them on the counter.

NEROCA made two quick substitutions early on in the second half to find a way to penetrate Minerva defence. Chencho got another opportunity in 76th minute when he dribbled past two defenders to go one on one with the keeper but his shot brushed off the right goalpost.

Lago created an opportunity for Minerva in the 88th minute when he almost scored from 30 yards.

NEROCA could not find any more good opportunities and home side Minerva emerged victorious. With this victory, Minerva went atop the league table with four points from two matches. AGENCIES

## Doping not a big problem in the sport: FIFA president Infantino

**MOSCOW:** FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Friday sought to distance football from any suspicions of the widespread doping in other sports that has cast a cloud over World Cup hosts Russia.

Russia have been stripped of a third of the medals they won as hosts of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi and last week a ban on the country taking part in international athletics was upheld by the sport's governing body the IAAF.

Infantino claimed that the level of testing in football is suf-



ficient to show that the game is largely clean.

"I don't think there are many other international sports organisations who are doing as many anti-doping tests as football is doing, with

FIFA, UEFA or national associations, in and out of competition, blood, urine, biological passports," Infantino said during a press conference in the Kremlin in Moscow ahead of the 2018 World Cup draw.

"Professional players in top teams play 50 or 60 matches every year. They are tested, I don't know how many times every year.

"If you would have a serious doping issue in football this would be known by now, whether in Russia or any other country of the world." AGENCIES

### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 Cr. PC**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that Asfhak Choroova S/o Mohd. Mohin R/o: 2052, TC Camp, Anand Parbat, Delhi has committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence case FIR No. 181/17 U/s 380/457 IPC, has been registered at P.S. Ranjit Nagar, Delhi punishable and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person Asfhak Choroova cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person namely Asfhak Choroova absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Asfhak Choroova of case FIR No. 181/17 U/s 380/457 IPC, at P.S. Ranjit Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before 16.01.2018.

**By Order**  
Sh. Jitender Singh  
ACMM, West District  
Tis Hazari Court, New Delhi

DP/5073/CD/17

### North Central Railway, Allahabad

**E-Tendering Tender Notice**

**E-Tender Notice No. SIG-WS-Cont-498** Dated: 27.11.2017  
Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/North Central Railway / ALD for and on behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on line (E-Tendering) for the following work..

S. No.	Description	E-Tender Notice No.	Approx Cost (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)	Cost of Tender Form (₹)
1.	Provision of Telecom facilities in connection with augmentation of infrastructural facilities like: Train time display board, Remote control room setup, PA system, CC TV etc. in mela circulating area i.e. Allahabad station, Subedarganj station, Naini Station for Kumbh mela.	SIG-WS-Cont-498	23645653.73	268230.00	10700.00

Date of Closing/Opening Tender: 03.01.2018. Date of Completion /Period from issue acceptance letter: 08 Months. Tender on line can be submitted up to 15.30 hrs on 03.01.2018. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in) 1097/17 Ad

### E-Tender Notice

**Tender Notice No. Tender\_17-18\_Stripping\_CN/NOTICE** Dated 25-11-2017

Tender no.	Description of work	Tender Cost (₹)	Earnest Money(₹)	Completion Period	Tender Doc. cost (₹)
Tender_17-18_Stripping_CN	Complete Stripping of GSCN coaches as per scope of work.	50,94,894.40/-	101900/-	12 months	5250/-

1. Tender will be closed at 15:00 Hrs on 02.01.2018 and is available on Indian Railway E-Tendering website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in). 2. For detailed information please visit Indian Railway E-Tendering website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in). 1094/17 Ad

North Central Railways [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in) @CPRONCR

# 'TO DO COMEDY, YOU NEED TO BE A GOOD ACTOR'



SYEDA EBA

After surviving quite a rough year amidst the spat with Sunil Grover, Kapil Sharma has made a commendable return to movies with his upcoming flick *Firangi*. Though the story is set in the pre-independence era, Kapil refrained from calling it a conventional period drama.

"Every movie made about partition has only shown the dark side of those times, focusing on atrocities, wars, and massacres. We are stuck with the negativity that has been prevailing in our minds. Considering this, we thought to take an attempt and show the flip side, which is indeed quite positive. Our film majorly focuses on the commoners who were more concerned about earning their living rather than the departure of Britishers from India. We have shown how people from different communities and religion, used to live together before partition, sharing joys and happiness," said Kapil during an interaction.

But how difficult is it to convince the audience that you are as good an actor as you are a comedian?

"You won't miss the comedy in this film at all. The only difference is, in a comedy show, the audience expect every second dialogue to be funny but the film offers us the space to bring versatility – including, comedy, drama suspense – at a single platform", mentioned Kapil.

He had been in news for something or the other throughout the year. Is the negative criticism going to influence the business of his movie? "No, I don't feel so. I don't think there is

a single actor in the film industry who did not get stuck into controversies for some reason. More the people love us, higher are their expectations. And so, if they hear any negative news surrounding us, it's natural for them to come up with harsh criticism. I always take such criticism in the positive light because it shows how much people admire and love me."

The ace comedian, who feels that television, demands more efforts and hard work, shall be seen playing an underdog character Manga in *Firangi*.

Kapil, who considers himself as his biggest critic, doesn't prefer aping other actors just to get included in the mainstream cinema. "I don't try to ape anyone. Say it Shahrukh or Akshay, everyone has his own style and specialty. If I ever think of doing romance like SRK or perform stunts like Akshay, I would end up laughing at myself. I always prefer to do things that I am good at," he spoke further.

What are his expectations from the movie? "Well, I just want that if a person is spending 200 bucks to watch my movie, I would never want him to leave the theatre crying and disheartened. As far as getting included in the 100 crore club is considered, I will explain you the technical side of it. A filmmaker spends 120 crores in making a particular movie and if it crosses the benchmark of 100 crores, we declare it 'Hit'. But it doesn't work this way. It's just a way to fool the audience. The total expenditure on *Kis Kisko Pyaar Karu* was approximately eight crore but the movie managed to get box office collection of 10 crores on its opening day. This is what we call a hit in real terms," said Kapil.



Talking about his upcoming flick *Firangi*, Kapil Sharma, an ace comedian, says that the audience will not only get to see him doing comedy but a lot more

## Katrina beats Priyanka, Deepika hollow: Salman



MUMBAI: Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, who will be seen on screen once again with Katrina Kaif in *Tiger Zinda Hai*, says her dedication has helped her become a dancer who beats "hollow" the likes of Priyanka Chopra and Deepika Padukone.

Salman has worked with Katrina in films like *Maine Pyaar Kyun Kiya*, *Partner*, *Yuvvraaj* and *Ek Tha Tiger*.

"She (Katrina) knows her limitations and works hard to achieve what she can't do. When she joined the industry, she couldn't dance. Today she is one of the best dancers we have. Priyanka Chopra,



Deepika Padukone, girls who are considered dancers I think she beats them hollow," Salman said in an interview.

*Tiger Zinda Hai*, a sequel to the box office franchise that

sees Salman as a RAW agent who falls in love with a Pakistani spy played by Katrina, gave them a chance to be back together on set after five years.

What makes them such a hit on-screen couple? Salman said: "I don't think we consider ourselves exceptionally beautiful or talented. I think we both just see ourselves as normal people who lucked out."

On the personal front with Katrina, he said: "I take advice from her but every time she has advised me, it has been a disaster." Little is known about their first meeting, except that Katrina was barely 18.



Government of West Bengal

## North Bengal marches towards development

Inspired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal **Mamata Banerjee** a host of welfare schemes will be announced and inaugurated by **Shri Rabindranath Ghosh** the Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, North Bengal Development Department, Government of West Bengal

Laying the foundation stone of a bridge to be constructed over the Raidak-I river at Ullarkhawa, P.S: Tufanganj, District of Cooch Behar.

**Chief Guest**

**Shri Goutam Deb**, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Department of Tourism, Govt. of West Bengal

**Special Presence**

**Smt. Pushpita Roy (Dakua)**  
Hon'ble Sabhadhipati, Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad  
**Shri Fazal Karim Miah**, Hon'ble MLA, Tufanganj  
**Shri Jagadish Barman**, Hon'ble Sabhapati, Tufanganj-I Panchayat Samity  
**Shri Swapan Kumar Saha**, Hon'ble Sabhapati, Tufanganj-II Panchayat Samity  
**Shri Ananta Kumar Barma**, Hon'ble Chairman, Tufanganj Municipality

**Date:** 2nd December, 2017  
**Time:** 10 a.m. | **Venue:** Work Site

Inauguration of the Infrastructure Development Scheme, for the Sister Nivedita High School, in the District of Cooch Behar.

**Chief Guest**

**Shri Partha Pratim Ray**, Hon'ble MP, Cooch Behar

**Special Presence**

**Shri Mihir Goswami**, Hon'ble MLA, Cooch Behar  
**Shri Bhusan Singh**, Hon'ble Chairman, Cooch Behar Municipality

**Date:** 2nd December, 2017  
**Time:** 11:30 a.m. | **Venue:** School Premises

Inauguration of a scheme, involving the installation of a 100 KW powerful grid solar system, at Panchanan Barma University, in the District of Cooch Behar.

**Chief Guest**

**Shri Partha Pratim Ray**, Hon'ble MP, Cooch Behar

**Special Presence**

**Smt. Pushpita Roy (Dakua)**  
Hon'ble Sabhadhipati, Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad  
**Shri Mihir Goswami**, Hon'ble MLA, Cooch Behar  
**Shri Bhusan Singh**, Hon'ble Chairman, Cooch Behar Municipality

**Date:** 2nd December, 2017  
**Time:** 12 noon  
**Venue:** Panchanan Barma University



North Bengal Development Department, Government of West Bengal

