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NEW 'DYNAMIC FARE' FOR APP-BASED CABS FROM JULY 20 PG3



'S-400 MISSILE DEAL WITH RUSSIA TO GO AHEAD DESPITE US SANCTIONS' PG5



DEJECTED ENGLAND, BELGIUM AIM TO LEAVE WORLD CUP ON A HIGH PG15



PRIYANKA LOVES THE IDEA OF GETTING MARRIED PG16

Nawaz Sharif arrested at Lahore airport

90 killed in poll violence

QUETTA: Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam, sentenced to jail for corruption, were arrested within minutes of landing at Lahore airport on Friday night. They are expected to be flown to Rawalpindi.



Over 10,000 policemen are posted in the city to check against any trouble or show of strength by supporters for the homecoming of the three-time prime minister, who wants to mobilise his party ahead of elections on July 25. The administration has ordered that mobile phones will be shut in the city from 3 pm to 12 am.

Earlier on Friday at least 90 people, including a top nationalist leader, were killed and more than 180 others injured as powerful bomb blasts targeted two separate election rallies in Pakistan, the deadliest in a string of attacks on candidates ahead of the July 25 polls.

Militants targeted a gathering of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) leader Siraj Raisani in Mastung area of Balochistan province.

The nature of the attack was not known and police and intelligence agencies were trying to figure out if it was a suicide bombing.

More reports on P12



A victim of a bomb blast brought to a hospital in Quetta following an attack at an election rally

“It’s been like a dream so far

HIMA DAS

In today's paper

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TOP COURT ON I&B'S PROPOSED SOCIAL MEDIA HUB

Monitoring WhatsApp is like creating surveillance state: SC

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday took a strong note of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's decision to set up a social media hub for monitoring online data, observing that it will be "like creating a surveillance state".

The top court said the government wants to tap citizens' WhatsApp messages and sought its response within two weeks.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud issued a notice to the Centre on a plea by Trinamool Congress (TMC) legislator Mahua Moitra and sought Attorney General K K Venugopal's assistance in the matter.

"The government wants to tap citizens' WhatsApp messages. It will be like creating a surveillance state," the bench said.

Senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for Moitra, said the government had issued a request for proposal, and the tender will be opened on August 20.

"They want to monitor social media content with the help of this social media hub," Singhvi said.

The bench then said it is listing the matter on August 3, before the opening of tender on August 20



Highlights

- ▶ The govt wants to tap citizen's WhatsApp messages. That would be like creating a surveillance state, says Supreme Court
- ▶ I&B ministry plans to create social media hub to monitor online data
- ▶ Top court seeks Centre's response within two weeks

and the AG or any law officer for the government will assist the court in the case.

Earlier, on June 18, the apex court had refused to accord urgent hearing on the plea seeking to stay a central government move to set up a 'Social Media Communication Hub' that would collect and analyse digital and social media content.

The counsel for Moitra had said that the government is trying to monitor the social media content of individuals by tracking their social media accounts such as those on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and their e-mails.

Recently, the Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL), a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the ministry, had floated a tender to supply software for the project.

"A technology platform is needed to collect digital media chatter from all core social media platforms as well as digital platforms such as news, blogs... In a single system providing real-time insights, metrics and other valuable data," the tender document says.

Under the project, media persons would be employed on a contractual basis in each district to

be the "eyes and ears" of the government and provide real-time updates from the ground.

The tender document says the platform is expected to provide automated reports, tactical insights and comprehensive work-flows to initiate engagement across digital channels.

"The platform may be used to disseminate content and hence, should support publishing features," the document says, adding the platform needs to power a real-time New Media Command Room," according to the tender document.

Don't attempt to create split in PDP, Mehbooba warns BJP



MPOST BUREAU

SRINAGAR: In her first public appearance after resigning as Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday said any attempt by the Centre to "engineer" a split in her party would have "extremely dangerous" consequences.

Mehbooba resigned as chief minister on June 19 after the BJP pulled out of the coalition with the PDP in the state and withdrew support to her government.

"My party is strong; there are differences which can be resolved. However, if there are any attempts to engineer a split in the PDP like it was done in 1987 to commit robbery on people's vote and to crush the MUF (Muslim United Front), the results will be extremely dangerous," she told reporters here.

Mehbooba also recalled that the events post the 1987 Assembly elections had "created" Syed Salahuddin, the supremo of the banned Hizbul

Mujahideen, and Mohammad Yasin Malik, the pro-Independence JKLF chief.

Salahuddin is now based in Pakistan.

"There are differences in every party like there are differences in every family and these can be addressed..."

"There can be no splits without Delhi's involvement. In 1987, the robbery on people's vote created one Salahuddin and one Yasin Malik," the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief said.

Mehbooba was talking to reporters at the Martyrs' Graveyard at Naqshband Sahib after paying tributes to those killed in firing by soldiers of Dogra Maharaja Hari Singh on this day in 1931 during protests against his autocratic rule.

This was her first public appearance in the state after she resigned as chief minister.

After the government fell, several PDP legislators raised a banner of revolt against Mehbooba's leadership and accused her of nepotism and favouritism during her tenure as chief minister.

Reacting to Mehbooba's statement, National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said it would not matter to Kashmiris if the PDP breaks up.

Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said Mufti with her statement was "trying to give oxygen to terrorists."

"Knowing or unknowingly she has only exposed her proximity to separatists," the BJP leader said.

CM congratulates sprinter Hima Das



MPOST BUREAU

KOLKATA: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday hailed sprinter Hima Das, who became the first Indian woman to clinch a gold medal at a global event the World Under-20 Championships in Finland.

Banerjee said that her achievement would surely inspire other girls to believe in themselves. "Hima Das the nation is so proud of you. My congratulations to you for your Under-20 win in Finland."

Your historic achievement of winning India's first ever track athletics world title will inspire girls to believe that nothing is impossible," Banerjee wrote on her Twitter handle on Friday.

Das had clinched the top spot in the women's 400m final race at the IAAF World Under-20 Athletics Championships held in Tampere, Finland on Thursday.

CHANGE OF HEART

Remorseful thief returns stolen gold ornaments with an apology

MPOST BUREAU

AMBALAPUZHA: A man who stole gold ornaments from a house here returned it two days later with an apology letter.

The thief had gained entry into the house in Thakazhi panchayat when the family was away attending a relative's

on Tuesday.

The intruder broke open the back door and took away the valuables- a finger ring, earring and a locket kept in the almirah.

When the family returned, they realised the house was burgled and immediately informed the police.

However, by then the

thief seemed to have second thoughts about his misdemeanour and returned the ornaments to the owner with an apology letter, pleading not to get him arrested.

"Please do not get me arrested. Pardon me. I am sorry.

The mistake I have committed is due to my extreme conditions," he said in the letter.

FREAK MISHAP

19-year-old BBA student dies as disaster drill goes horribly wrong, trainer arrested

MPOST BUREAU

COIMBATORE/CHENNAI: A 19-year-old student died when she jumped off the second floor of a college building here during a disaster management drill, following which a trainer was arrested for allegedly prodding her to leap, police said on Friday.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami said he had directed the police and the higher education department to take stringent action against those who organised the drill "without obtaining due approval".

He also announced a solatium of Rs 5 lakh to the victim's family. In a video of the incident, which went viral, the girl appeared hesitant to take the jump even though a net was put up for her safe landing and, it seemed, the trainer was trying to push her, police said.

Lokeshwari, a second-year BBA student, who finally took the jump, hit a sunshade in the first floor, police said.

She suffered severe head injuries and died while being taken to a government hospital on Thursday, they added.

Students also claimed she was not willing to jump.



A video grab of Lokeshwari being pushed during the safety drill

Police said R Arumugam, who claimed to be a trainer of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA),

was arrested based on a complaint by the student's father and remanded to custody. However, the NDMA said

it was not associated with the drill and that the trainer was not authorised by it to conduct the exercise.

"Unfortunately that this incident has happened & we have lost a young life. Our heartfelt condolences to the family," it said.

"However, the National Disaster Management Authority wasn't involved in this drill. The trainer wasn't authorised by NDMA to conduct such a drill," it said in a tweet.

Palaniswami condoned the student's death and expressed his sympathies to the family of the deceased.

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Take note of time, space to SLEEP LIKE A BABY

You've heard of oral hygiene, personal hygiene and food hygiene, but did you know you there was something as simple as sleep hygiene, that ensures blissful, uninterrupted sleep? Little things like room temperature, room darkness, sound disturbance and colour comfort can make a huge difference, say experts.

Quick, restful, deep sleep is something that comes from being in a peaceful state of mind. When you are free of any mental baggage you can sleep anywhere. However, it is important to have a comfortable environment tuned to your specific needs to be able to optimize sleep.

Experts share some tips to help you sleep like a baby.

▶ You want to work that body up through the day, so it begs for sleep at night. Avoid taking naps in the afternoon or any other time in the day so you hit your bed exhausted at bedtime.

▶ At bedtime, don't stress about how many hours of sleep you'll get before you have to drag yourself to another long tiring day at work. Nothing works better than easing yourself to sleep with no negative thoughts.

▶ Your bedroom should be your personal happy space, your cocoon. Make sure you have the lighting and decor done to your taste. The temperature should be right. If you're married, make sure you sign a temperature treaty, rather than a prenup.

▶ Your bed should allow you enough space to stretch and roll without being cramped. Get a pillow that fits your contours. Sleep with the right posture, without kicking your partner or kids out of the bed. If you're single, enjoy the luxury of having the 'whole' bed to yourself and sleep on that thought.



▶ There are some things you just can't help. Are you a morning person or a night person? If you're a morning person, there is no way you are going to stay up with the owls –

sleep hygiene or no hygiene. You'll go to bed early and wake up early. Figure this one out. ▶ No matter how hard a day you've had, you owe yourself an hour or two to wind down. Do what makes you happy before

you go to bed. Read a book, paint, watch a movie, knit, work out, dance. A happy mind equals sound sleep.

▶ When most of us follow a rigorous 9-5 work day, our food habits always go out the window. Don't eat dinner at 11 pm. You're guaranteed to have heartburn leaving you tossing through the night. Eat dinner by 8 pm. You'll starve the first few days, but you'll survive if you follow through.

▶ Sun your mattresses and pillows regularly. A damp, moldy bed and pillow not only give your body aches, but also snatch your sleep away.

▶ Warm milk before bed almost always works. It helps if you sleep at the same time every day.

MOVIE OF THE WEEK

Bollywood salutes a true hero

“SOORMA”

Director: Shaad Ali;
Starring: Diljit Dosanjh, Tapsee Pannu, Angad Bedi, Satish Kaushik, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Vijay Raaz
Rating: ★★★★★



At a time when supposedly responsible filmmakers are glorifying gangsters, terrorists and sociopaths in ostensible bio-pics, *Soorma* about the struggles of hockey champ Sandeep Singh to overcome crippling obstacles to claim a name among sports legends, comes as a gust of unpoluted air.

This is a film that needed to be made, a story about a man whom future generations need to know about and look up to. Damn, the young need role models from our everyday life, not imported superheroes who can't save their own egos even as they purport to save civilization from destruction.

Soorma serves up an appetizing homemade dish of inspirational drama and some beautifully furtive flights of flirtation where Diljit Dosanjh's Sandeep Singh courts Tapsee Pannu's Harpreet with hockey and love songs. There is a resonant ring of authenticity to the courtship, as though director Shaad Ali were addressing love not as a second-hand emotion but a first-hand dip into emotions that are so real and pure, they make us smile.

A lot of the time Shaad's narrative deploys the standards sports tropes: protagonist undertaking punishing regiment, cruel coach and gruelling tasks for the hero, savage setbacks and those inspiring songs about akela-chala-chal (very cutely redolent in Gulzar's poetry). These stereotypical signposts of sportive cinema are sprinkled into Sandeep Singh's life-story with inspiring gusto.

Shaad Ali films Sandeep Singh's story with tremendous empathy. There are no attempts to titivate the tale with an august aura, or make the characters more appealing than they really are. Not just Diljit Dosanjh, but the rest of cast who huddle together in a circle of shared kinship that moved me to tears, specially when Sandeep is wounded by a near-fatal gunshot.

Angad Bedi as Sandeep's Veerji is also splendid. Physically and emotionally potent, Angad makes the supportive sibling's part look so real you wish you could take him home to be your real-life bro. Vijay Raaz as Sandeep's Bihar coach reins in his emotions with expertise. Tapsee Pannu as the hockey player who is wooed by Sandeep Singh has seldom looked so pretty. She lends emotional heft to the film's second-half when she must move away from love to redeem the loved one.

The irony of the situation is not lost on the narrative. Director Shaad Ali, making as triumphant a comeback after the crippling failures of *Jhoom Barabar Jhoom*, *Kill Dill* and *OK Jaanu*, as Sandeep Singh after the freak gunshot, keeps the narrative straight and uncluttered. He gets fabulous support from his leading man.

If Sandeep Singh was nicknamed 'Flicker Singh' this film takes that flicker into sphere of a burning flame. *Soorma* just makes you happy for the unsung heroes whom cinema has the power and reach to put on a pedestal.

IAN S

An orange a day may prevent AGE-RELATED VISION LOSS

IF YOU WANT to prevent losing your vision as you age and keep your eyes healthy, eat oranges daily, says a study led by an Indian origin researcher.

Macular degeneration is a condition associated with old age that causes vision loss at the centre of the field of vision.

The results showed that people who ate at least one serving of oranges every day had more than 60 per cent reduced risk of developing late macular degeneration 15 years later.

The effect may be due to flavonoids present in oranges that help prevent vision loss.

Flavonoids are powerful antioxidants found in almost all fruits and vegetables, and they have important anti-inflammatory benefits for the immune system.

"Essentially we found that people who eat at least one serve of orange every day have a reduced risk of developing macular degeneration compared with people who never eat oranges," said lead researcher

Bamini Gopinath from the University of Sydney.

"Even eating an orange once a week seems to offer significant benefits," she added.

For the study, published in American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, the team interviewed more than 2,000 people aged over 50 and followed them over a period of 15 years.



Gopinath explained that previously most of the researches had focused on the effects of common nutrients such as Vitamins C, E and A on the eyes.

The team also looked at other flavonoid containing foods like tea, apple, red wine. However they did not find any relation between other sources and protection of eyes against the disease.

Age is the strongest known risk factor and the disease is more likely to occur after the age of 50.

There is currently no cure for the disease. IAN S

How baby's sex may influence pregnancy complications

SCIENTISTS have found that the placentas of male or female babies control the level of small molecules which may explain the reason behind why pregnancy complications may vary depending upon the baby's biological sex.

The findings showed that the genetic profile of the placentas of male and female babies were very different in relation to the baby's sex.

This may help explain why male babies may be more vulnerable to the effects of poor growth, and why being pregnant with a girl may lead to an increased risk of severe pre-eclampsia for the mother, the researchers said.

"In pregnancy and childbirth, the sex of the baby is at the forefront of many parents' minds, but we do not even think of the placenta as having a sex. This work shows that the placenta differs profoundly according to sex," said



lead author, Gordon Smith from NIHR Cambridge Comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre at the University of Cambridge, Britain.

For the study, published in the journal JCI Insight, the team included data from 4,000 first time mothers and analysed

samples of placenta and maternal blood.

The team found that one of the uniquely sex-related placental genes controlled the level of a small molecule called spermine -- a metabolite that is a substance involved in metabolism -- that plays an important role in

all cells and is even essential for the growth of some bacteria.

Female placentas had much higher levels of the enzyme that makes spermine, thus increasing levels of the metabolite in mothers with baby girls which is associated with pre-eclampsia risk whereas placental cells from boys were found to be more susceptible to the toxic effects of a drug that blocked spermine production, causing low levels of the substance which may lead to poor foetal growth.

"These differences alter elements of the composition of the mother's blood and may even modify her risk of pregnancy complications. Better understanding of these differences could lead to new predictive tests and possibly even new approaches to reducing the risk of poor pregnancy outcome," Smith explained.

IAN S

Chandan Gomes at Arles

'People You May Know', Chandan Gomes latest work, is a dark and poignant search for romantic love in the digital age

UMA NAIR

Photography is about many things to many people. But when you carve a series of conversations around the discovery of your own intentions it becomes a tenuous journey. SACAC Photography Faculty Chandan Gomes latest work titled 'People You May Know' is amongst the ten projects short-listed for the 'New Discovery Award' and is being shown at Rencontres d'Arles 2018. The exhibition opened on July 2, 2018 and will continue till September 23, 2018.

There are 36 works in total, printed on archival paper and mounted on Aluminum Dibond, with each dibond sheet fitted with a channel on the back, thus mirroring the collapsible borders between the analog and the digital at the conceptual core of 'People You May Know'.

"People You May Know is an archive of the conversations I have with a stranger-friend on Facebook and where they lead me to, sometimes in the real world," states Gomes. "It is a visual document of the intimacies we share, coupled with a sense of distrust and irony—I often find myself speaking to her on Facebook, while in the company of my real friends, family, the people I claim to love."

Gomes plays with provocation, in a person called Tara. An umbrella is enough for him to pen his love note. He also tears away our conventional understanding of photography as a tool, to serve us a body of work that goes where few Indian male photographers dare to — into the vulnerability and fragility of the self, inadvertently contesting any easy perception and representation of masculinity.

"The laptop screen becomes a bricolage of screenshots of our conversation,

photos and films that we have exchanged, documents from my past like images from family albums and diary entries, several open chat/browser windows, etc. I carefully arrange all these elements on the laptop screen and then photograph it in the darkness of my room, while it glows and flickers," he adds.

In these photographs are Gomes confessions about his mother's memory loss, his stay at a sanatorium and my increasing anxiety to find Tara in the real world, amongst other things. "Through this work, I wish to throw light on how our dependence on the Internet has reshaped our social interactions, sexual habits and our understanding of the self. In the virtual world everyone appropriates, imitates who they want to be, but hides who they really are," says Gomes.

The curator Devika Daulat Singh of 'Photoink' says that Gomes show is an unconventional exchange of conversa-



tions between two strangers who found each other in the virtual world. "This work investigates the boundary-less realm of the 'unknown' and 'unseen' and reflects on how people interact and influence one another in the age of social

media. As the boundaries between the digital and physical worlds get blurred, the phenomenon of the digitised self-finds agency and freedom to be anybody it wants to be.

'People You May Know' is a dark and

poignant search for romantic love in the digital age. Its unpredictable and non-linear narrative allows the viewer to experience a relationship as it unfolds, falters, and rebuilds, not always in the same order," adds Daulat Singh.

City streets to see 'cool-headed' bikers, thanks to special helmet from HIDCO

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Motorcycle riders in the city now have reason to rejoice as Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO) is introducing a special type of helmet which will keep the rider's head cool, as part of the Safe Drive Save Life programme.

The helmet, the first of its kind in the country, has been manufactured by a Bengaluru-based company. The fully covered lightweight helmet has a temperature control system which is run by a battery. The batteries will have to be charged for eight hours in order to operate for a week.

The firm will give a few helmets to HIDCO which will be distributed among bikers to get their feedback

It may be recalled that another firm had previously installed fans inside helmets to keep them cool but the solution did not last long after the fans developed snag. The firm had approached HIDCO and the helmet was given a trial for three months.

Welcoming the move, Subrata Boral, a long-distance biker, said it will be a very effective solution for those who cover long distances on motorcycles, particularly in the sweltering summer heat. "If it cools the rider's head in summer then it will be used on a large scale," he said. The firm will give some helmets to HIDCO which will be distributed among bikers to get a proper feedback. Bikers said very few riders use proper helmets, which are essential for safe riding. They feel that more awareness is required about the utility of proper helmets.

Mamata to inaugurate Rath Yatra festival today

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will inaugurate the Rath Yatra festival organised by ISKCON on Saturday morning.

There will be different functions at the temple premises. She will be inaugurating the Rath Yatra and at around 1 pm, it will start moving ahead from Hungerford Street and pass through AJC Bose Road, Sarat Bose Road, Hazra Road, SPM Road, ATM Road, Chowringhee, Exide Crossing, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Outram Road to reach Brigade Parade Ground.

Thousands of people will be turning up to take part in the Rath Yatra. People from different walks of life will start pouring into the city from Saturday morning itself to attend the biggest Rath Yatra festival in Kolkata.

The police have also made an elaborate arrangement to avoid any untoward incident during the Rath Yatra festival on Saturday. Steps have also been



The Chief Minister has been taking part in the Rath Yatra festival for several years

taken to ensure that no traffic congestion happens when the Rath passes through the important thoroughfares. The top brass of the Kolkata Police have held a meeting in this connection and chalked out a plan to divert vehicles through other roads. Additional policemen will be on-duty for the security of the devotees who will take part in the Rath Yatra. Policemen in plainclothes and women cops will also be deployed.

The chariot will be staying at Brigade Parade Ground till July 13 and people can visit to offer prayers to Lord Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra. There

will also be a fair at the ground on the eve of Rath Yatra.

It is on July 22 noon that the festival of Ulta Rath Yatra will start. The Rath will be brought back to the temple through Outram Road near Park Street Metro, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Dorina Crossing, S N Banerjee Road, Moulali Crossing, CIT Road, Suhrawardy Avenue, Park Circus 7 Point Crossing, Shakespeare Sarani and Hungerford Street.

The Rath Yatra will be celebrated across the state on Saturday with great pomp and show where lakhs of devotees will gather at Mahesh in Hooghly.

New 'dynamic fare' for app-based cabs from July 20

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The new "dynamic fare" for the app-based cabs is going to be effective from July 20.

The dynamic fare will not exceed more than 45 percent of the charges for air-conditioned metered taxis approved by the government. The approved fare for an air-conditioned metered taxi is Rs 18.75 and the waiting or ride-time charges and service charges will get added.

According to a press communiqué issued by the state Transport department on Friday, both the app-based cab aggregators have informed the department about the changes to be brought about in the pricing pattern following the meeting. State Transport minister Suwendu Adhikari held a meeting with authorities of the app-based cab aggregators on July 4 in this connection. It may



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

be mentioned that the state Transport department had been receiving repeated complaints of high surge fare for app-based cab services for the past few months. As a result, the state Transport department had initiated finding a solution and held meetings with the operators.

It may be mentioned that both the companies shall also try to limit the total number of rides that would be charged

with dynamic fares, which are more than the authoritative price for air-conditioned meter taxis, to within 25 percent of the total rides for a month. The aggregators also agreed to have a good number of rides with fares below the authoritative prices. At the same time, both the companies will be submitting monthly compliance reports with aggregated data to the Transport department that will evaluate the scenario

within three months. The companies have also requested the state Transport department to take steps to issue new permits for commercial cars and bike-taxis in order to increase the availability of the vehicles.

Meanwhile, the state Transport department has also taken steps to ensure that the commission system of payment for drivers and conductors of private buses are abolished and salaries are started. The step has been taken to bring down the rate of accidents caused due to racing between two or more buses. It would come into effect from August 1.

The top brass of the state Transport department already held meetings with representatives of the bus owners' associations. Sources said a committee has also been formed to prepare a time-table based on which the buses will be plying in a particular area.

Suwendu launches training programme for 1,200 bus drivers

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: In a bid to ensure the safety of passengers while they travel in buses, an initiative has been taken to organise training programmes for as many as 1,200 bus drivers of South Bengal State Transport Corporation under the project Safe Drive Save Life.

The training has been organised at the Traffic Training School of the Kolkata Traffic Police. The 1,200 drivers of the state-run buses will get trained in phases and the programme will continue for one-and-a-half-months.

After inaugurating the training programme, Suwendu Adhikari, the state Transport minister, said: "The main target is to ensure safe and secured journey of the passengers. I hope the training will be helpful for drivers."

He further added that around 85 to 90 percent road accidents take place due to human errors. Mistakes can happen both in the case of drivers as well as pedestrians. Programmes to create awareness among people have been

taken up. Now, the training of the bus drivers will improve the situation further.

It may be mentioned that the state government has taken several steps to check road accidents in Bengal. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had launched the state-wide Safe Drive Save Life campaign that has helped in bringing down the rate of accidents in the state. The state Transport department has also allotted funds for different police Commissionerates and the state police to create necessary arrangements to check road accidents. Besides creating awareness among people, steps were also taken to create the necessary infrastructure to control road accidents.

It may be recalled that the state Transport department and the police had earlier taken up an initiative to ensure that drivers do not use mobile phones while driving. It is learnt that during the training, the drivers will be told about the situation that often leads to accidents and one of the causes is the use of cell phones during driving. The police also pasted stickers and posters on vehicles



PICTURE BY AMIT DATTA

containing messages on the quantum of punishment if caught speaking on mobile phones while driving. The small-size stickers were pasted at a corner of windcreens of vehicles so that it acts as a constant reminder for drivers.

DECKED UP



Raths on sale in city a day before the start of the festival AMIT DATTA

Rath Yatra: This year, hot wheels to replace age-old chariot

AMITAVA BANERJEE

DARJEELING: Even the Gods haven't been able to resist the luxury of modern technology. Lord Jagannath, his brother Lord Balabhadra and sister Devi Subhadra are all set to trade their age-old chariot for fast wheels in Siliguri for this year's Rath Yatra.

On the occasion of the Chariot festival on Friday, the trio will be heading to their aunt's house (Gundicha temple) in Innova cars.

As custom has it, on the day of Rath Yatra, Lord Jagannath, accompanied by his siblings, comes out in wooden chariots and takes a ride to the aunt's house, meeting devotees en route. After spending a week at his aunt's house, they return back to the main temple.

"Earlier, we used to take Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra on a single chariot through the main thoroughfares of Siliguri. They used to then return to the temple premises and were kept on a specially-prepared platform for a week before returning to the main temple. This year, however, there is a change," stated Nam Krishna Das, Commu-



The chariot being decorated

nication Officer, ISKCON, Siliguri. This year, a spot has been earmarked in Shivmandir on the outskirts of Siliguri town opposite gate number 2 of the North Bengal University. A pandal has been erected where religious festivities will be held for a week. The Lord and his siblings will be putting up in the house of a devotee, adjacent to this spot, which will be treated as the Gundicha Temple.

The police were reluctant to give permission for the slow-moving chariots to be pulled to Shivmandir through the congested roads. "We then decided

to use Innovas to transport the Gods. This will help avoid the traffic jams," added Das.

However, devotees need not worry. The trio will first take a trip around Siliguri in the wooden chariot (like previous years), return to the temple and then ride three separate Innovas to the Gundicha temple.

"Every year we have one single Rath (chariot.) However, we have decided to have three smaller sized hydraulic chariots from next year. Overhead wires are a big problem so we have designed hydraulic chariots that can negotiate through the overhead wires and cables," added the communication officer.

The old wooden chariot has got a fresh coat of paint. The Lords will traverse the ISKCON temple, Sevok Road, Hill Cart Road, Haiderpara route to return to the ISKCON temple in the wooden chariot. From the temple they will then proceed to their aunt's house in Shivmandir in Innovas.

"It is not possible to transfer the idols to the cars from the Rath in the middle of the road. Hence, after the chariot ride, they will first return to the temple," explained Das.

Governor complains of chest pain

KOLKATA: Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi was taken to a private hospital in South Kolkata on Friday morning after he complained of chest pain.

He was, however, shifted to SSKM Hospital later where the doctors examined him thoroughly. Several tests including ECG and ECO were also conducted. He was later released from the hospital as there was nothing serious in the reports. The doctors suspect that he might have felt the chest pain following some irregularities in his food habit.

According to hospital sources, as there was no serious ailment, the doctors in the cardiology department of the hospital decided to release Tripathi. A senior official of the hospital said he was released only after his condition was stable.

It may be mentioned that the Governor suffers from hypertension, diabetes and coronary artery disease. In May last year, he was admitted to a private hospital after he bled from an outgrowth in the nose and a surgery was conducted on him. MPOST

NBFC for food processing likely this year: Kaur

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Union Food Processing department will float the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the non-banking financial company (NBFC) exclusively catering to financial needs of the food processing sector by this month and expects to make it operational by the end of this year.

"The RFP will be floated by this month and it would possibly be operational by the end of this year. It will entail an investment to the tune of Rs 2,000 crore and is likely to be named Agro-Processing Financial Institution," Union Food Processing Industries Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal said on Friday on the sidelines of an interactive session by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC). Kaur informed that she had a meeting with the Finance min-



Harsimrat Kaur Badal (right) with Shashwat Goenka MPOST

istry on Thursday for some clarification on expenditure. "There is a lot of interest from the private sector not only nationally but also globally to invest in this venture. We are looking at an investment of Rs 2,000 crore. We are putting a seed money of about 20 percent," she said. The decision of setting up such a financial institution exclusively catering to the food processing sector has resulted amidst allegations from the business community in this sector about the

bank's hesitation in extending financial support.

"The growth potential is huge but banks have refused to finance the way we would have wanted them to as they do not fully understand the risk assessment," she said. Kaur also maintained that Bengal, with six agro-climatic zones, huge coastline and abundance of raw materials, has a huge potential in food processing industries. She also urged the Farmer Producer's Organisa-

tions (FPOs) of Bengal to come forward and take advantage of such government schemes. She felt that 'Operation Greens' will be hugely beneficial for the state, especially for the farmers producing perishable commodities like tomatoes, onions and potatoes. The Central government has roped in Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) for helping the small farmers on availing the central subsidies and allied benefits in this sector.

Shashwat Goenka, president, ICC, in his welcome address said he felt that government policy support, with schemes like 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana', improved production strategies, increased public investment in infrastructure and R&D activities have significantly increased India's food production and availability of marketable surplus.

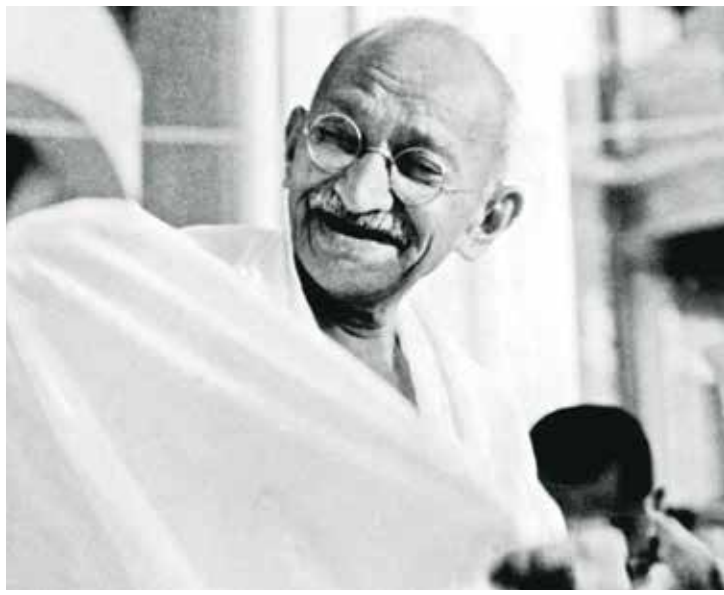
Holy Rathayatra

Mamata Banerjee

Chief Minister, West Bengal

ICA - 1480(19)/2018 Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal

Soon, 'Father of the Nation' to be part of syllabus from primary level



SOUMITRA NANDI

KOLKATA: The state School Education department is planning to introduce Mahatma Gandhi's life and his contribution to the freedom movement as part of the syllabus right from the primary level.

"Students of Class IV and V will now have to study Gandhi. Some aspects of his life and his contribution to India's freedom movement will be incorporated in three subjects - Bengali, English as well as Environment Studies. If everything goes as per plan, we will introduce this from the next academic year itself," a senior official of the department said.

The syllabus restructuring committee will finalise the modalities on how the study on Gandhiji can be included in the syllabus of Class IV and V.

"We are now in the initial stage and

are discussing with experts," said Avik Majumdar, chairman of the syllabus restructuring committee.

It may be mentioned that the state government has made plans to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji in a befitting manner. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has formed a high-powered committee, consisting of 46 members, including prominent academicians and intellectuals.

As part of the celebrations leading up to Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary in 2019, the committee will hold elocution tests, essay competitions for children and distribute booklets with Gandhiji's views on untouchability and patriotism among the city people.

The idea of introducing the study about Mahatma Gandhi was floated by Banerjee herself in one of the meetings.

"We have plans to celebrate the birthday of the Father of the Nation in all schools and colleges in the state on October 2 this year," an official of the state Education department said.

It may be mentioned that under the present curriculum students study in detail about Mahatma's life, ideology and his contribution to the Indian freedom struggle in classes IX, X and also in Higher Secondary.

"The committee is of the opinion that students in the primary level need to have some idea about Mahatma Gandhi right from an early age, as he is the role model of many in the state and the country as well," the official maintained.

The committee has already decided to renovate Gandhi Bhavan in Belegghata area of the city, where the visionary had stayed and fasted in 1946.

Deceased Presiding Officer's wife gets job with state govt

BALURGHAT: Arpita Roy, the wife of Rajkumar Roy, a Presiding Officer who died in mysterious circumstances, received an appointment letter from North Dinajpur District Magistrate Arvind Kumar Meena on Friday.

Rajkumar Roy, an assistant teacher of English in Rahatpur High Madrasa of Karandighi located on the outskirts of Raiganj, died on May 14.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had assured Roy's wife a suitable job under in the state government while the latter met her after the mishap in Kolkata. The state government had also issued a cheque of Rs 5,00,000 to her through the North Dinajpur district administration.

Arvind Kumar Meena handed over the appointment letter to her.

"She has been appointed as a clerk in the District Magistrate's office in Raiganj. The state government had earlier promised her a permanent job after the unfortunate incident," Meena said.

Roy's family hails from Siliguri's Phansidewa. He is survived by his wife and two kids.

Arpita Roy (Barman), overjoyed after getting the offer, said: "The Chief Minister had promised me this job which she has fulfilled. I have already received financial aid from the state."

MPOST

TMCP leader shot in Cooch Behar

COOCH BEHAR: Intra-party fighting in Trinamool Congress has once again come out in the open after Majid Ansari, convener of the Cooch Behar College unit, was shot by another group.

Ansari has been admitted to the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital in a critical condition as the bullet has pierced his abdomen. The police have begun a probe. No one has yet been arrested. Sayandwip Goswami, a Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad (TMCP) leader, said following Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's instruction, admission in the college is going on strictly on the basis of merit.

On Friday morning, some outsiders entered the college premises with another list. They beat up students who had put up resistance. While fleeing, they had fired at Ansari.

The students alleged that some criminals enjoying patronage of local Trinamool councillor Subhojit Kundu were behind the crime. MPOST

One held for sexually assaulting woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Bidhannagar City Police arrested a person on charges of sexual assault on a woman at New Town and another three for assaulting her husband and son. The victims are residents of DD 94 under the jurisdiction of New Town police station.

The sexual assault victim's husband Biren Pradhan is the caretaker of an under-construction building adjacent to their residence.

According to police sources, Pradhan and his son Sujoy had ventured out of their house at around 1 am on Thursday night, after hearing a ruckus in front of their residence.

As they protested, they were beaten up by three miscreants. When the woman came out to rescue her husband and son, she was taken to the first floor of the under-construction building and was sexually

assaulted.

The person who committed the offence also took away her mobile phone and a small bag containing some money and the voter ID card and pan card of her husband.

The woman lodged a written complaint on Thursday night at New Town police station and the police immediately took action and arrested one Kamaluddin Dhali (25), a resident of Thakurdari Muslimpara in New Town, on charges of sexual assault.

The sleuths also conducted the medical examination of the victim at Bidhannagar Sub Divisional Hospital.

The police also arrested three persons: Jakir Hossain Dhali (18), Kamal Dhali alias Chotobabu (28) and Sadique Hossain Dhali (25) alias Notu, residing at the same police station area, for being involved in the assault of the victim's husband and son.

Youth held in Howrah for extorting money to grant admission

KOLKATA: A youth was arrested on Friday morning on charges of extorting money, after assuring help regarding admission in a college at Bally in Howrah. Sources said that the arrested youth had initially claimed himself to be a cousin of a CPI(M) leader in the area. Police said the youth, Jeet Ganguly, was caught red-handed when he was taking money from a student seeking admission at Lal Baba College in Bally. Police have also got hold of an audio recording of the conversation between the arrested youth and the student. A senior police officer said that Jeet had assured help to the student to get admission in the college and asked him to give Rs 15,000. The amount was reduced to Rs 8,000 when the student pleaded his inability to give Rs 15,000. Finally, the student agreed to give Rs 5,000. He had given Rs 1,000 earlier to Jeet, who was arrested by policemen in plainclothes when receiving the remaining Rs 4,000 in cash at Bally Ghat station. It has been learnt that Jeet is a former student of the college. Sanjay Kumar, principal of the college, said: "Jeet doesn't have any connection with the college." The police suspect that Jeet might have taken money from some more students after assuring help to arrange admission in the college. MPOST

Agitation continues at Presidency despite varsity proposal

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A section of students at Presidency University (PU) continued their agitation on Friday, ignoring the appeal of the university authorities to withdraw their agitation.

The university had offered a proposal of slashing the counselling fees for the students, who find it difficult to furnish the same.

However, the students stuck to their demand of reducing it for all students and went on with their sit-in demonstration at the first floor where the room of the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and other senior varsity officials are located.

"We have told them that the excess fee for counselling will not be charged from the students who have financial constraints," said Debajyoti Konar, Registrar of PU.

The university on Thursday had claimed helplessness in



reducing the fees and had said that the state Joint Entrance Board has enhanced the counselling fees to Rs 500 from Rs 100.

The agitating students also alleged that the university has been pursuing the admission process without publishing the merit list. They demanded publication of the same as they feel that admission without it may

jeopardise transparency associated with the process.

It may be mentioned that 38,000 applicants had appeared for the written test at the varsity. There are 705 seats in the undergraduate level.

The first phase of counselling is scheduled to be held from July 17 to 20, while the second phase will be held on July 22 and 23.

Complaint filed against SSKM for extracting eyes of deceased infant

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Family members of a 3-year-old boy who was taken to SSKM Hospital after sustaining serious injuries during an accident leading to his death, lodged a complaint at Bhawanipore police station on Friday bringing serious charges against the state's only super speciality hospital.

They alleged that both the eyes of the deceased boy have been removed, which has been revealed following postmortem. SSKM Hospital authorities have, however, assured full cooperation with the police investigation. The victim, Faisal Ali, a resident of Lutbagan of Kamarhati in North 24-Parganas, was seriously injured after being hit by a car. He was playing on the street close to his house on 7

July. He was immediately taken to the School of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital by his family members.

The doctors at the hospital transferred the patient to SSKM Hospital after his condition deteriorated. The doctors there had started his treatment on the same day. The family members of the victim were told on Sunday morning the patient had succumbed to his injuries.

After the body was handed over to the family members, they found that his eyes had been extracted. The matter was taken up with the local police station, before the family members registered the final complaint with the city police.

Feroz Ali, the victim's father who is a jute mill worker, demanded a high level inquiry into the incident.

Demand for new hostel: CMCH students continue agitation for fifth day

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Some MBBS students at the Calcutta Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) continued their demonstration for the fifth consecutive day, with the demand of a new hostel.

The CMCH authorities on Friday categorically mentioned that they will not be able to fulfill the demands of the agitating students. Some of the representatives of the medical students taking part in the agitation met the principal of CMCH and held a prolonged discussion in this regard.

It has been learnt that senior officials of the CMCH had urged the students to lift the agitation which they turned down. According to the students, the agitation will be continued till the demands are met.

The incident, however, had



no impact on the health services of the hospital. It may be mentioned that a section of medical students at CMCH continued their demonstration so that their various demands are met, including setting up of a new hostel.

The second, third and fourth year MBBS students of

CMCH started a protest agitation inside the hospital campus, demanding a new hostel for them.

The move was made after the first year MBBS students were given a new hostel by the CMCH authorities.

The students taking part in the agitation alleged that the

hostel meant for them is not in a good condition. The hostel rooms are not up to the mark. The students had also submitted a deputation to the CMCH principal on Tuesday, placing their various demands.

These students have alleged that the hostel rooms are unhygienic and one cannot stay there for too long. The matter was taken up with the CMCH authorities but they are yet to take any step in this regard.

They also said that first year students have got a new hostel, while the second, third and fourth year MBBS students have been deprived.

CMCH principal Uchhal Bhadra urged the agitating students to stop the demonstration, which they refused to do. The students also threatened to continue the agitation until a new hostel is being allotted to them.

French, Croatian delicacies to entice foodies on Sunday at Café Ekante

TARUN GOSWAMI

KOLKATA: Want to enjoy French and Croatian cuisine? Café Ekante in New Town has made an elaborate arrangement to welcome its guests to enjoy quality food and the FIFA World Cup 2018 final on Sunday.

The guests can enjoy the game on a big screen, while enjoying French and Croatian special dishes. The final between France and Croatia will start at 8.30 pm.

The welcome drinks include Snipper Modrij and Young Embapa. As starters, the guests can have cheese, corn nuggets and fish rolls stuffed with spinach and mushroom sauce.

In the main course there will be caesar salad, green bouquet with French dressing, grilled chicken with reduced



espagnole sauce, seafood pasta aglio olio, bread roll and butter, sauce vegetable, herbed rice and caramel custard. The dishes will cost Rs 500 plus 5%

GST.

Café Ekante, named by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has celebrated World Cup 2018 in a befitting manner for

the past one month. The restaurant has been decorated with jerseys and footballs.

There is a mini golfpost and the guests who can score two

goals, will get a discount on their food bill. Those who can predict the name of the winning team, will get a 20% discount on the food bill, which will be valid for one month from the date of the final match.

Experts chefs have supervised cooking of the French and Croatian cuisines.

Café Ekante has become popular in New Town and its neighbourhoods, as well as in Kolkata. Getting a seat on Saturdays and Sundays is quite difficult. The ambience and food have become popular among foodies.

During the World Cup, there were special dishes every day on the countries that were participating in the matches. For example, on the day when England faced Croatia, there was fish and chips on offer.

Cabbie murder case: Howrah police nab one of the accused

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Seven days after a transport businessman from Howrah was murdered by some goons near Burdwan, the Howrah police on Thursday night arrested one of the accused who stabbed the victim to death inside a car.

The victim, Kundan Maharaj (24), was driving his own cab while ferrying some passengers to Burdwan from Howrah. He had been murdered after he resisted their attempt to loot the vehicle. He was a resident of Liluah in Howrah.

According to the preliminary investigation, police suspect that the accused are car lifters. The arrested person has been identified as Saibuddin Baidya, who is a resident of Kheria area under Basanti police station in the South 24-Parganas district. In the face of interrogation, the accused

has admitted his involvement in the murder of the transporter. He also told the police that other accused in this case have fled to Bihar.

Police have examined the mobile phone of the victim and came to know that he had received several phone calls from a particular number on the day of incident. After tracking the phone call, police came to know about the involvement of Baidya.

Police said that the miscreants, who might have been a part of an inter-state car smuggling racket, had stabbed the victim and dumped him on the side of a road. They then sped

up the vehicle in an attempt to loot it. On their way, they met with an accident as the vehicle was moving at a high speed.

When the car met with the accident, the accused youths fled the spot, leaving the vehicle there.

The accused had booked the vehicle under the pretext of going to Shaktigarh. Police came to know during investigation that four miscreants had boarded the vehicle from Howrah and told the victim that they would go to Shaktigarh.

According to the police when the victim reached Shaktigarh, the youths asked him to drive 10 kms further towards Burdwan side. Police had recovered the body of the victim from the National Highway 2 with several stab marks in his abdomen on July 7. The car was found at a distance of around 10 km from the place where the body was spotted.

'S-400 missile deal with Russia to go ahead despite US sanctions'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the S-400 Triumf air defence missile deal with Russia will go ahead notwithstanding the US sanctions on military transactions with Moscow.

Referring to CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act), under which the Trump administration has imposed sanctions on military deals with Russia, she said it is an American law and not a UN law and India has conveyed its position on the issue to the US.

"Our defence relation with Russia has endured several decades and we have conveyed about it to a US Congressional delegation which visited India recently," Sitharaman told reporters. She said negotiations with Russia for the S-400 missile deal have almost come to conclusion.

The defence minister said it may take two-and-a-half to four years to implement the S-400 missile deal after it is signed. There has been mount-



ing concerns in India over the US sanctions against Russian defence majors including Rosobornexport as billions of dollars of military purchases may be impacted because of the punitive measure. The US had announced sanctions against Russia under the stringent law for its alleged meddling in the American presidential election in 2016. CAATSA mandates the Donald Trump administration to punish entities engaging in significant transaction with the defence or intelligence establishment of Russia.

India wants to procure the long-range missile systems to tighten its air defence mechanism, particularly along the nearly 4,000-km-long Sino-India border.

In 2016, India and Russia had signed an agreement on the "Triumf" interceptor-based missile system which can destroy incoming hostile aircraft, missiles and even drones at ranges of up to 400 km. S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system.

China was the first foreign buyer to seal a government-to-government deal with Russia in 2014 to procure the lethal missile system and Moscow has already started delivery of unknown number of the S-400 missile systems to Beijing.

The S-400 is an upgraded version of the S-300 systems. The missile system, manufactured by Almaz-Antey, has been in service in Russia since 2007.

UNHRC report on Kashmir baseless: Sitharaman

NEW DELHI: Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday dubbed the recent assessment report by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on Kashmir as baseless.

"The report (on Kashmir) is prepared sitting somewhere else. Assessment made by the UNHRC is without basis. If only they see what is on the ground. Indian Army shows the maximum restraint," Sitharaman said here.

On June 14, the UN released its first ever human rights report on Kashmir accusing security forces of gross human rights violations on both sides of the border.

The report demanded Pakistan to stop using its anti-terror legislation to crack down on activists. On the other hand, it accused India of using excessive force on civilians.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has also tagged the report as "biased and motivated."

Reacting to the comments on a Pakistani-Canadian national, Zafar Bangash who claimed that he played a role in producing the report on Kashmir, MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, "The document very clearly reflected bias of an official acting without any mandate and who relied on unverified sources of information. It is very clear that report which was put out was motivated and biased."

Bangash earlier admitted that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, was in constant touch with him while preparing the human rights report on Kashmir, which has been rejected by India. **MPOST**

BJP: Congress playing dangerous game, creating partition-like situation

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: In a sharp attack on the Congress, the BJP on Friday said the opposition party was trying to create a "partition-like situation" in the country, and it would be solely responsible if any disharmony plays out between now and 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Senior BJP leader and Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman also asked Congress chief Rahul Gandhi to clarify his remarks reported in a Urdu daily that his party was a Muslim party and that he was on a course-correction.

"This needs to be clarified, probably he wants to say that to call himself a Janu-dhari (a Hindu who wears the sacred thread) was wrong, probably he wants to say now he is Muslim dhari," she said.

"You can't be a Janu-dhari at one point... a Muslim-dhari at another... This is playing with the people's trust."

Though the Congress has termed the report as a rumour, Sitharaman said, "The Congress would be solely responsible if any disharmony plays out between now and 2019 elections."

'You can't be a Janu-dhari at one point... a Muslim-dhari at another... This is playing with the people's trust'

She claimed that the party was playing a dangerous game. "It is playing up the card of religion and communal division. It may lead to the kind of division and communal disharmony which prevailed during the partition in 1947," Sitharaman said.

She said there is a pattern in which Congress leaders such as Shashi Tharoor are making statements, aimed to divide the country on religious lines.

The statements such as of Rahul Gandhi's and by Shashi Tharoor about 'Hindu Pakistan' create a situation that the Congress party has to come clean on, Sitharaman said.

"The Congress party's pro-fessing to minority appeasement has now reached a crescendo," she said.

According to the BJP leader, Rahul also said in the news report that Muslims are next Dalits.

Killer pothole claims another life in Maha

OUR CORRESPONDENT

THANE (MAHA): A man died on Friday after being run over by an unidentified vehicle after he fell off his two-wheeler when it slipped on a pothole here, the fourth fatality related to potholes reported in Thane district since the onset of monsoon, police said.

Kalpesh Jadhav (26), a sand supplier, was on his way to the railway station at around 4 am when the incident took place in Kalyan township of the district, an official of the Khadakpada police station said.

"He lost his balance and fell when the two-wheeler he was riding skidded over a pothole near Gandhari bridge. An unidentified vehicle passing by crushed him under its wheels," the official informed.

A case has been registered under IPC section 304A (causing death by negligence) and efforts were underway to identify the vehicle and its driver, he added.

Jadhav's is the fourth death caused by potholes in Kalyan township since the monsoons began in early June.

On July 11, a 45-year-old man died after he fell into a water-filled pothole and was run over by a truck on Haji Malang Road in Kalyan.

'IT dept to re-assess ITRs of HNI buyers of Nirav Modi jewellery'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Income Tax Department has decided to re-assess the ITRs of over 50 high net-worth individuals (HNIs) who purchased costly jewellery from firms owned by absconding diamantaire Nirav Modi, official sources said on Friday.

They said the taxman decided to initiate the step after a number of people, it sent notices asking them to explain the source of income for purchase of the jewellery, denied any cash payment made by them to Nirav Modi's firms.

Officials said the department has gathered documents that indicate that these select buyers of high-end jewellery had split the total payment for diamond jewellery, by paying a part through cheque or card (debit/credit) and the rest in cash.

In reply to the tax notices, most of the people said that they did not make any cash payment, but this version does not corroborate with the data obtained by the IT Department vis-a-vis the sales made by the firms of Nirav Modi.

It has been found from the company books that payments were received after splitting them into cash and cheque/card transactions, officials said, hence it is essential to re-assess the income tax returns (ITRs) of these over 50 people beginning from the 2014-15 assessment year.

They said if discrepancies of concealed cash payments are found, which in some cases may be in several lakhs, the HNIs will be charged for tax evasion and subsequent action will be initiated.

Some more cases of this nature are under preliminary

probe, the officials said.

The department had recently conducted searches on the premises of a Rewari-based hospital group, related to the family of Swaraj India leader Yogendra Yadav, after it was found that the owners of the firm allegedly made a part-cash and cheque payment against purchase of jewellery from a Nirav Modi firm.

The tax department has already filed a charge sheet against Nirav Modi and others before a Mumbai court for alleged tax evasion.

Nirav Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi are also being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate and the CBI after it was detected that they allegedly cheated Punjab National Bank of more than Rs 13,400 crore with the purported involvement of a few of its employees.

PM on 2-day tour of UP from today To lay foundation stone of Purvanchal E-way

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: On the part of his nationwide programme, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on his two-day visit to the eastern Uttar Pradesh, where he is scheduled to visit his constituency Varanasi, Azamgarh and Mirzapur districts on July 14 and 15 and is scheduled to participate in series of programmes.

On Saturday he will lay the foundation stone of the 340 km long Poorvanchal Expressway. This road will connect several important towns of eastern UP, including Barabanki, Amethi, Sultanpur, Faizabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh, Mau and Ghazipur with Lucknow. This Expressway will further connect Delhi, and to several major towns from Noida in the west, to Ghazipur in the east once it gets completed.

Later this day, he is scheduled to lay the foundation stone



of important projects, cumulatively worth over Rs. 900 crores in Varanasi—the Varanasi City Gas Distribution Project, and the Varanasi-Ballia EMU train.

The foundation stone for the Panchkoshi Parikrama Marg will also be laid by PM on that day, along with several projects under the Smart City Mission and Namaami Gange.

Adding, he will lay the founda-

tion stone for an International Convention Centre in Varanasi. At a separate event, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will release a book titled "Meri Kashi," in the presence of PM Modi.

On the following day, the Prime Minister will visit Mirzapur, where he will dedicate the Bansagar Canal project to the Nation. This project will provide a big boost to irrigation in the region and will be greatly beneficial for the farmers of Mirzapur and Allahabad districts of Uttar Pradesh.

On the very programme, PM Modi is also scheduled to lay the foundation stone of the Mirzapur Medical College. Besides, he will inaugurate 108 Jan Aushadhi Kendras in the state and inaugurate a bridge over the River Ganga at Balughat, Chunar, which will facilitate connectivity between Mirzapur and Varanasi.

Bhopal model held by 'lover' finally rescued

BHOPAL: A woman who was held hostage at her house by a 30-year-old man in Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal was finally rescued on Friday evening.

The man identified as Rohit Singh, who is from Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh, had held a woman hostage claiming that he loves her and wanted to marry her.

"We have rescued the girl, her condition is stable, she has been sent for medical treatment," police said.

Cops also said that the man has been sent for medical treatment.

Singh entered the apartment at Fortune City with a gun, took the woman hostage and threatened to kill her as well as himself. The woman's parents were also inside the house and they were locked in one of the rooms in the fifth-story flat.

The woman reportedly met Singh while she doing some modelling assignments in Mumbai.

She had returned to Bhopal two months back. Earlier when police tried to barge in, the accused threatened them. "He (accused) claims that he loves her and wants to marry. He had asked us for a stamp paper and mobile charger," police said.

"When I reached Bhopal, a police complaint was filed against me. They harassed me, tortured me which is why I took this step," said Rohit speaking to new channel.

"If the crowd outside the door was not there, I would have come out a lot earlier," he added. **AGENCIES**

Ex-AP CM Kiran rejoins Congress

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy returned to the Congress fold on Friday, four years after quitting the party.

Congress' communications in-charge Randeep Surjewala announced Reddy's return to the party after the former chief minister met party president Rahul Gandhi at his residence today.

Reddy, along with many of his associates, met the party chief and decided that they would work for strengthening the Congress, Surjewala said.

AICC Andhra Pradesh in-charge Oommen Chand, APCC chief N Raghuvveera Reddy and former Union minister M M Pallam Raju were also present during Kiran Reddy's meeting with Gandhi.

Speaking to reporters after joining the Congress, Kiran Reddy asserted that unless a Congress government comes back in Delhi, justice will not



be done to the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

"Implementation of the Reorganisation Act, special status, special incentives -- all this will be possible only if the Congress comes back to power. The present Indian government, the state government and the opposition parties have failed miserably to implement the Reorganisation Act," he said.

Assurances given by the then prime minister Manmohan Singh in Rajya Sabha should also be implemented in

totality, he said.

Expressing his happiness on returning to the Congress fold, Kiran Reddy said he cannot be separated from the party because whatever identity he has got was because of the Congress.

Chandy, welcoming Kiran Reddy into the party said, "When he was the chief minister, he did many good things for the state, especially for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He did a lot of things for the development of Andhra Pradesh."

Congress: BJP trying to polarise, divert attention from real issues

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Friday hit back at the BJP for its statement that the opposition party was trying to create a "partition-like situation" in the country, saying that it was the saffron party that was seeking to polarise people and divert attention from "real issues."

In a sharp attack on the Congress, senior BJP leader and Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman had asked Congress chief Rahul Gandhi to clarify his remarks reported in a Urdu daily that his party was a Muslim party and that he was on a course correction path.

The Congress has dismissed the media report as a "rumour" and asserted that it was a party of 132 crore Indians.

Taking on Sitharaman, Congress spokesperson Sushmita Dev said it was expected that

with just days to go for the monsoon session, the Defence Minister would take up issues which are "unnecessarily to create a controversy and move away from real issues."

"I request Nirmala Sitharaman ji that till today you have not bothered to answer to the nation about the Rs 58,000 crore deal of Rafale which is the biggest scam. If you have the courage in this monsoon session please make a suo motu statement and reply to the nation that how the defence ministry has conducted the biggest scam under your nose," Dev said.

Through her press meet today, the defence minister "is trying to create tensions between people of different religions," the Congress MP told reporters.

The Congress as a party has fought for the freedom of India, it has stood by the Constitu-

tion and is a party that is inclusive, she asserted.

Raking up the issue of 2002 Gujarat riots, the Congress spokesperson accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of making repeated attempts to polarise people.

"We request you that do not through your press meets increase division, do not through your press meets go ahead towards polarisation because that is the only thing prime minister falls back on before every election.

"This has never been the politics of the Congress and get ready for some real answers in the coming Monsoon session," she said. If the peace shattered in the country, the government is responsible and not the opposition, she added.

"The news of Tharoor's comments, the media report on Rahul are being twisted in

the media. The prime minister has made repeated attempts to polarise. What were his intentions. Nirmala Sitharaman must answer this and then question the Congress.

"Till today the biggest black mark in the history of India has been the riots of Gujarat and Prime Minister Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat at that time and till today he has not taken moral responsibility for that," Dev said.

Sitharaman, in her remarks, had said that the Congress chief must come out and tell very clearly what he meant when he said that the Congress was a Muslim party.

She also said the opposition party was trying to create a "partition like situation" in the country, and it would be solely responsible if any disharmony plays out between now and 2019.

Jaypee: SC to hear home buyers plea on Jul 16

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday listed for final hearing on July 16 the pleas of hassled home buyers registered with Jaiprakash Associates Limited (JAL) saying that it would exclusively deal with their grievances and the "capability" of realty firm to refund money to them.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra had earlier said that it would ask the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) at Allahabad to expeditiously decide JAL's plea on restructuring of its subsidiary firm, Jaypee Infratech Limited (JIL), if they deposit Rs 600 crore for refunding principal amount to home buyers who have opted out of housing proj-



ects. "Let the matter be listed on July 16 for exclusively hearing the aspect of protection of rights of home buyers and the capability of Jaiprakash Associates Limited (JAL) to pay the money," the bench, which also comprised justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, said.

At the outset, senior advocate FS Nariman, appearing for the real estate firm, said that JAL was ready with a plan to deposit Rs 600 crore with the apex court registry through cheques provided the company was given

some liberty to arrange funds through banks. If JAL is not allowed to deal with its properties for arranging funds then its subsidiary firm JIL would be wound up and no purpose would be served, the senior lawyer said.

The bench, once during the hearing, asked JAL to deposit Rs 475 crore by August 27 with a caution that non-compliance would force it to order jailing of its directors. However, later it adjourned the hearing to July 16.

It said that Rs 750 crore has been deposited by JAL with the apex court's registry and Rs 600 crore more would be required for paying principal sum to the home buyers who wanted refund of their investment.

Senior advocate A M Singhvani, appearing for Dalmia

Cement, said that the firm has been supplying cement to the real estate firm which owed money to it and its interest be safeguarded by the apex court.

Earlier, the apex court had suggested that JAL pay Rs 600 crore, instead of Rs 1,000 crore ordered earlier, to refund the principal amount to hassled home buyers. Prior to this, it had directed JAL to deposit 1,000 crore, in addition to Rs 750 crore already deposited, by June 15 to provide refunds to the home buyers who had wished to opt out of its various housing schemes. "This case (of home buyers) can be disposed off if they (JAL) deposit Rs 600 crore for refund of the principal amount. We will ask the NCLT to decide the company petition (of JAL)," the bench had said.

Teesta Setalvad likens Tuticorin police firing to Jallianwala Bagh massacre

CHENNAI: Likening the Tuticorin police firing in which 13 people were killed to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, civil rights activist Teesta Setalvad has said that courts should take cognisance of such incidents on their own to ensure that they do not recur.

She said the High Courts and the Supreme Court very rarely use a powerful tool, the provision of 'Suo Moto' (on their or its own initiative, without external prompting or explicit demand). The last time that the Apex court used it was for the protection of the Himalayas, she said.

"Should the courts not intervene when gross injustices

take place, when people get killed, when wrongful arrests take place?" she asked during a discussion over the Tuticorin incident here.

Setalvad also alleged that there was a pattern of "repression" against protests and dissent in the country which exemplified the concept of fascism.

She said that the May 22 incident in which 13 persons were killed in police firing in Tuticorin district was a blot on Indian democracy.

"It is as draconian as the Jallianwala Bagh incident in which General Dyer gunned down several protesters," she said.

Referring to the violence at Bhima Koregaon in Maharashtra, rustication of JNU student Umar Khalid and arrest of Bhim Army chief Chandrashekar Azad, Setalvad alleged that there was repression against political activists, creative people, young leaders, dissenters and most importantly people's movements against things like acquisition of land and forests.

"Across different states we are seeing this pattern. If we want to fight this fascism and bring a political alternative, it is important that all those who are agitating put these issues upfront," Setalvad said.

This slower moving full Moon will take longer time and greater distance of Earth's umbral shadow cone to travel.

"A total lunar eclipse will occur on July 27-28 with a totality duration of 1 hour 43 minutes. The duration makes it the longest total lunar eclipse of this century (2001 AD to 2100 AD)," a statement by the MoES said.

Such long duration of total lunar eclipses had earlier occurred on July 16, 2000 for totality duration of 1 hour 46 minutes and another one on June 15, 2011 for totality duration of 1 hour 40 minutes.

The entire eclipse will also be visible from all parts of India. The eclipse will also be visible in the region covering Australia, Asia, Russia -- except the northern part, Africa, Europe, east of South America and Antarctica.

EDITORIAL

Tumultuous Pakistan

Ahead of the general elections on 25 July, Pakistan is witnessing political upheavals of enormous proportions. First, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, who is widely believed to be his political heir, have been sentenced to imprisonment by an accountability court. They are expected to be arrested on their return to Lahore from London on Friday evening. Nawaz Sharif has been sentenced to 10 years and his daughter 7 years of imprisonment in the Panama Papers leak case. As per the latest opinion polls, PML-N, which enjoyed a clear lead over the rivals in the past months, seems to be losing ground to Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Before the latest round of political and legal setbacks, Nawaz Sharif has survived a military coup, jail term and exile to become Pakistan's Prime Minister for the third time in June 2013. He was forced to resign as the Prime Minister in July 2017 after Pakistan's Supreme Court disqualified him from holding the post. In recent public meetings, Nawaz Sharif has lashed out at the military and the security establishment including ISI for deposing him through the courts for his policy to win peace with India and his efforts to try former army chief Pervez Musharraf for treason. Even as Nawaz Sharif and his daughter face arrest on their arrival on Friday, they have recourse to two stages of appeal — in the Islamabad High Court and in the Supreme Court. The Sharif family believes that it has sincerely worked for the common man by delivering on "development". They believe that the voters would acknowledge the achievements of the PML government in ensuring an end to power-cuts ended, keeping the economy afloat and massive investment in building road networks. But after the court verdict that sends Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz to imprisonment, PML (N) leaders are on the edge and they have reportedly refused to contest the election on PML (N) tickets. A large number of these leaders are contesting the election as independents. The change in fortune for the Nawaz Sharif family is not sudden and there are clear signs that the military and security establishment are working behind the scene to make things difficult for them by favouring Imran Khan and his party PTI, which is in power in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, one of the four states of Pakistan. Khan has been spearheading relentless protests and agitation against the PML (N) government for the last four years, charging the Sharif family of orchestrating large-scale corruption.

Even as Khan is inching closer to becoming the next prime minister of Pakistan, his ex-wife Reham Khan has come out with an autobiography that demystifies his larger than life image. Reham Khan who was married to Imran Khan for about 10 months reveals that Khan has been a skirt-chaser and a non-serious politician who does not believe in meeting the common man and working on their grievances. Khan has been obsessed with the idea to become the Prime Minister of the country and took little interest in the development of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, where his party is in power. When he entered politics in 1996, political analysts believed that he has little chance of a promising career in politics just on the basis of winning the cricket world cup in 1992 and setting up a cancer hospital in 1994. But over the years, his political fortune emerged stronger mostly because of the political instability in the country and lack of credible alternative after the death of Pakistan Political Party chief Benazir Bhutto in 2007. But instead of working with the people at the grassroots level to expand his support base, Khan chose to fight the government on the streets. The high rate of unemployment and gloomy economic scenario in the country drove thousands of people to the rallies and protests. In the process, Khan has had a flurry of court cases filed against him by the law enforcement agencies. So far, he has not shown due respect for the law of the land and he often misses court hearings and proceedings. Khan is contesting the July 25 general election from five constituencies and in the nomination paper, he has not acknowledged that he is the father of Tyrian White. All the court cases and the fact that he has deliberately given false information in the nomination paper can be used against him in the future by the powers that rule Pakistan from behind the scene. Reham Khan in her autobiography has pointed out these factors and writes that she had cautioned Imran to stay away from unscrupulous elements like ISI and the military officers, who interfere in the country's politics. Imran Khan may have to face the problems that Nawaz Sharif is facing right now, Reham Khan argues.

Of agony and ecstasy

If the world of sport has its agony and ecstasy, this week showed both in abundance. To begin with football, it was but natural that the thousands of supporters who had travelled to Russia for the World Cup would support their own national teams. The media of their respective countries had given plenty of hype to the prospects of the teams. Given the different time zones, millions stayed up to watch the proceedings on TV, the world over. In the first semi-final, Belgium were clearly the underdogs but their performance up to the last-four stage, including toppling favourites Brazil, had their supporters and so many others hoping against hope that they would whisk past World Cup winners, France. France have been seasoned campaigners for the last two decades and can never be taken for granted. Belgium played very well, indeed. But it was just not their day. The other side played better and narrowly carried through to the finals. The Belgian supporters were, naturally, shattered. In the other semi-final, the youngest English side ever was under the pressure of too much hype. The problem was that they had virtually taken their victory for granted. Many kept explaining why they would make it to the Finals for the first time since 1966. Such were the expectations that Croatia, which had half a dozen professionals from top European sides, were seen as the underdogs. At the start of the game, England was up by a goal. But, the second-half scripted a different story. The Croatians were all over them. They were, sans doubt, convincing winners. Even the biased commentators were all at sea trying to explain the debacle. Over to the Wimbledon, and the favourite of millions the world over, top-seed Roger Federer, was up by two sets and even had a match point against Kevin Anderson and then no one could quite explain what happened. Was it the strong breeze, a loss of nerves or the mind not in sync with the body? The match went on for all five sets and the man, who is often referred by the likes of the great Rod Laver and John McEnroe as the GOAT (Greatest of All Time), lost 13-11. Such was the agony of the spectators that 95 per cent of the galleries on Court 1 emptied as the match ended. Few stayed back to watch the other quarter-final. Big servers Raonic and Isner were virtually playing to empty stands. True, everyone has their favourite player or side but it is not all that easy to explain or understand the agony and ecstasy after every defeat or victory. Some go berserk and others manage to digest the result and allow life to move on. True, Federer would be back next year trying to win his ninth Wimbledon title but, at 37, would he be able to?



ANIRBAN GANGULY

Sen's intellectual dishonesty pales before Modi's drive and determination to transform India. Sen's insidious propaganda is increasingly falling on deaf ears. The new India, young India, the India that is aspiring to transform itself has no real interest or time for Sen's senseless prattle

Sen's senseless prattle

Amartya Sen's strategic and selective silence on many issues that are a challenge to transforming India reeks of intellectual opportunism and charlatanism

The migratory intellectual bird that goes by the name of Amartya Sen is back in India on his annual peregrination. The only way in which Sen thinks he can keep himself relevant and in circulation in the high circles of dilettantism is by undertaking an annual 'pilgrimage' to India at the behest of his powerful backers and myopic disciples — foremost among them, Martha Nussbaum, an US-based academic whose understanding of India has been influenced and shaped by her hatred for Narendra Modi and the BJP — and by giving interviews and addressing public events in which he abuses Modi, his government while arguing how India is gradually sliding into perdition. This keeps Sen's backers in the West happy, his sponsors active and gives a fresh lease of life and hope to his depleting constituency of followers in India.

For the last few years Sen, the failed prophet of the Nalanda University project — a project which he led and bled white by diverting resources from it to fund his junkets and meetings in exotic locales — has followed this trajectory. Come winter or monsoon, Sen is in India to caution Indians, whom he had dumped long ago for a career in the West, against electing Narendra Modi once again. That Sen can still come to India, address public events and go on television to dish out homilies without batting an eyelid, after being one of the kingpins of the scam that had bogged down the dream project of reviving the Nalanda University, speaks volumes of his insensibility and self-obsessive arrogance.

Being unaccountable while splurging resources at the expense of the Indian taxpayers have been Sen's forte and that is why, each time the ministry which was shepherding the Nalanda project called for accounts and accountability, Sen threw a tantrum and spoke of how institutional autonomy was being hampered. In reality, what he passed off as institutional autonomy was essentially his self-arrogated right to hoodwink the system, cheat Indian public sentiment and try and subvert the system to suit his ideological propensities and personal agenda.

Over the years, ever since his early days when he would simultaneously kowtow to his communist comrades and the then big bosses of the Congress



Amartya Sen's annual India visit to denigrate Narendra Modi is a futile, arrogant exercise

party, Sen has mastered this unique capacity of pleasing many masters, — masters who, for their own interests, would keep him engaged in order to make sure that Sen would keep working overtime to fit his economic theories to their political actions. However, this is something which Sen has failed to do in the case of Narendra Modi. Modi has never ingratiated himself to anyone, let alone to Sen, and what Sen says about Modi does not matter to the vast majority of Indians who have rooted for Modi's transformative narrative.

Opposing Modi, denigrating and disparaging his efforts at trying to transform India, dishing out falsehood and half-truth about him and his worldview, spreading hate and lie about the man, is what pumps adrenaline into Sen's veins, it keeps him going, it keeps the industry of self-seekers and rent-seekers that has grown around him well-oiled and keeps alive a narrative that is actually fast losing traction in young India and amongst the thinking mind. Young India has no

time or patience for the harangues of an irrelevant and superannuated academic whose theories have failed under Indian conditions.

Of course, one will never hear Amartya Sen speak of the imbecility of Shariat Courts in a democratic and constitutional set up such as India. Criticising such moves may prove detrimental to his niche back in the West, one will never hear him criticise the trafficking of children indulged in by a section of the Missionaries of Charity, doing so would most certainly compromise his self-styled messianic position in Western academia, Sen will also not take the Congress leadership to task for continuously trying to fan the flames of caste conflagration across the country for that would deprive him of the largesse of the Congress dynasty and would surely dent his false aura and close a number of avenues in India.

Amartya Sen's strategic and selective silence on the many issues that are in reality a challenge to the effort to transform India reeks of intellec-

tual opportunism and charlatanism, it projects him as a dishonest intellectual whose only interest is self-aggrandisement and whose only agenda is to peddle a divisive agenda. Knowing full well the multi-dimensional agenda that Modi is pursuing in empowering and mainstreaming the marginal sections of our society, Sen keeps quiet or peddles falsehood because that will keep the pot of his insidious broth boiling and full. He hates Modi because Modi had come up the hard way despite the likes of Sen trying to stymie his chances of leading India.

However, Sen's intellectual dishonesty pales before Modi's drive and determination to transform India. Sen's insidious propaganda is increasingly falling on deaf ears. The new India, young India, the India that is aspiring to transform itself has no real interest or time for Sen's senseless prattle.

(The author is Director, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation, New Delhi. The views expressed are strictly personal)

Quote martial

Economics is extremely useful as a form of employment for economists

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

TACKLING UNEMPLOYABILITY

Today's graduates are indeed caught between the devil and the deep sea. There is "unemployability" due to studying useless syllabus on one hand and the threat of automation-induced redundancy, even if employed, on the other! The urgent need of the hour is to make a radical overhaul of the prevailing technical curriculum, which should be tailored to meet the needs of industry and also society. As for automation, while it brings efficiency and cost-cutting to many a business, it also portends a precarious and dehumanised mechanical age we are heading for. Software companies are understood to tackle the problem through re-training.

C.V.KRISHNA MANOJ via email

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SHRUTAPA PAUL

While countries such as the US, Canada, England, and even our neighbouring nation Nepal, have shown greater acceptance for same-sex relationships and scrapped this draconian law, India still upholds the law that was introduced by the British in India in 1861

India looks well-poised to exit the infamous group of 72 countries in the world that still criminalises homosexuality

There may be various reasons for life but that one, overpowering, omnipresent reason that supersedes all other reasons to live is love. I am not being philosophical but just think about it: all of our most meaningful acts stem from a kind of love. Love for parents, siblings, children, pets, environment, country...there are indeed so many delightful variations of this one emotion. The most exciting, uplifting, liberating, and passionate of these loves is romantic love. Literature, paintings, sculpture, cinema, and music have, for ages, been hinged on the idea of love. Artists have exhausted their efforts to properly represent the emotion through their work; researchers and scientists have laboured to scientifically understand this feeling; and, the common man has many times been left confused by its overbearing influence. All through this, the universality of this one emotion has held true in the saying that 'Love makes the world go round'. Love spans across age, races, nationalities, creeds and gender. Yes, gender too. Not in India though where archaic laws such as Section 377 exercise control over the hearts of individuals.

The upcoming week is an important one for all those who have dared to love differently in India. Who have, due to natural compulsions, chosen to love someone of their own gender. What may be labelled as "unnatural sex", as per the law, is the most natural expression of love for them. The Indian apex court will finally pass its verdict next week to decriminalise homosexuality. While countries such as the US, Canada, England, and even our neighbouring nation Nepal, have shown greater acceptance towards same-sex relationships and scrapped this draconian law, India



The upcoming week will be crucial or the LGBTQ community in India

(Representational Image)

still upholds the law that was introduced by the British in India in 1861. India is among 72 countries in the world that currently punish homosexuals. The Supreme Court had, in fact, overturned the much-anticipated favourable judgment passed by the Delhi High Court in 2009. Now, however, it stands to make history, a bit late compared to the other more accepting and progressive nations — but better late than never.

The government has maintained neutral ground by leaving the decision to decriminalise same-sex relationships to the wisdom of the Supreme Court.

But, by emphasising that the matter up for contention is only Section 377, the government has also shown its future opposition to the issue of same-sex marriages and child adoption by gay couples. In doing so, the Narendra Modi government has lost a golden opportunity to show its progressive stance of keeping up with the changing customs of society. For now, though, the LGBTQ community is relieved and grateful that the government has at least not opposed the decision and seems willing to shed its tag of being a police state.

There are many things in this world

that all of us do not fully comprehend. Who we love and how we choose to do it are some of them that remain inscrutable. But, having said that, we have no right to impinge on the rights of people who choose to love someone from their own gender. Love traverses gender and it is about time that it crosses over the unnecessary obstacles of moral policing, hypocrisy, pettiness, and most importantly, persecution. Live and let love.

(The writer is a journalist and media entrepreneur. The views expressed are strictly personal)

Autonomy in, UGC out

Higher education demands government intervention with financial support, not for curbing dissent



UJJWAL K CHOWDHURY

The draft bill has claimed that the new institution will ensure more autonomy for colleges and facilitate holistic growth of the education system and also provide greater opportunities to students at a more affordable cost. It also aims to reduce the interference of various regulatory bodies

'Autonomy' Explained

Some 62 universities and colleges were granted, in last March, a degree of freedom from the oversight of the University Grants Commission (UGC), which itself is being repealed now. The policy allows institutions with high accreditation scores awarded by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to start courses, research facilities and programmes without seeking the commission's permission. Those in the top category, with a score of 3.51 or more out of 4, are even free from external reviews. Five central universities, 21 state universities, 26 private universities and 10 other colleges were granted autonomy under the Autonomous Colleges Regulation. The institutes include JNU, BHU, AMU, TERI, JU, Pune University and the University of Hyderabad, which have maintained high standards of excellence. These quality institutions, as per the declaration, will receive complete autonomy by which they can start new courses, departments, programmes, off-campus centres, skill courses, research parks, appoint overseas faculty members, take foreign students, offer variable incentive packages and introduce online distance learning courses.

'Autonomy' Exposed

Most of the academic community members are of the opinion that the move is nothing but the government's withdrawal from the education sector to allow space for private players. In contrast, the Indian Constitution, so far, has visualised education as an important tool of social-economic-political transformation which could ensure the objectives enshrined in the Preamble. Jadavpur University's (JU) teachers' body objected most to the regulations which stated that autonomous institutions would be allowed to add infrastructure, launch programmes or initiate collaborations with others without taking permission "provided no demand for a fund is made from the government". They fear that this would lead to high fees, ad hoc teaching appointments and the neglect of those academic disciplines which are less immediately connected to industry.

Further, there exists confusion on what this autonomy entails. Osmania University VC, S Ramachandran, is under the impression that an autonomous status will bring more government funds. In reality, the regulations state categorically that all programmes started by autonomous institutions without the commission's permission must be financed by them. Despite the recognition bringing in laurels, many feel that it will be pushing the University towards unknown challenges. sCritics note that this will have an impact in the long-run as Universities will be forced to take in students who can pay, while gradually the meritorious students from humble backgrounds, who



The UGC repeal is expected to significantly alter higher education in India

have been an integral part of public Universities, will be weeded out. Also, the recently held People's Tribunal in Delhi on attacks on higher education institutions in India, in its interim report, said, "The centrality of higher education to the survival of Indian democracy is crucial and the higher education system must itself be the space where the freedom to think, explore, discuss and also to dissent is maximised. Higher education institutions must be open to all sections of the society, particularly those marginalised in multiple ways."

Spending on education

The Union Budget, this year, had a reduced allocation of less than 1 per cent of the Gross National Income for education. This has added woes to the already crumbling public-funded higher education sector. Imposition of the partial funding formula for universities, the institutionalisation of loans instead of grants from UGC, making universities and colleges 'autonomous' and the contractualisation of jobs at universities are seen as ways to dismantle higher education. On the other hand, the CAG report tabled in the Parliament in 2017 tells us that the entire education cess collected during more than a decade since its imposition in 2006-07 has remained unspent. It's as huge as 83,497 crores. In addition, a mere 7.73 per cent of

the taxpayer's money collected under the research and development cess in the last 20 years has been utilised, so far. Clearly, there is more to it than what meets the eyes. Under the guise of autonomy, the government may be pushing universities to generate their own resources through self-financed courses. This will eventually end with the state shedding its responsibility of subsidising education or treating it as a public good, as a public service, rather than as a commodity.

The other perspective

Several university heads have also expressed support for the autonomy of selected universities. Father Felix Raj, the VC of St Xavier's University, said, "Autonomy is good as it gives the institution the freedom to design their curriculum but yes, the cost of education definitely shoots up when one decides to include new courses. But then, it's very much needed to maintain the standard of the educational institute. The government still pays a certain amount as grants but for the traditional ones." Prof Dinesh Singh, the former Vice Chancellor of Delhi University, said, "This is certainly a welcome step. They have reduced the oversight of the UGC, which is crucial. Its role has been extremely regressive and counter-productive in the last few years."

Repeal of UGC

The Centre has also prepared a draft Act, last month, to replace the University Grants Commission with a new regulator for higher education in the country. The Act is being called the Higher Education Commission of India Act, 2018 (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act), i.e. HECI. The draft bill has claimed that the new institution will ensure more autonomy for colleges and facilitate holistic growth of the education system and also provide greater opportunities to students at a more affordable cost. It aims to reduce the interference of various regulatory bodies in the functioning of higher education institutions and create a single body that will have the power of accrediting institutions, maintaining their academic standard and even imposing fines for non-performance.

So far, various regulators - UGC, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Technical Education (NCTE) - have been functioning under the ministry. The new regulator will replace all of them to create a single regulatory authority. The HRD Minister has claimed that the transformation of the regulatory set up is based upon the principles of - Minimum government & Maximum governance, Separation of grant functions, End of inspection raj, Focus on academic quality, Powers to enforce. The government

had asked for suggestions online till July 7.

HECI will be tasked with the mandate of improving academic standards with a specific focus on learning outcomes, evaluation of academic performance by institutions, mentoring of institutions, training of teachers, promoting the use of educational technology, among other functions. In addition to these, it will lay down standards for the opening and closure of institutions and also for appointments to critical leadership positions at all universities, even if they are established under state law.

Behind UGC Repeal

The seemingly mother-of-all reforms is, in fact, a climb down from the HEERA (Higher Education Evaluation and Regulatory Authority), earlier promoted by the PMO and NITI Aayog which tried to form a single body to oversee education. UPA HRD minister Kapil Sibal tried to do the same by advocating a National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER). In the neoliberal WTO-GATT order of finance capitalism, education is not a right but a marketplace of profitable commerce, and, hence, needs to be commercialised. HECI is purportedly claimed as a regulatory body to maintain academic standards with punitive powers. It also, in one stroke, has legislated funding as the exclusive domain of the government of the day, thereby, compromising academic freedom by making financial grant conditional to the pleasure of the government in power.

The government appears to be withdrawing from the duty of providing more inputs/infrastructure in higher education by talking about public-private-personal partnership and, yet, tries to reap suitable outcomes or credulous subservience from these spaces of critical thinking by having absolute administrative and financial control. HECI will pave the way for higher student fees and place a greater curb on dissent and freedom of expression of individuals and institutions. It appears to be nothing but the government consolidating, centralising and monopolising power in academic matters while ensuring a free run for private capital. Most claims accompanying the new act seem anti-people. For instance, when it claims to end Inspection Raj, it actually inaugurates Accreditation Raj. In envisioning it as overriding the specific acts of universities and the legislation of states, this Act unilaterally legislates on a concurrent subject thereby encroaching on the rights of the state governments and jeopardising constitutional federalism.

While private education can co-exist based on market demands, the government's abdication of its responsibility from public education for the poor cannot be reduced.

(The author is a former Dean of Symbiosis and Amity Universities. The views expressed are strictly personal)

Naturalising a queer concern

In a country where socially validated common heterosexual concerns are broached in hush tones, genuine homosexuality will naturally seem unnatural



KAVYA DUBEY

Support to gay community can pave the way for due upliftment of other marginalised communities. Awareness and informed acceptance of human sexuality have still a long way to go in India. A generation raised with basic sex education is very unlikely to harbour resentment against the queer

Retrieving alternate sexuality from the draconian Section 377 of IPC that classifies homosexuality as an "unnatural offence" (which has its roots in the colonial Buggery Act of 1533 which criminalised sexual activities "against the order of nature") has been long overdue. While India debates, demonstrates, and judges homosexuality, the UK has seen remarkable support coming in for LGBTQ community since the turn of 21st century. It deserves to be emphasised that LGBT individuals openly serve in Her Majesty's Armed Forces besides having the same legal rights as other citizens. Beyond this contrast and instance of exemplary progress, it must be clarified what might possibly constitute unnatural sex - debatably but conclusively, rape; even IVF and artificial insemination are (scientific and progressive) methods of unnatural sex. Homosexuality is a variation, not an aberration, as Justice Indu Malhotra asserted.

There is no moral or legal ground to incriminate ones' exercise of free will. Regarding homosexuality as an offence is to infringe one's right to express their self and decriminalising it is the first step to remove barriers that discriminate them and deprive them of their rightful entitlements as citizens. The aspects of Section 377 pertain not just to exercising sexual preference but also to the larger spectrum of right to life (and liberty) and the right to privacy in such relationships. Decriminalising private consensual gay sex and relationships will inevitably lead to a radical change in social patterns and outlook about the institution of marriage. If homosexuality is to be officially accepted, there is no reason to not solemnise such unions. Any bearing of this on matters of inheritance is comparable to when this issue had broken out about female children inheriting property. As established, an enforced legal status will eventually lead to social acceptance.

Notwithstanding the extent of modernisation that the Indian society likes to emulate selectively, it is commonly not encouraged that an adult exclusively chooses their partner. Further, any deviation from social or family convention



It can be debated endlessly whether homosexuality is a conscious choice or an innate inclination beyond choice but it must be reiterated that people of alternate sexuality and preferences are equal citizens who must not be discriminated for their naturalness

is regarded with doubt that borders on disagreement; and acceptance of the final result of choosing one's partner seldom comes readily. Drawing very validly from the Hadiya case (March 2018 judgement; when a Hindu girl from Kerala converted to Islam and chose to marry a Muslim man out of her own free will), Justice Chandrachud observed that neither the State nor one's parents can influence an adult's choice of partner. That would amount to violation of one's fundamental right to privacy. When it is a matter of difficulty in accepting individuals who make their own choices, the aspect of sexual orientation becomes an extraordinary problem only due to social conditioning.

The gay community in India reflects the general condition the marginalised and the ostracised such as those surviving the trauma of parental rejection and subsequent societal exclusion, sex workers and transgenders who can monetarily afford their rehabilitation but do not find acceptance in the larger society and hence have no way out of their mis-

ery which they are compelled to accept, even those who are socio-economically backward but foster ambitions to rise above their limiting conditions. Support to gay community can pave the way for due upliftment of other marginalised communities. Awareness and informed acceptance of human sexuality have still a long way to go in India. A generation raised with basic sex education is very unlikely to harbour resentment against the queer.

Genuine homosexuality will naturally seem unnatural in a country where socially validated common heterosexual concerns are broached in hush tones and a certain qualification in the status of the individual (woman in particular) is expected for validating bringing up such matters. In these haphazardly changing times, the concern for reproduction by a married woman of a certain 'late' age is justified but a single woman of the same 'late' age seeking a sperm donor to independently start a family is declared being a complex kind of crazy, almost diseased. An emi-

nent Indian journalist's opinion for *The Washington Post* bears this headline: "The shameful cowardice of India's politicians on gay rights". To be clear about our easy-paced social modernisation, society and politics are very cleverly delinked to suit electoral and populist agendas. Social concerns are never quite a political concern.

Indeed, it is time we realise the necessity to extend constitutional rights to all citizens, irrespective of gender and sexual orientation. It can be debated endlessly whether homosexuality is a conscious choice or an innate inclination beyond choice but it must be reiterated that people of alternate sexuality and preferences are equal citizens who must not be discriminated. The judicial integrity at the Apex level has once again overturned the 'judgements' that have belittled the humanity of some humans. The Supreme Court is expected to be the guardian of social justice.

(The author is Senior Copy Editor with Millennium Post. The views expressed are strictly personal)



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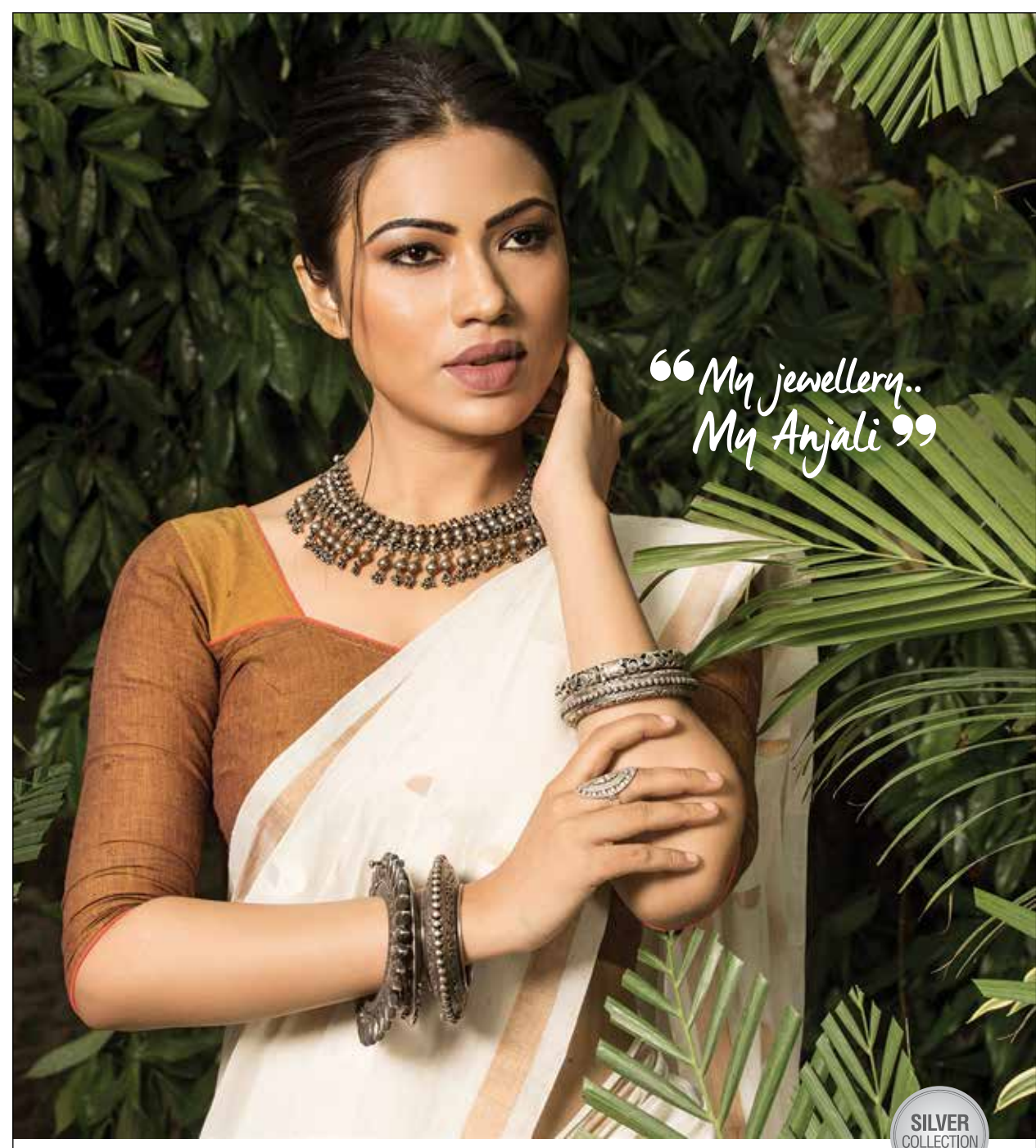
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INDIA'S LYNCHING SPECTRUM WIDENS

Firecrackers, beef, child abduction rumours...

People should not pelt stones at Army: DGP Vaid

TRISHA MUKHERJEE AND MANIK GUPTA

NEW DELHI: Jatin Das, a labourer, was beaten to death by an angry crowd at a wedding venue in Assam three days ago for allegedly demanding that revellers stop bursting firecrackers, laying bare once again the veneer of tolerance that gives way only too easily to extreme rage and aggression.

The 35-year-old labourer's tragic death this week is only the latest in a series of lynchings that have shocked India, and forced experts to introspect on collective anger that kills and the why and how of public violence.

According to reports, at least 20 people were killed in 14 separate incidents between May and July 2018 in various parts of India.

Though the National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) does not specifically track lynchings, the incidence of mob killings

and vigilantism has been on the rise.

The killing of Das, who wanted the fireworks to be stopped because he had been hit by a splinter, is one end of the lynching spectrum. If his ask triggered irrational fury, the other cases are fuelled by righteousness with mobs believing they were doing the good thing.

Some of the victims were believed to be beef eaters or indulging in cow slaughter, others were thought to be kidney smugglers, and in many cases the victims were suspected to be child abductors.

The reasons for this vigilante justice were varied but the root cause was often the same -- suspicion based on rumours

fanned by messages on social media platforms like WhatsApp.

According to Mumbai-based psychologist Harish Shetty, India is caught in a "state of post-disaster syndrome", contributing significantly towards the making of an angst driven



"fickle" population which can be easily instigated.

"One needs to understand that something or the other is always happening in this country...children are being stolen...suicides and murders are happening. All of this leaves people in a state of hyper-arousal and a small trigger can channel their frustration," he said.

In Dhule in Maharashtra, where five people were killed

on July 1, violence in the predominantly adivasi region was triggered following rumours of child kidnappers on WhatsApp.

"Rumours of child kidnappers were doing rounds on WhatsApp, and people became suspicious of the victims who belonged to the nomadic Gosavi community due to their alien attire and language," Superintendent of Police M Ramkumar told PTI.

A police team of "eight people", heavily outnumbered by the mob, reached the spot within 40 minutes, only to find that the victims had already succumbed to the attacks.

The deaths bring to light the horrors of mob fury when a group of people, sometimes 50 and sometimes as many as 3,500 like in Dhule, decide to take law in their hands and kill somebody. Last month, the deaths of 29-year-old Nilotpal Das and 30-year-old Abhijeet Nath in Assam's Karbi Anglong district shook the country. The two were beaten to death by over 500 angry people, again on the suspicion of being child abductors.

"It is an uncivilised notion of justice," said city-based lawyer Kirti Singh.

Equating the act of lynching with a kangaroo court where "the mob seems to be doing what it thinks is right", she said people build up the fury on "fake news".

She rued the absolute lack

of political will to put an end to these "rumours" and blamed the absence of a policy of "zero-tolerance" towards the heinous crime for the lives lost.

"Lynching is illegal. It is brutal murder. The ruling dispensation needs to tell people they cannot take the law in their hands. There should be widespread condemnation of such actions. They should set an example by talking extensively about its horrors," the lawyer said.

Singh also stressed on the need for police to act immediately and efficiently to stop incidents of violence from escalating, particularly by getting more forces.

Agreeing with her, Shetty said, "The police needs to be 10 steps ahead of the rumours."

Putting a check on the anti-social elements spreading fake news, effectively communicating with the general public and making them aware about mar-

ginalised communities are some of key steps the police must keep in mind, Shetty said.

Cyber law expert Pawan Duggal suggested data localisation to supervise the dissemination of content on Whatsapp and similar platforms.

According to him, having servers of Whatsapp and Twitter in India will help bring the data that needs to be controlled within the physical boundary of India, thereby bringing it within the purview of Indian law.

"This could have a substantial impact on reducing the dissemination of fake news," Duggal said.

In 2015, the lynching of Mohammed Akhlaq following rumours that he was storing beef in his home in Dadri village shocked the nation and prompted a nationwide debate.

Three years later, the cases continue to pile up but the outrage seems to have dulled, prompting the question -- is lynching the new normal? **PTI**

SRINAGAR: The top cop of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday appealed to people not to go near the encounter sites and pelt stones at security forces in order to avoid loss of lives as army is their own.

"We are saddened if someone dies in this way. That is why we have been appealing that wherever there is an encounter, people should not go there to pelt stones on the army. This is our own army," Director General of Police S P Vaid told reporters. Vaid said he could feel the pain of the family that loses its child in such incidents.

"The family that loses its child, we can feel their pain. How difficult it is! We again appeal to everyone that this should not happen and they should not come to the encounter sites and stone-pelting should not happen on army," he said. Vaid said police has discussed the issue of avoiding deaths during stone-pelting incidents with the army and CRPF officers. **MP/PTI**

UP Amarnath pilgrim dies after being hit by car in Samba

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU: A 36-year-old Amarnath yatra pilgrim died and three others were injured when a private vehicle hit them on the Jammu-Lakhanpur highway in Samba district on Friday, a police official said.

A group of pilgrims, hailing from Etah district of Uttar Pradesh, were walking when a private car driven by a person called Bhuvini Dubey hit them near Bari Brahmana flyover, the official said.

He said four pilgrims were injured in the accident and were immediately rushed to hospital, where one of them, identified as Mukendra Singh, succumbed to injuries.

The condition of another pilgrim, Chander Paul, is stated to be critical, he said, adding Veeri Singh and Ram Paul escaped with minor injuries but are still undergoing treatment.

DRI busts ₹2K-cr money laundering racket at diamond bourse, four held

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has busted a Rs 2,000-crore money laundering racket at the Bharat Diamond Bourse (BDB) here and arrested four people, officials said on Friday.

The racket was unearthed after the DRI recently conducted raids at the BDB at Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) here following a tip off and intercepted consignments of rough diamonds of "low quality" with a declared value of Rs 156 crore.

However, a revaluation of these diamonds found that they were worth only about Rs 1.2 crore.

"The revaluation done by experts ascertained that these rough diamonds were of inferior quality and worth only about Rs 1.2 crore, against their declared value of Rs 156 crore," an official said.

During the probe, it came

to light that these rough diamonds were imported from overseas markets like Hong Kong and Dubai in connivance with the exporters and they were shown to have been procured at grossly overvalued prices, he said.

Four people have been arrested so far and cash worth Rs 10 lakh, demand drafts amounting to Rs 2.2 crore, cheque books, Aadhaar cards and PAN cards were recovered during the raids, he added.

The four arrested accused, with the help of some members of the panel of diamond valuers, used to get the declared value of the consignments approved as the fair value, the official said.

BDB Vice President Mehul Shah expressed shock over the racket.

"No one in the industry had heard of these arrested valuers and we are surprised how they were valuing diamonds. Our industry is very small and peo-

ple know each other," he said.

Shah said that valuers also work with the customs department, where nobody from the industry is allowed.

"Inside, there is no role of any trade body," he said.

"In a day or two things will become clear and we have full confidence in the investigating agencies and government departments," he added.

Industry sources said that to prevent such incidents, the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) had been urging the government to become the sole approving authority for valuers.

"The GJEPC has been closely working with the DRI and the government for the last three months and this action is a result of our joint efforts," a GJEPC source said.

The arrested valuers were not approved by the GJEPC, he said.

Two CRPF jawans killed in militant attack in Kashmir

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR: Two CRPF jawans were killed and one injured in a militant attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district on Friday, official sources said.

A civilian was also injured when militants opened fire on a CRPF team deployed on law and order duty at Achabal Chowk in Anantnag and escaped, the sources said.

The two CRPF jawans killed were assistant sub-inspector Meena and constable Sandeep, they said. The area has been cordoned off and a hunt launched to track down the assailants, the sources added.

Militant outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) claimed responsibility for the attack.

"Lashkar-e-Taiba attacks convoy of CRPF at Achabal Chowk. Claims two killed including an officer and several injured (sic)," LeT spokesman Abdullah Ghaznavi said in an email.

No ban on outside food in multiplexes: Maha Govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NAGPUR: Maharashtra Food and Civil Supplies Minister Ravindra Chavan on Friday assured the state legislature that "there is no ban on patrons carrying outside food to multiplexes but if the multiplex authorities prohibit it, they could face action".

The minister's statement came after a heated debate on the raging issue of the exorbitant rates charged by multiplexes for food, water and beverages which were higher than the printed maximum retail price (MRP).

Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Dhananjay Munde raised the issue of differential pricing of the same product inside and outside multiplexes.

In recent weeks, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) carried out agitations and protests inside various multiplexes



in Mumbai, Thane, Pune and other cities where a popcorn pack costing Rs 5 outside was sold for Rs 250 inside.

The agitations, occasionally violent, however seemed to have struck a cord and elicited huge public response even on social media platforms.

The Bombay High Court last month demanded to know why the Maharashtra government could not regulate the prices of the food and beverages sold inside multiplexes.

Hearing a petition filed last year by a social activist Jainendra Baxi, the court observed that in many instances, the foodstuffs were priced even higher than the entry ticket rates and ordered the state government to file its affidavit in the matter within four weeks.

Cinema Owners and Exhibitors Association of India (COEA) President Nitin Datar said that they have not received any orders from the government.

Will Amit Shah apologise for UP BJP MLA's remark on rape: Sena

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: The Shiv Sena on Friday asked whether BJP president Amit Shah would apologise for his party's UP MLA's remark that even Lord Ram cannot curb rapes.

The Sena's poser came a day after the BJP sought an apology from Congress president Rahul Gandhi for Shashi Tharoor's 'Hindu Pakistan' remark.

"Tharoor said if the BJP wins the 2019 (Lok Sabha) polls, India will become 'Hindu Pakistan'. In short, if (Narendra) Modi is voted to power again, India will be declared a Hindu rashtra (nation)."

"This is RSS's agenda, which Tharoor has only expressed from the Congress platform," the Sena said in an editorial in its mouthpiece 'Saamana'.

The Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram, Tharoor, had set off a political controversy on Wednesday with his remark that if voted to power again, the BJP will rewrite the Constitution and pave the way for creation of a "Hindu Pakistan". On Thursday, the BJP had demanded an apology from Gandhi for the "attack on Indian democracy and Hindus".

"The BJP wants Congress president Gandhi to apologise for Tharoor's remarks. But one needs to understand that Tharoor is only speaking the language of the BJP," the Sena said.

"One of its MLAs Surendra Narayan Singh had said even Lord Ram cannot curb rapes. His statement is an insult to Hindus. Shouldn't BJP chief Amit Shah apologise for his remark?" it said.

BJP MLA from Bairia in Uttar Pradesh, Singh, had recently said, "Bhagwan Ram bhi aa jaayenge, tab bhi balaatkaar ki ghatna per niantran nahi ho paayega" (The incidents of rape cannot be curbed, even if Lord Ram descends on earth)".

The Sena said, "India was divided because of the Congress. That party is responsible for the division. If Pakistan was founded on the basis of religious identity, then Hindustan is a Hindu rashtra."

"The Sangh parivar always accused (Jawaharlal) Nehru, (Sardar) Patel and others of turning Hindustan into a 'secular' state. If Nehru and others had committed this mistake, then the country gave two opportunities to the BJP to rectify it," the Uddhav Thackeray-led party said.

Bhojpuri singer Kalpana joins BJP

GUWAHATI: Bhojpuri singer Kalpana Patowary, who hails from Assam, has joined the BJP in the presence of its president Amit Shah and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi in Patna.

After joining the party on Thursday, Patowary told PTI "I am impressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and leadership. I'll use politics as a tool, medium and power to serve more and reach out. BJP for me is an ideology."

"I have not joined BJP for contesting elections as of now, but I am ready to help the party in every possible way through my art," said the multi-lingual singer who has also lent her voice to many Bollywood films.

"Even though I join politics, my field of work will be the same - that is music and more importantly archiving our folk musical heritage," said the singer who is popularly known as 'Bhojpuri Queen'. **PTI**



Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) workers clear the garbage washed ashore during high tide on a road along the Marine Drive in Mumbai on Friday **PTI**

PM Modi loses nearly 3L Twitter followers, Rahul Gandhi 17,000

NEW DELHI: As Twitter began sanitising its platform by removing inactive and locked accounts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday lost nearly 300,000 followers while Congress Party President Rahul Gandhi lost over 17,000 followers.

The number of Modi's followers went down to 43.1 million from 43.4 million.

According to SocialBlade.com that tracks the number of Twitter followers on a daily basis, Modi's personal Twitter handle (@narendramodi) lost 2,84,746 followers.

The official handle (@PMOIndia) lost 140,635 followers.

Rahul Gandhi (@RahulGandhi) has lost 17,503 followers while Congress leader Shashi Tharoor lost 1,51,509 followers.

The micro-blogging platform was yet to come up with

an official statement on this. Twitter earlier this week announced it will remove locked accounts -- which are disabled owing to suspicious activity -- from follower counts across profiles globally.

The move is likely to affect high-profile users the most.

With this clean-up exercise, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj (@SushmaSwaraj) has lost 74,132 followers.

While BJP President Amit Shah was left poorer by 33,363 followers, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has lost 91,555 followers.

Former Jammu and Kashmir CM Omar Abdullah has lost 21,878 followers, SocialBlade.com showed.

US President Donald Trump lost about 100,000 of his 53.4 million followers and former President Barack Obama lost about 400,000 from his 104 million. **MP/PTI**

BJP MLA charged by CBI for framing Unnao rape victim's father in false Arms Act case

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar was on Friday listed in a charge sheet by the CBI for framing the father of a minor girl, allegedly raped by the lawmaker in Unnao, in a false Arms Act case, officials said.

Along with him nine others including the then Station Officer of Makhi police station, Ashok Singh Bhaduria, Sub-Inspector Kamta Prasad Singh, Constable Amir Khan, brother of the MLA Atul Singh Sengar were also named in the charge sheet, filed before a special CBI court in Lucknow. Four other accused have also been charged by the agency.

Sengar is a four-time MLA from Bangarmau, a semi-urban area nearly 70 km from Lucknow, and enjoys immense clout in the area.

The CBI recently named him in a charge sheet for allegedly raping the minor girl at his



residence on June 4, 2017 night but the local police had not registered the FIR after the crime.

The girl's father was booked by the local police on allegations of brandishing a country-made pistol and put in prison when he filed a case this year to bring Sengar to book on April 4. He was allegedly beaten up by the brother of the MLA and his aides.

The police action had prompted the girl to attempt self-immolation in front of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence on April 8

to highlight the plight of her father. Next day, her father succumbed to his injuries.

The CBI has charged the MLA, his brother, policemen and five others in IPC sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 166 (public servant disobeying law, with intent to cause injury to any person), 167 (Public servant framing an incorrect document with intent to cause injury), 193 (producing false evidence), 201 (destruction of evidence) among others.

CBI's spokesperson said further investigation is on.

KERALA NUN ABUSE CASE

Nuns, priests, laity write to Vatican

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI: A section of nuns, priests and laity of the Roman Catholic Church has written to the Vatican over the alleged rape of a nun in Kerala by a bishop, urging it "to do what is right" to provide justice to the women in the church.

The letters were written to Giambattista Diqutro, Apostolic Nuncio to India and the Catholic Bishops Conference of India Cardinal Oswald Gracias.

The church authorities were requested to "advise" Pope Francis to "relieve" Jalandhar bishop Franco Mulakkal "of his pastoral responsibilities so that the church is seen to actually practice the zero tolerance it professes to observe in abuse cases."

Stating that they were concerned about the integrity of the Indian church, the letters stated that people's faith in the credibility of the church to implement its policy of zero tolerance in abuse matters would continue to erode if the accused bishop remain in his position at Jalandhar diocese.

They said the "mud slinging" between the bishop and his priests on one hand and the aggrieved sister and her fam-

ily on the other has turned the church into an object of ridicule, "thus causing a lot of harm to the church and in particular to the faith of the people of God."

"We trust that Christ who is our light, and who always stood up against the exploitation of women will stand with the church and give the leadership courage to do what is right in the cause of justice to women in the church," the letter to the Apostolic Nuncio to India said.

They also requested Cardinal Gracias to advise bishops in India to publicise and create awareness about CBCI guidelines to deal with sexual harassment in workplace, 2017, and institute the structures and procedures described therein without delay.

"To preach justice, the church must be seen to practice justice (Synod of Bishops, 1971). Sadly the representations made by the religious sister to the bishops have brought no response, raising issues about the credibility of the CBCI policy," the letter to Gracias said. Mulakkal has claimed he is innocent and said the truth will come out in the police investigation.

"I know that I am inno-

cent, but that is not enough. Bringing out the truth is also my responsibility now. I believe that the police investigation in the case will bring out the truth," he said yesterday.

In her complaint to the Kottayam district police chief, the nun charged Mulakkal with rape and unnatural sex multiple times at a small town near Kottayam between 2014 and 2016.

Clergymen supporting Mulakkal had said the nun filed a complaint against him after a priest, also an official of the Jalandhar diocese, filed one against her relatives for allegedly threatening the bishop.

In his complaint, the priest has alleged that the nun's relatives threatened to kill Mulakkal after he ordered a probe against her on the basis of the complaint received by the Mother Superior of her congregation.

Last week, the nun complained to the National Commission for Women that the Kerala Police was "not working" in the case as the accused is a "highly-linked" person.

NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma said the commission would extend all possible help to the nun in her fight.

Second priest held in Kerala rape case

OUR CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala police on Friday arrested the second priest accused of sexually abusing a woman in Pathanamthitta district, while two other clergymen were still absconding.

Johnson P Mathew, a counsellor, was arrested from Kozhencherry in the district and is being questioned by crime branch sleuths, police sources said. His anticipatory bail petition was pending in court.

The Crime Branch made the first arrest yesterday after Job Mathew, the vicar of a local church, surrendered, a day after the high court dismissed his anticipatory bail plea and that of two other priests, observing they acted as "predators" and took "undue advantage" of the woman. The two other priests are absconding.

Crime branch sources said there were no orders from the court against Johnson P Mathew's arrest.

The incident came to light after an audio clip of the purported conversation of the husband of the alleged victim with a church official about the alleged sexual abuse of his wife by the priests was widely circulated on social media.

The woman's husband had last month accused five priests

of using his wife's secret confession to "blackmail and sexually abuse" her.

The crime branch registered a case following which the four priests had moved the high court seeking anticipatory bail.

The priests-- Abraham Varghese alias Sony, Job Mathew and Jaise K George-- had approached the court soon after the crime branch slapped rape charges against four clergymen named by the alleged victim as her tormentors. The name of the fifth cleric was not included for want of substantial evidence.

According to the woman's statement to police, the accused vicar had sought sexual favours from her after she made a confession to him about one of her tormentors and also threatened to reveal the contents of the confession against another accused in the case. The vicar also used to speak about sexual activities over phone and that the abuse continued till 2012, she alleged.

Johnson P Mathew, according to the woman's complaint, was her senior in college and got in touch with her through WhatsApp.

In course of time his messages turned explicit and he also allegedly morphed her face with a nude picture of another woman and threatened to circulate it on the web, the complaint said.

HC says cops fail to inform rape victims about option of abortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: Allowing a 16-year-old rape survivor to terminate her pregnancy, the Bombay High Court on Friday once again said that police must inform the victims in such cases that they have the option of undergoing abortion.

A bench of justices Naresh Patil and GS Kulkarni granted permission to the girl to undergo an abortion, after a panel of doctors suggested that it would be safe for her.

The victim, who is 21 weeks pregnant, moved the court earlier this week after her request for the termination of pregnancy was rejected by two government hospitals.

Doctors at the government-run KEM hospital asked her to approach the high court, as an abortion beyond 20 weeks is illegal, except under certain circumstances.

The judges noted that the girl lost five to six days in running from one hospital to another.

"Often (rape) victims and their families do not know that they have the option of medicinally terminating a pregnancy up to 20 weeks. The state must tell police officers to not waste any time when they are dealing with such victims," the court said.

SC takes note of poor facilities in jails, asks AG to assist

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday took note of lack of facilities in jails, leading to delayed trials and prolonged incarceration of under-trial prisoners, in the country and sought assistance of the Attorney General in issuing directions to deal with the situation.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, on its own, initiated the judicial proceedings after taking note of reports on deficiencies at the Faridabad jail in Haryana and expanded the scope of the case to the entire country.

Placing reliance on a report of the District and Sessions judge of Faridabad, the bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, said there were several infrastructural and operational deficiencies like lack of video conferencing and transportation facilities in prison.

"A report has been submitted by the District and Sessions judge of Faridabad and the judge has mentioned various causes for delayed trials and long incarceration of under trial prisoners in jail," it said.

"Having perused the report, we are of the view that such a situation cannot be confined to



the jail at Faridabad," the bench said, adding lack of facilities have been posing impediments in speedy trial.

The bench then asked Attorney General K K Venugopal to assist the court in the matter and said that making all the states and union territories (UTs) parties to the case would cause delay in passing directions.

The court appointed advocate Gaurav Aggarwal as an amicus curiae, friend of the court, and asked him to help the Attorney General deal with the case.

The bench considered the note on the prevailing situation at Faridabad jail of Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, since retired, who had visited the prison on June 3 this year.

MARTYRS DAY



Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba Mufti offers floral tribute to the 1931 martyrs, at Ziyarat Naqshband Sahab in the Downtown area of Srinagar on Friday

PDP rebels criticise Mehbooba Mufti for saying Centre 'engineering' split in party

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR: Five rebel PDP legislators on Friday accused party president Mehbooba Mufti of putting them and their families at risk by claiming that the internal rumblings in the party done at the behest of Delhi. The rebels also said that they consider the "accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India as final."

"One she (Mehbooba) has tried to give an impression that the institution is up for sale that anyone can buy them. Second, she has tried to label us that we are dancing to someone's tunes. This is like putting us before the lynch mob, this can put our families and workers at risk," MLA Baramulla Javid Hassan Beg

told reporters here.

Beg was accompanied by MLA Pattan Imran Ansari, MLA Noorabad Abdul Majid Padder and two MLAs at the press conference.

Ansari's uncle -- MLA Zadibal Abid Ansari -- and MLA Tangmar Abbas Wani are the other two PDP legislators who have openly rebelled against the leadership of Mehbooba Mufti.

Beg said they condemn Mehbooba's statement in which she claimed that any attempt to break the PDP would lead to 1987-like situation and have dangerous consequences.

"Does she think that the MLAs would commit a sell out of the nation? She has created a situation as if we are separatists

and our supporters and voters are like Hurriyat or militants. There is nothing like that. We consider the accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India as final," he said. Ansari said the rebels have woken up to the reality and want to fight the "two-family rule" in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We don't believe in two family rule. These two families (Abdullahs and Muftis) have always believed that they are indispensable," he said.

The rebels emphasized that they were still part of the PDP and were making efforts to set the house in order but they had no faith in the leadership of Mehbooba.

Asked about the future course of action, they said they would think about it if their

demands are not considered.

"We have categorically said that we do not have any faith in Mehbooba Mufti's leadership," Ansari said. Asked if the demands of rebels also included that Mehbooba step down as the party president, the MLA Pattan said the "writing is clearly on the wall".

The rebels rubbish any suggestion that the rebellion with the PDP had anything to do with government formation with BJP.

Earlier on Friday, Mehbooba, in her first public appearance after resigning as Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, said any attempt by the Centre to "engineer" a split in her party will have "extremely dangerous" consequences.

Assam to get its 1st transgender judge today

GUWAHATI: Assam's first transgender judge will begin work at the lok adalat here from Saturday making the north eastern state the third one in the country, after West Bengal and Maharashtra to have one such. Swati Bidhan Roy said on Friday that she will begin her stint in court number 25 in the Kamrup district and sessions court on after being appointed to the post by the Kamrup(metro) district legal services.

"My appointment as a judge in the lok adalat is a very positive message for the society and will help create awareness on discrimination against transgenders," she told reporters here.

Babri Masjid destroyed by 'Hindu Taliban': SC told

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Babri Masjid was destroyed by the "Hindu Taliban" just like the demolition of the Buddha statue by the Taliban in Bamiyan in Afghanistan, a litigant in the Ayodhya temple-mosque land dispute case told the Supreme Court on Friday.

No law or the Constitution allows destruction of religious structures of any faith, senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, appearing for the legal heirs of M Siddiq -- one of the original litigants in the case and has died, told a bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer. Dhavan also questioned the locus of the Shia Central Waqf Board in the case.

His comments came after the Shia board told the bench that it was willing to donate

one-third of the disputed land, which the Allahabad High Court had given to the Muslims, to the Hindu group for "peace, harmony, unity and integrity" in this great country.

The counsel for the Shia Central Waqf Board said they were the claimants of the Muslim share of land at the disputed Ayodhya site, as the Babri Masjid was built by Mir Baki, a Shia Muslim.

"It is a fundamental issue. The Shia Central Waqf Board has decided that for the unity, integrity, peace and harmony of the country, we want to donate the one-third part of land to the Hindu group," the lawyer said.

Dhavan, who initially said he would not respond to innuendos, later countered the Shia board's submissions and said it was way back in 1946 that the Babri Masjid was held to be a Sunni mosque.

Govt to showcase Sikkim's success in organic farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: In a move aimed at giving a push to organic farming across the country, the Agriculture Ministry has decided to showcase the performance of Sikkim in organic farming as the model for its Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY). As per officials, the initiative would help in encouraging farmers to adopt organic farming.

As per the latest report of Agriculture Ministry, out of government's total 50,000 hectares target to bring under organic farming in the North Eastern states, 45,918 hectares have been made suitable for organic farming and 2,429 farmers' interest groups have been formed, thereby connecting 48,949 farmers with the scheme.

Calling upon farmers to adopt organic farming, Union Agriculture Minister said, "We need to bring a revolution in



organic farming just like the Green Revolution. For this, government policies alone will not work. The society and all stakeholders will have to come forward and contribute."

Sikkim, a small state in the northeastern region that borders China, has achieved the tag of organic state under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, who had taken the decision to bring the state's entire agriculture land under organic farming in 2010 and the state was declared an

organic state in 2016.

According to the reports of Sikkim government, the state has registered total food grain production of 1,00,580 tonnes in an area of 62,490 ha during the year 2015-16, which was 1,04,000 tonnes in an area of 72,500 ha in the year 1995-96.

However, despite a 16 per cent reduction in area under cultivation, the state witnessed just 3 per cent decline in production, but the productivity increased by 12 per cent in the same period.

In the year 1995-96, the area occupied by rice crop was 15,930 hectares while in 2015-16 it was 10,670 hectares. Similarly, the area under wheat cultivation during 1995-96 was 8,420 hectares while it was only 320 hectares during 2015-16. The productivity of rice has increased from 1,437 kg/ha in 2003-04 to 1,845 kg/ha in 2015-16.

In contrary to other crops, the production of cardamom has increased from 3,500 tonnes in 2004 to 4,110 tonnes in 2015 despite a reduction in cultivation area from 24,800 hectares and 17,000 hectares.

On the promotion of organic farming, the agriculture minister had said, "India is traditionally the world's largest organic farming country. The government is committed to taking India on the path of modernity in agriculture and wants to introduce new techniques."

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, WEST BENGAL
161A, S.P. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata - 700 026
INDICATIVE ADVERTISEMENT NO. 22/2018
APPLICATIONS IN THE PRESCRIBED FORMAT ARE INVITED FOR DIRECT RECRUITMENT TO THE FOLLOWING POST. THE BREAK UP OF THE VACANCIES IS AS FOLLOWS

NAME OF THE POST	U.R.	S.C.	S.T.	O.B.C. 'A'	O.B.C. 'B'	P.D.	TOTAL
SUB-INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS IN THE WEST BENGAL SUBORDINATE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNDER THE SCHOOL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL	176	74	20	34	24	10	338

Closing date for receipt of application : The 6th August, 2018
Closing date for submission of fees through off-line : The 7th August, 2018
Applications can be submitted through online only in Commission's website at www.pscwbapplication.in from the 17th July, 2018 onwards. Before applying for the post, candidates are required to enroll themselves as per 'ONE TIME ENROLLMENT' scheme through the same website. Those who have already made enrollment through the same website (i.e., www.pscwbapplication.in) need not enroll once again.
Detailed information regarding age limit, qualifications, scale of pay, closing date etc. are available in the Commission's website at: <http://www.pscwbapplication.in> & www.pscwbonline.gov.in.

ICA-1482(5)/2018

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, WEST BENGAL
161A, S.P. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata - 700 026
INDICATIVE ADVERTISEMENT NO. 21/2018
APPLICATIONS IN THE PRESCRIBED FORMAT ARE INVITED FOR DIRECT RECRUITMENT TO THE FOLLOWING POST. THE BREAK UP OF THE VACANCIES IS AS FOLLOWS

Name of the Post	Vacancies							TOTAL
	UR	SC	ST	OBC (A)	OBC (B)	PD B/LV*	PD HI**	
Motor Vehicles Inspector (Non-Technical) in the Transport Department under the Government of West Bengal	35	14	4	6	4	1	1	66 (Sixty Six)

***Blindness or Low Vision **Hearing Impairment ***Meritorious Sports person**
Closing date for submission of application & fees through online : The 6th August, 2018 (midnight).
Closing date for submission of fees through offline : The 7th August, 2018.
Applications can be submitted through online only on Commission's website at www.pscwbapplication.in and from 11:00 a.m., 17th July, 2018. Before applying for the post, candidates are required to enroll themselves as per 'ONE TIME ENROLLMENT' scheme through the same website. Those who have already made enrollment at the same website (i.e., www.pscwbapplication.in) need not enroll once again.
Detailed information regarding age limit, qualifications, scale of pay, closing date etc. are available on the Commission's websites at: <http://www.pscwbapplication.in> & www.pscwbonline.gov.in.
Scheme of Examination :
Screening Test will be objective type (MCQ) in 4 different series, viz., A, B, C & D
 • Number of questions: 100, each carrying 1 mark.
 • Full marks: 100.
 • Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes.
N.B. : There will be negative marking for wrong answers as per norms (1/3rd of the full mark for each wrong answer).

ICA-1481(5)/2018

Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad
Cooch Behar
Notice inviting e-Tender (in brief)

Following e-tender notice is hereby invited on behalf of Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad for Construction, Repairing works and Supplying vide NIT No. WBZP/115/DE-ET/COB/2017-18(3rd Call), WBZP/116/DE-ET/COB/2017-18(3rd Call) The details may be had from the website <https://etender.wb.nic.in>

Sd/
 Addl. Executive officer
 Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad
 Cooch Behar

366A(1)/ICA/ADD/COB

Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad
Cooch Behar
Notice inviting e-Tender (in brief)

Following e-tender notice is hereby invited on behalf of Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad for Construction, Repairing works and Supplying vide NIT No. WBZP/212/DE-ET/COB/2017-18(2nd Call), WBZP/213/DE-ET/COB/2017-18(2nd Call) The details may be had from the website <https://etender.wb.nic.in>

Sd/
 Addl. Executive officer
 Cooch Behar Zilla Parishad
 Cooch Behar

366B(1)/ICA/ADD/COB

ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE
N.I.T. No. 02 of 2018-19 of E.E. (A-I) Krishnagar-II (A-I) Division
 Sealed Tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer (A-I), Krishnagar-II (A-I) Division, Bhaluka Road, Krishnagar, Nadia for Internal wiring in the Pump House at different HDTW/DTW schemes under Krishnagar-II (A-I) Division.
 1. Last date of application for issuing Tender Paper: 19.07.2018 up to 2.00 P.M.
 2. Date of Purchasing Tender Documents: 23.07.2018 up to 4.00 P.M.
 3. Date of Dropping of Tender: 26.07.2018 up to 1.30 P.M.
 Other details may be had from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/-
 Executive Engineer
 Krishnagar-II (A-I) Division, Krishnagar, Nadia

261(2)

MUNICIPAL SERVICE COMMISSION
149, A. J. C. Bose Road, Kolkata-700014.
WEBSITE:- www.mscwb.org
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT
 Schedule of Examinations for Recruitment to the following posts under Furfura Sharif Development Authority (Advertisement No 8 of 2018) has been displayed at our website.

Date of Examination- 05.08.2018

Sl. No.	Name of the Post
1.	Surveyor
2.	Draftsman
3.	Work Assistant
4.	Lower Division Clerk

The Admit Card (s) for the above posts will be Downloaded from our website www.mscwb.org from 16.07.2018 onwards.
 All concerned are requested to follow the above website. **Secretary**

Nawaz Sharif lands at Lahore airport

SENT STRAIGHT TO JAIL BY ARMY-BACKED PAK GOVT

LAHORE: Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam were arrested tonight upon their return to the country after their conviction in one of the three corruption cases against the powerful political family, less than two weeks before the country goes to polls.

The plane carrying Sharif, the supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz, and Maryam landed at Lahore's Allama Iqbal Airport at 9:15 IST, nearly three hours late from the scheduled arrival.

The Etihad Airways flight EY243 arrived here from Abu Dhabi. Earlier they flew to the UAE capital from London, where Sharif's wife Kulsom, suffering from throat cancer, is battling for her life.

According to an airport official, they surrendered before a team of the country's anti-graft body -- The National Accountability Bureau -- without any resistance.

"They will be transported to Islamabad by a helicopter," he said.

Sharif reportedly refused to sit in the vehicle of the Rangers to get to the airport terminal. Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officials took their pas-



port for immigration.

According to media reports, dozens of security officials entered the plane after it landed and asked other passengers to leave. The duo's passports were seized by a three-member FIA team, and both were permitted to meet Begum Shamim Akhtar, Sharif's mother, in the Haj Lounge.

The two were convicted on July 6 in the Evenfield properties case linked to the Sharif family's ownership of four luxury flats in London.

Both Sharif, 68, and Maryam, 44, have been sentenced by an accountability court to 10 and 7 years in prison respectively.

The Sharif family is now facing two more corruption cases in the accountability court Al-Azizia Steel Mills and Flagship Investments in which they are accused of money laundering, tax evasion and hiding offshore assets. Sharif and Maryam are expected to be sent to Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi tonight.

Around 10,000 police officers have been deployed across the city to maintain law and order. The Punjab government has suspended mobile and internet services in Lahore.

Sharif's PML-N party, led by its President and Sharif's younger brother Shabbaz, on Friday managed to take out a rally despite imposition of section 144 that bars assembly of more than five people.

Earlier, media reports and an official of the Civil Aviation Authority had said their plane was diverted to Islamabad to avoid any law and order situation in Lahore as a large number of the PML-N workers were

heading in hundreds of vehicles to the city to cheer up their leader.

The rally kicked off at the Lohari Gate in the afternoon and could manage to proceed a few kilometers as party workers struggled to remove cargo containers on their way.

Close to the airport, Sharif's supporters clashed with police which otherwise did not stop them from removing containers.

"It appears the Punjab caretaker government had reached a deal with the PML-N withdrawing thousands of policemen to give a free hand to reach close to the Lahore airport and wind up the rally," a senior police officer told PTI.

"We have orders from our top command not to take action against the PML-N rally participants," he said.

The PML-N workers joined in the rally from different points in Lahore.

Wearing a shirt with Sharif's picture on it, Muraz Ali had come all his way from Bahawalpur, some 400km from Lahore, to participate in the rally. "I love Nawaz Sharif. I am even ready to sacrifice my life for him. I will go on fast if my leader is arrested," Ali said. AGENCIES

90 killed, over 180 injured in two blasts targeting election rallies

PESHAWAR/KARACHI:

At least 90 people, including a top nationalist leader, were killed and more than 180 others injured on Friday as powerful bomb blasts targeted two separate election rallies in Pakistan, the deadliest in a string of attacks on candidates ahead of the July 25 polls.

Militants targeted a gathering of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) leader Siraj Raisani in Mastung area of Balochistan province.

"Raisani succumbed to wounds while he was being shifted to Quetta," District Police Officer Mohammad Ayub Achakzai said.

Raisani is the brother of former Chief Minister of Balochistan Nawab Aslam Raisani.

The nature of the attack was not known and police and intelligence agencies were trying to figure out if it was a suicide bombing.

At least 85 people, including Raisani, were killed and more than 150 injured in a deadly blast, Dawn newspaper quoted Balochistan's caretaker health minister Faiz Kakar as saying.

Initially the death toll was not high but many critically injured persons including Siraj Raisani passed away in hospitals, Kakar said.

He said the death toll could rise further as 120 other people have been wounded in the explosion.

Officials of the Bomb Dis-



posal Squad (BDS) confirmed that it was a suicide blast. They said that around 16-20 kilogram of explosives were used in the attack.

Following the incident, an emergency was declared in Quetta hospitals, with additional medical staff summoned.

The attack came hours after a bomb hit a rally of Akram Khan Durrani of Muta-hida Majlis Amal (MMA), an alliance of religious party, including Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) and Jamaat-e-Islami, in Bannu area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.

Five persons were killed and over 37 other injured, police said. Durrani was unhurt in the attack. He later visited the injured in a hospital in Bannu and said that his vehicle was damaged in the attack.

Durrani, who is contesting in July 25 elections against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan, announced that he will continue campaign despite threats.

No group has claimed responsibility for the two attacks so far.

The twin attacks came as former prime minister Nawaz Sharif along with his daughter Maryam returned to the country to face arrest in a corruption case.

The law and order had suddenly deteriorated ahead of elections despite claims by the government and security forces that terrorism has been wiped out of the country.

President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Nasirul Mulk also condemned the attack in separate statements.

On Monday, a suicide bomber killed Awami National Party (ANP) leader and candidate in the general elections, Haroon Bilour and 19 others after striking at a corner election meeting in Peshawar city.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack on the ANP rally. AGENCIES

Hundreds of PML-N members detained in Pak

QUETTA (Pakistan): Pakistani police detained hundreds of members of the former ruling party in the central city of Lahore on Thursday, weeks before the country heads to the polls, party officials said.

No official reason was given but the party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), says it is an attempt to stifle its ability to launch street protests.

A police official who asked not to be identified said more than 100 PML-N workers had been detained.

"We received instructions to take prominent PML-N activists from their areas to avoid a law and order problem," the official told Reuters.

The crackdown on the PML-N, whose leaders have accused the military of attempting to destabilise the party, comes a day before the party founder, ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, is due to return to Pakistan where he faces arrest.

Muhammad Mehdi, the party's media coordinator, told Reuters that nearly 500 workers had been detained in a "massive crackdown", including raids on the homes of a number of some of the party's local councilors.

PML-N members have said the crackdown on workers who handle street-level organising will make it harder for them to stage rallies and protests on Sharif's return when he will challenge the verdict and sentence against him.

A Pakistani accountability court on Friday sentenced Sharif in absentia to ten years in prison for corrupt practices linked to his family's purchase of upscale London flats.

Sharif has denounced the court proceedings as politically motivated and a judicial witch-hunt, often suggesting the military was to blame. AGENCIES

Pak Army chief confirms death for 12 'hardcore terrorists'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Friday confirmed the death sentences awarded to 12 "hardcore terrorists" involved in attacks on jails and killing of security personnel as well as civilians, according to a media report. The ratification comes within days of the powerful army chief approving the execution of a similar number of hardcore terrorists. These terrorists include those who attacked armed forces personnel, law enforcement agencies, destroyed educational

institutions, telephone exchanges and killed civilians, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the military's media wing, said. Among the convicts are also those involved in attacks on Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan's jails, Express Tribune reported. Nearly 400 prisoners including militants had escaped in 2012 from Bannu jail in northwestern Pakistan after an attack by insurgents armed with guns, grenades and rockets, while 240 criminals including 35 high-profile terrorists, fled the Dera Ismail Khan's central prison. AGENCIES

'Will haunt many': Nawaz Sharif's farewell ailing wife in UK hospital

LAHORE / NEW DELHI:

A picture of former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam bidding farewell to Begum Kulsom Nawaz, Mr Sharif's ailing wife, before their return to Pakistan for their imminent arrest, has struck an emotional chord with many in the country.

The photograph, which was tweeted by a Pakistani journalist, and retweeted by Nawaz Sharif's daughter, shows Maryam breaking down as her father Nawaz Sharif keeps his hand on Begum Kulsom's forehead, hours before they head to the airport to return to Pakistan, where they would be arrested upon arrival.

Kulsom Nawaz, whose health has been described as "highly critical" by doctors, has been undergoing treatment at the Harley Street Clinic in London. She has been on life support - on a ventilator - for over a month, and had even slipped into coma.

"This picture will haunt many in the future," tweeted the Pakistani journalist who first posted the photo on social media.

Many in Pakistan are reacting and sharing the emotional photograph on social media. Some have even called it the "ugliest face of Pakistani establishment" as the administration in the country said it would arrest Mr Sharif and his daughter Maryam mid-air, as soon as their plane enters Pakistani territory. "This picture will be marked as the ugliest face of Pakistani Establishment for a hundred years," a user said. Hours before his imminent



arrest, Mr Sharif said, "Maryam and I are coming back to face prison, and even if they send me to the gallows, we know that freedom cannot be won without sacrifice. It is not easy to leave my wife on a ventilator in a hospital, but I am returning along with my daughter to play our role to rid of this slavery."

"Despite seeing the bars of prison in front of my eyes, I am going to Pakistan," he told a conference of his Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz or PML-N party in London.

According to news agency AFP, Nawaz Sharif, who has a mass appeal in his country, told cheering supporters: "Put Nawaz Sharif in prison for life, send him to the gallows, but you will have to answer the questions that the people of Pakistan are asking and they will stop only after getting answers." Attendees chanted "Nawaz Sharif, We Love You!" as he concluded his speech.

Mr Sharif was sentenced by a court in Islamabad last week over the purchase of high-end properties in London. He was ousted from his third term as prime minister by the Supreme

Court of Pakistan last year following a corruption investigation and banned from politics for life but remains a powerful symbol for his ruling party.

On July 6, Nawaz Sharif was sentenced to 10 years in prison and a fine of eight million pounds in the Avenfield Reference case, while his daughter Maryam Sharif was sentenced to seven years of jail and fined two million pounds, by the accountability court.

Mr Sharif and Maryam are expected to land at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport at 6:15 pm (local time) via Abu Dhabi on Etihad Airways flight EY243.

In a video message, tweeted by Maryam, Mr Sharif urged his followers to stand with him and "change the fate of the country".

"The country is at a critical juncture right now," 68-year-old Mr Sharif said, adding, "I have done what I could. I am aware that I have been sentenced to 10 years [in prison] and I will be taken to a jail cell straight away. But I want the Pakistani nation to know that I am doing this for you." AGENCIES

Notice Inviting Tender
Tender Ref. No.: WBPWD/CEC/NIT/39/T/18-19
Tender Id: 2018_WBPWD_181192_1
The Superintending Engineer, Central Electrical Circle, Public Works Directorate, 184, C. R. Das Road "Special repair & renovation of E.I. work of Main Building at 'MIT' Berhampore in the District of Murshidabad". Bid submission closing date 30/07/2018 up to 2.00 PM. Detailed information will be available on the website <http://etender.wb.nic.in> & above office.
Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Central Electrical Circle, PWD
695(3)

ASANSOL DURGAPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.
(A Statutory body of the Govt. of West Bengal)
1st Administrative Building, City Centre, Durgapur-713216
It is hereby notified to all concerned that Asansol Durgapur Development Authority (ADDA) has terminated the license of Cycle Stand (s) near 1st & 2nd Administrative Building, ADDA, City Centre, Durgapur -713216 w.e.f. 13th July 2018 and do not consider them as Cycle Stand (s) from such date.
All citizens who keep their two-wheelers in the aforementioned Cycle Stand are hereby informed that they may do so at their own risk and responsibility. The Authority shall not in any way be responsible for safety of their two wheelers on and from 13th July 2018.
Sd/- C.E.O, ADDA

Notice inviting Tender
Tender Ref. No. :- WBPWD/CEC/NIT/37/Q/18-19
Tender Id :- 2018_WBPWD_181113_1
The Superintending Engineer, Central Electrical Circle, Public Works Directorate, 184, C.R. Das Road "Construction of new Circuit House at Jangipur, Murshidabad with G+3 stories and Basement provision at Jangipur Sub-division office compound under Berhampore Division No-1, PWD in the district of Murshidabad During the year 2015-2016.- SITC of Lift." Bid submission closing Date 01/08/2018 up to 2.00 PM. Details information will be available in the web site <http://etender.wb.nic.in> & above office.
Superintending Engineer
Central Electrical Circle, PWD
694(3)/ICA/MURSHIDABAD

MUNICIPAL SERVICE COMMISSION
149, A. J. C. Bose Road, Kolkata-700014.
WEBSITE:- www.mscwb.org
ADVERTISEMENT NO. 11 of 2018.
Recruitment Examination for the post of Sub-Assistant Engineer (Mechanical) will be held on 5th August, 2018.
Schedule & Syllabus of the above mentioned Examination has already been displayed at our website.
On-line admit cards will be up-loaded on and from 16th July, 2018. In case of non-receipt of Admit Card or any difficulty in downloading Admit Cards, candidate may contact office of the Commission on 2nd & 3rd August, 2018 between 11.00 A.M. and 4P.M. with proper documents.
Secretary

Eastern Coalfields Limited
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
ABRIDGE FORM
Name of Area / Department : Pandaveswar Area, MM Dept.,
Tender Notice No. : (1) ECL/PA/MMD/04/ET/18-19/ET007
Date : 07.07.2018, (2) ECL/PA/MMD/04/ET/18-19/ET009 Date : 07.07.2018, (3) ECL/PA/MMD/04/ET/18-19/ET010 Date : 07.07.2018, (4) ECL/PA/MMD/04/ET/18-19/ET008 Date : 07.07.2018. Name of the work : (1) Supply of Spiral Bevel Wheel for EIMCO ELECON make 1 Mtr LHD Model 912 as per part No. EEA0005590, (2) Supply of ECE make 11KVCB Spares, (3) Supply of Turn Table Bearing and Spares for TIL make RT630C Crane, (4) Supply of LT Power Line Distribution Board, Estimated Cost : (1) ₹ 2,74,615/-, (2) ₹ 2,87,896.40, (3) ₹ 13,83,799/-, (4) ₹ 10,00,000/- Sale of tender form start date : (For Sl. No. 1 to 3) 12.07.2018, (4) 13.07.2018. Sale tender form closing date : (For Sl. No. 1 to 3) 23.07.2018, (4) 03.08.2018. Date & time of submission of tender : (For Sl. No. 1 to 3) 13.07.2018 at 11:00 Hours to 23.07.2018 at 17:00 Hours, (4) 14.07.2018 at 11:00 Hours to 03.08.2018 at 17:00 Hours. Tender Opening date & time : (For Sl. No. 1 to 3) 24.07.2018 at 17:00 Hours, (4) 06.08.2018 at 17:00 Hours. NB : Details of tenders can be seen in ECL website www.easterncoal.nic.in or www.tenders.nic.in
Dy. Magr. (Excv)/MM, Pandaveswar Area
VISIT US AT : www.easterncoal.nic.in/

ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE
NOTICE INVITING e TENDER No. :
NZRMC/eT/07/2018-19, Dated - 12/07/2018
E-tender is hereby invited on percentage Rate basis by two Bid systems for "Construction of 3 Nos Black Top Road from 1) Sahaspara Colony para house of Ajitk Shesh towards PMGSY Road (house of Akali Shesh), II) Murusia Bazar towards Saha Variety Stores of Sayyad Saha via Thakurpara and III) Jantala kaali Mandir towards Anandapalli river side Park." under Kanimpur - I & II Development Block.
Amount put in to tender = ₹11,07,682.15, ₹13,83,921.15 & ₹10,21,970.91 Last Date of Download and Submission of tender 30/07/2018 up to 5.00 PM. For other details & conditions in connection with the e-tender may be seen under Organization West Bengal State Marketing Board at www.wbtenders.gov.in
Sd/-
Secretary,
Nadia Zilla Regulated Market Committee
259(3)DICO/N/ADVT.-18-19

WEST BENGAL GOVT. E-TENDER
The Director of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, W.B. on behalf of the Governor to the State of W.B. invites online tenders (2nd Call) for supply of Ayurvedic Power at decentralized units under this Directorate across the State of W.B.
After publication in Medias, detailed N.I.T. may be obtained from e-tender portal <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in>. The N.I.T may be viewed from the website <http://www.darahwb.org>. Online submission of bid will start from 17th July, 2018. The last date of submission of bid is up to 5 pm on 6th August, 2018.
Sd/-
Director of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, West Bengal
ICA T-4701(3)/2018

OFFICE OF THE
MURSHIDABAD ZILLA REGULATED MARKET COMMITTEE
24/A BARRACK SQUARE NORTH, P.O. & P.S. BERHAMPORE, DIST.- MURSHIDABAD.
N.I.T. NO.- MZRCM/SECY/3/RI/2018-2019 (2nd Call), Dated:- 12/07/2018
The Secretary, Murshidabad Zilla Regulated Market Committee invites Sealed Tender from bonafide, reliable, resourceful, experienced and financially sound agencies/contractors, on their official stationary for execution of the work "Special repair cum renovation of the D.M.Pool at Berhampore, Murshidabad during 2017-2018", amounting Rs.13,04,237.00 of Tender ID 2018_WBSMR_181272_1. The last date for downloading bidding documents is 24/07/2018 up to 17.00 Hours.
For details enquiry feel free to visit the above office at any working day.
Sd/-
Secretary,
Murshidabad Zilla Regulated Market Committee
698(3)/ICA/MURSHIDABAD

HOWRAH MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
4, MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD, HOWRAH-711 101
No. WB-HMC/TN/ED/S&D/23/2018-2019, Dt.06.07.2018
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender is prescribed form are being invited by Executive Engineer (S & D) Howrah Municipal Corporation for the work of Supply of two nos. 20HP Kirloskar make centrifugal pump motor and allied works at Mohinath Porel Lane, ward no.07 under Howrah Municipal Corporation from the reputed resourceful & bonafide contractors who have sufficient experience in similar nature of work. Related information in detail will be available from the E-Tender notice & the Dept. of E.E (S & D), www.wbtenders.gov.in. Bid Submission closing (online) 27.07.2018, up to 5.00 pm. HMC authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason.
140(2)/18-19 13/07/2018

MUNICIPAL SERVICE COMMISSION
149, A. J. C. Bose Road, Kolkata-700014.
WEBSITE:- www.mscwb.org
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT
Schedule of Examinations for Recruitment to the following posts under Mukutmanipur Development Authority (Advertisement No 7 of 2018) has been displayed at our website.
Date of Examination - 05.08.2018
Sl. No. Name of the Post No. of vacancy Reservati on status Monthly consolidated Remuneration (Rs.) Age
1. Staff Nurse for MMC&H under NACP 01 SC Rs. 13000/- Upper age limit 60 years as on 01/06/2018
The Admit Card (s) for the above posts will be Downloaded from our website www.mscwb.org from 16.07.2018 onwards.
All concerned are requested to follow the above website. Secretary

Government of West Bengal
District Health & Family Welfare Samiti Paschim Medinipur
Memo No. DH&FWS-Mid(W)/NACP / 2018 / 3411 Recruitment Notice Date: 11/07/2018
Applications are invited in prescribed format (to be available in www.wbhealth.gov.in) from the eligible candidates to filling up the under noted post purely on contractual basis.
Sl. No. Name of the Post No. of vacancy Reservati on status Monthly consolidated Remuneration (Rs.) Age
1. Staff Nurse for MMC&H under NACP 01 SC Rs. 13000/- Upper age limit 60 years as on 01/06/2018
Qualifications and other details to be had from the website of www.wbhealth.gov.in. Last date of submission of filled applications: 30/07/2018
Sd/-
Member Secretary, DH&FWS & CMOH Paschim Medinipur

India, China discuss maritime security, bilateral cooperation

BEIJING: India and China on Friday discussed maritime security issues and prospects for bilateral cooperation for the first time since Prime Minister Narendra Modi had enunciated India's policy on the strategic Indo-Pacific region amidst Beijing flexing muscles in the South and East China seas.

The two sides held their second maritime security dialogue here during which the Indian side elaborated on its vision for the Indo-Pacific region as articulated in Prime Minister Modi's keynote address at this year's Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

The two countries had held the inaugural maritime security dialogue in 2016 in New Delhi amid tensions over the South China Sea. It was not held last year.

The first dialogue covered a range of issues of mutual interest, including exchange of perspectives on maritime security and prospects for maritime cooperation between the two countries.

Developments in international regimes such as UNCLOS (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea) and the IMO (International Maritime



Organisation) also figured in the discussions, according to the External Affairs Ministry. In the second dialogue, the two sides exchanged views on various topics of mutual interest, including perspectives on maritime security and cooperation, blue economy, and further strengthening of practical cooperation, a press release issued by the Indian Embassy said.

Both sides underlined the importance of the dialogue as an important mechanism between the two countries for consultations on maritime issues.

"They emphasised the need to further strengthen maritime cooperation as an important area of India-China bilateral relations, and as a platform to strengthen political and strategic mutual trust between the two countries," the press release said.

The term Indo-Pacific being highlighted by the US, Australia and Japan besides India has caused concerns in China, considering its stakes in the disputed South China Sea, where it claims about 90 per cent of it.

Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims over the

The growing presence of the Chinese navy in the Indian Ocean where it already acquired a logistic base at Djibouti has aroused concerns in India besides acquisition of the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka by China on a 99-year lease

area. China is also engaged in maritime disputes in the East China Sea with Japan.

The growing presence of the Chinese navy in the Indian Ocean where it already acquired a logistic base at Djibouti has aroused concerns in India besides acquisition of the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka by China on a 99-year lease.

China is also expanding its influence over the Maldives besides aggressively pursu-

ing its 21st century Maritime Silk Road which is part of its multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aimed at expanding its trade and influence in the world.

In his address at the Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore last month, Modi had termed the Indo-Pacific as a natural region.

"Inclusiveness, openness and ASEAN centrality and unity, therefore, lie at the heart of the new Indo-Pacific. India does not see the Indo-Pacific region as a strategy or as a club of limited members," he had said.

The Indian delegation at Friday's talks was led by Pankaj Sharma, Joint Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs) in the Ministry of External Affairs while the Chinese delegation was led by Wu Jianguo, Director General at the Department of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. The Indian delegation also called on Kong Xuanyou, Vice-Foreign Minister of China. Both sides agreed to hold the next round of the dialogue at a mutually convenient time in India, the press release said. MPOST

Exports up 17.57% in June; trade deficit widens to 43-month high

NEW DELHI: India's exports grew by 17.57 per cent to USD 27.7 billion in June on account of healthy growth in sectors such as petroleum and chemicals but trade deficit widened to a 43-month high of USD 16.6 billion due to costlier crude oil imports.

Imports rose by 21.31 per cent to USD 44.3 billion during the month, according to the data released by the commerce ministry.

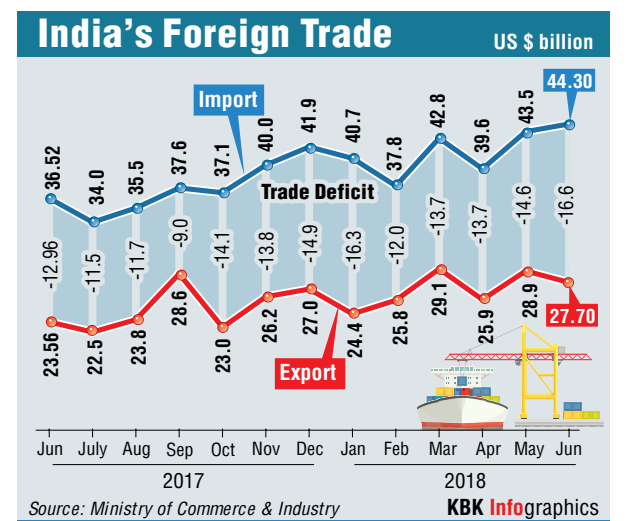
The trade deficit in June 2018 is the highest since November 2014 when the gap was USD 16.86 billion. The deficit in June 2017 stood at USD 12.96 billion.

During April-June this fiscal, exports rose by 14.21 per cent to USD 82.47 billion.

Exports of petroleum products, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, and engineering goods registered a positive growth.

However, shipments of textiles, leather, marine products, poultry, cashew, rice and coffee recorded negative growth.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ganesh Gupta expressed concern over rising trade deficit, saying it could impact current account deficit thereby adding to the woes of the government on the fiscal deficit front. MPOST



"MSME sectors of exports are still feeling the pinch of liquidity crunch as banks and lending agencies have continuously been tightening their lending norms," he said in a statement. Imports during the first quarter of the fiscal increased by 13.49 per cent to USD 127.41 billion. Trade deficit during the period widened to USD 44.94 billion as against USD 40 billion in April-June 2017.

Oil imports during the month were up by 56.61 per cent to USD 12.73 billion. These imports during April-

June 2018-19 were valued at USD 34.64 billion which was 49.44 per cent higher as compared to the same period last year. Gold imports in June dipped by about 3 per cent to USD 2.38 billion. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank data showed that services exports in May contacted by 7.91 per cent to USD 16.17 billion. The trade balance in services (i.e. net export of services) for May was estimated at USD 5.97 billion. The imports stood at USD 10.21 billion. MPOST

NTPC signs Rs 1,500 cr term loan with HDFC Bank



NEW DELHI: NTPC, India's largest electricity generating company, on Friday said it has signed a term loan agreement with HDFC Bank for availing a loan of Rs 1,500 crore. The 15-year loan will bear an interest rate linked to 3-months MCLR of the bank, the company said in a statement.

"This loan has a door-to-

door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC," it said.

The loan agreement was signed by NTPC General Manager (Finance) A K Gautam and HDFC Bank Regional Head for Corporate Banking Raveesh Bhatia on July 10. MPOST

No merit in Mistry's charges against Tata Sons, Ratan Tata: NCLT

MUMBAI: The National Company Law Tribunal, which dismissed Cyrus Mistry's petition against Tata Sons earlier this week, has held that all the allegations made by the former chairman against Ratan Tata, Tata Sons and group companies are devoid of merit.

Instead, during his tenure as chairman of Tata Sons, and a director on the board of Tata Sons, Mistry tried to gain "unbridled control over the group", the tribunal held in its order.

In a 368-page judgement made public yesterday, a special bench of the NCLT, Mumbai has delved deep into the history of the Tata family and its businesses, praising all along the virtues, and "benevolence" extended by the Tatas to the "society" for decades.

The bench has admitted that it secured such information on the group's origins and



the past through "Britannica, and Wikipedia," but considering such history, and merits of the Tata group, it is unlikely that the group could have made prejudiced business decisions solely for personal gains.

"The situation necessitated us in giving the background of the Tatas to get a flavour of the values with which this family cherished and to see whether the Tatas can do something to have personal gains for self

enrichment". The tribunal also criticised Mistry for levelling charges against Ratan Tata and trustee director N Soonawalla.

Following his ouster as the chairperson of Tata Sons on October 24, 2016, Mistry moved the NCLT through his two family-run companies, making allegations of rampant mismanagement and oppression of minority shareholders by Tata Sons. MPOST

Airbus BizLab subsidiaries tie up with three Indian startups

BENGALURU: Airbus BizLab subsidiaries, Navblue and Aerial signed contracts with three Indian startups here on Friday with an aim to establish a new industry benchmark in aeronautical data services, flightoperations and imagery services. The contracts were signed with Eflight, a Bengaluru-based startup, Stelae Technologies and Airpex Devices based out of Chennai and Navi-Mumbai respectively.

"For the last couple of years I have been convinced with the potential and the quality of entrepreneurs in India.

I am pleased to see that all these partnerships between Airbus and Indian startups are proving me right," Airbus BizLab, Global Head, Bruno Gutierrez, said on the occasion.

As part of the take-off programme, Airbus BizLab will sponsor two travels to Europe for Indian startups in a period of six months as well as fund



up to 50,000 euros to them for the demonstration of proof of concept.

Navblue, Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, Fabrice Villalun said India has proven capacity for innovation within the IT sector, which is demonstrated by the startups present at the Airbus BizLab.

The company also sees the potential of the aerospace industry given the fact that India has the world's fastest-growing domestic airline market. The company said the agreements mark the successful culmination of season 3 of Airbus BizLab's startup acceleration programme "Take Off 2018", which seeks to bolster the Indian government's 'Make in India' and 'Startup India' initiatives. MPOST

11 mineral blocks to start production by year-end: Tomar

OUR CORRESPONDENT

INDORE: As many as 11 mineral blocks of the total 43 auctioned will start production by the year-end, Mines Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on Friday. The work was being carried out in around 102 mineral blocks and the auction of these mines will happen soon, the minister said.

He was speaking during National Conclave on Mines and Minerals here.

The states, he said, will earn a revenue of Rs 1.55 lakh crore over the lease period from 43 auctioned mines, Tomar said. The mineral block rules were amended in order to give a push to auction.

A total of 11 PSUs have been notified so that they could take up exploration, the minister informed. MPOST

CORPORATE KALEIDOSCOPE



NAFED organized a Workshop On Organic Farming themed on "Market Linkages to Cooperatives/Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)/Farmer Groups" at NCU Auditorium, New Delhi on 13 July bringing all the stakeholders on one platform, which included Chairman and senior officials from APEDA, Joint Secretary, INM, GOI, Director NCOF



A young member of IndianOil family being awarded for her thoughts on making India clean & green by Devesh Chauhan, an Olympian, Arjuna awardee & former hockey player. V K Shukla, ED (HR), Refineries HQ and N K Das, CGM (HR), RHQ, IndianOil are also seen in the picture



Atanu Chakraborty, IAS, Secretary, Department of Investment & Public Asset Management released the special issue of Kaleidoscope journal on the theme Financial Communication and Investor Relations Management in the presence of Ved Prakash, Chairman, SCOPE & CMD, IIMTC and Dr UD Choubey, Director General, SCOPE during the two-day Seminar organized by SCOPE

Taparia Tools organises get-together at Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD: Taparia Tools organised a Get Together Meet at Hotel Ritz Inn, Station Road, Kapasia Bazar, Near Moti Bakery, Ahmedabad, on 4 July 2018 from 11 am to 6 pm where Taparia Tools had displayed their New and Old Product Ranges. D Tapari-aji, Sales Director and B Pillai from Taparia Tools Ltd Mumbai office were present for the exhibition and the get-together to answer the technical aspects of the products. During the get-together one-to-one interac-



tion as well as queries of the retailers were taken. Taparia Tools believes that

Hand Tools are an extension of a human hand. Whereas human hand performs many remarkable activities but there comes a limitation e.g. where some nut has to be tightened, the human hand alone will not be able to do it and there comes the role of a Hand Tools, which means an extension of a human hand.

In recent years, Taparia Tools Ltd has come out with lots of new innovative products. The company is quite confident about their products

being well appreciated among the end-users as all of them are aesthetically good looking and functionally superb.

Their newly-launched products like Plastic Tool Box with Organizer, Steel Files, Cantilever Tool Box, 2 in 1 Rolling Tool Box, Non-sparking Tools, Diamond Cutting Blade, Cut Off Wheel, etc. were also displayed at the Get Together. TAPARIA Tools last a lifetime. One is safe, sure, efficient and economical with Taparia Tools. MPOST

Fortis picks IHH to take over hospital chain

NEW DELHI: Fortis Healthcare on Friday said its board has picked Malaysia's IHH Healthcare to take control of India's second-largest hospital chain, ending months of take-over battle. Fortis board picked up IHH offer to infuse Rs 4,000 crore of capital by way of subscription to preferential shares, over rival TPC-Manipal consortium's offer that included Rs 2,100 crore infusion and merger of Manipal Hospitals with Fortis Healthcare.

IHH, which will get 31 per cent stake in Fortis Healthcare through the preferential allotment of shares at Rs 170 apiece, will make an open offer for an additional 26 per cent at the same price. The open offer will cost another Rs 3,300 crore.

The offer price is about 20 per cent higher than Fortis' closing price on Thursday. Based on the offer price of Rs 170 per share, the implied equity valuation for 100 per cent of Fortis Healthcare is Rs 8,880 crore (RM 5.2 billion).

"The transaction is expected to be completed within 7 business days of receipt of shareholders' and CCI's approval, which will be obtained concurrently with shareholders'



approval and can take approximately 60-75 days," Fortis Healthcare said in a statement.

Fortis said the proposal offers significant deal certainty given a "simpler" transaction structure and requirement for fewer approvals and a shorter time frame.

This also provides an exit opportunity for shareholders through the open offer, in case they desire, the company said.

"In terms of next steps, the company will call for a shareholder's meeting at the earliest and look forward to shareholder's approval," it said.

IHH Managing Director and CEO Tan See Leng, said the acquisition would significantly increase the company's reach across the Indian sub-continent, complementing its existing capabilities in the high-value quaternary care segment. MPOST

"IHH has already been actively expanding and deepening our presence in our home market of India over the last few years and this acquisition is a natural progression in our expansion and plans across India," he added.

Leng further said, "With a clear and holistic strategy in place, we have developed a 100-day turnaround plan to stabilise Fortis."

IHH further said the open offer for Fortis is expected to commence in August/September 2018, subject to regulatory approvals, including Competition Commission of India, Sebi and RBI, and close by Q3 2018.

Founders Malvinder and Shivinder Singh loss of shareholding due to debt triggered the bidding war for cash-strapped Fortis. Also, there were allegations that they took funds from the company, a charge that the duo, who have since left the company, deny.

Fortis board had first accepted a merger offer from Indian firm Manipal Health Enterprises and US private equity firm TPG Capital. The bidding war, however, escalated with four other suitors throwing their hats in the ring. MPOST

Fortis shares up 4%, m-cap rises by Rs 293 crore

NEW DELHI: Shares of Fortis Healthcare rose by 4 per cent after its board approved Rs 4,000-crore offer from Malaysia's IHH Healthcare for 31.1 per cent stake in the healthcare company.

The stock jumped 3.97 per cent to close at Rs 147.80 on the BSE. Intra-day, it soared 5.10 per cent to Rs 149.40.

On the NSE, shares of the company surged 3.93 per cent to end at Rs 147.80.

The company's market valuation rose by Rs 293.13 crore to Rs 7,666.13 crore.

In terms of equity volume, 16.35 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 2 crore shares changed hands on the NSE during the day. Fortis Healthcare board today approved Rs 4,000-crore offer from Malaysia's IHH Healthcare for 31.1 per cent stake in it, valuing the cash-strapped firm at Rs 8,880 crore thus ending months of takeover battle. MPOST

Government of West Bengal North Bengal Development Department Branch Secretariat Uttarkanya, Fulbari, Jalpaiguri			
ABRIDGED -e-NIT			
NIT ref. no.	Name of work	Estimated Amount	Last date of Bid submission
NIT01(EL)/EE/2018-19-2nd Call	Supply and Installation of street lighting arrangement from Maskalbari Bridge to Super Specialty Hospital at Jalpaiguri in the District of Jalpaiguri.	2123992.00	30/07/2018 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
For all details and online tender submission visit https://wbtdenders.gov.in

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-45 OF 2018-19	Construction of Composite / RCC Bridge over river Bannia (Saltia) at Uttar Kodalkheti (Manik Adhikary Ghat) at Nishiganj-II GP under Mathabhanga-II Block in the District of Cooch Behar. (Length of Bridge: 51.980m, Length of approach Slab: 5.50 Mtr. & approach road length: 102.80 Mtr. with 7.50 M carriage way)	Rs. 4,27,65,413.00	10/08/2018 up to 15:00 Hours
NIT-46-SI-1 OF 2018-19	Construction and Placing truss for Jalpaiguri Sports Complex Gallery A and Gallery B, Jalpaiguri	Rs 4,11,40,454.00	10/08/2018 up to 15:00 Hours
NIT-46-SI-2 OF 2018-19	Construction of Proposed Four Storied College Building of P. D. Women's College at Jalpaiguri, Dist. Jalpaiguri.	Rs 2,30,11,766.00	10/08/2018 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://wbtdenders.gov.in

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED (A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise) Regd. Office: Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700 091 CIN: U41019WB2007SECT113473, cecorpmont@gmail.com, www.wbsecd.in				
Sl. No.	Tender Notice No. & Description of Items	Qty.	Estimated Value (Rs.)	Last date of Submission of E-Bid
1.	Tender Notice No.: P-18/2018-19/PC-1 SCADA Compatible 12 KV Shunt Trip Panel with VCB			20.08.2018 (up to 16:00 hrs.)
i.	9 Panel (3 I/C + 2 B/C + 4 O/G)	3 Sets	0.80 Crore	20.08.2018 (up to 16:00 hrs.)
ii.	9 Panel (2 I/C + 1 B/C + 6 O/G)	40 Sets	10.72 Crore	
iii.	7 Panel (2 I/C + 1 B/C + 4 O/G)	49 Sets	10.24 Crore	
iv.	3 Panel (1 I/C + 1 B/C + 1 O/G)	4 Sets	0.35 Crore	
v.	1 Panel (1 O/C + 0 B/C + 1 O/G with Bus Bars)	110 Sets	3.25 Crore	
TOTAL:			25.36 Crore	
2.	Tender Notice No.: P-17/2018-19/PC-1 11 KV Combined CT & PT with CTR: 200-100/1A suitable for 3 element meter	1400 Nos.	4.97 Crore	16.08.2018 (up to 11:00 hrs.)

Tenders are to be submitted online through https://wbtdenders.gov.in. Further details of the above Tender Notices may be had from www.wbsecd.in and the above-mentioned Office. (Phone No. 033-2319-7742/7563)

India set to become 5th largest economy by next year: Jaitley

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Arun Jaitley on Friday exuded confidence that India will pip Great Britain to become the fifth largest economy in the world next year if economic expansion continues at the projected rate.

However, rising international crude oil prices and the global trade war would throw up challenges going forward, he said.

"If we keep growing at the rate which is being projected, it is likely that next year we will be the fifth largest economy ahead of Great Britain," Jaitley said in a Facebook post titled "The Congress Gave Slogans to Rural India - Prime Minister Modi Gave Resources".

"This is in consonance with the rest of the narrative. Being the fastest growing economy for the last four years, we can look at the next decade as one of economic expansion," he added.

A latest World Bank report has said that the Indian economy has become world's sixth-



biggest economy, pushing France to seventh place. The US tops the list followed by China, Japan, Germany and Britain.

The new calculations were arrived on the basis of Indian economy's performance in 2017.

India's gross domestic product (GDP) was valued at USD 2.597 trillion at the end of 2017 overtaking the French economy, which was amounting at USD 2.582 trillion last year.

"We have already seen a significant move up in India's ranking in the ease of doing business and as a preferred investment destination. Today

we stand to be tested in the midst of a global challenge thrown up on account of the international crude oil prices and the trade war," Jaitley said.

Crude oil prices, which were around USD 66 a barrel, in April are now hovering around USD 75 a barrel.

The Indian economy is estimated to grow at 7-7.5 per cent in the current fiscal, higher than 6.7 per cent growth clocked in 2017-18 fiscal.

"The recently released World Bank data reveals that India has now become the sixth largest economy relegating France to the seventh posi-

tion. Obviously, on account of disparity in the size of the population, there would be a very significant difference in the per capita of the two countries," he said.

The NDA government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has ensured that rural India and the less privileged get the first right on resources and if this, along with increased expenditure, continues for the next decade the impact on India's rural poor would be significant, he said.

"This benefits all irrespective of religion, caste or community. The Congress provided India's rural poor with slogan. Prime Minister Modi has given them resources. This will ensure faster growth and lead to a faster depletion in the poverty," Jaitley added.

He said the Congress party in 1970s and 1980s followed the model of "populist slogans" rather than "sound policy and actual expenditure for the welfare of the poor".

"The 1971 Garibi Hatao

model was one of redistribution of poverty rather than the generation of wealth and resources. The result of this misguided approach was that the lives of the poor did not move up significantly.

"On the contrary, the present Prime Minister is a man of many words and many more actions. He announces stiff targets and programmes which at first sight appear to be difficult, if not impossible. He follows it up with the actual implementation and delivers the promise," Jaitley said.

He said the government's programmes for rural India will lead to increased incomes, increased social security, improved quality of life, higher income from agriculture and better healthcare. Jaitley said ever since the present government took over, it has been working to translate the advantages of faster growth to rural India as well as to bring a significant section of people into the neo-middle class and bring people out of poverty. **MPOST**

Infosys raises Q1 net profit by 3.7% to Rs 3,612 cr, announces 1:1 bonus issue

BENGALURU: Infosys Ltd, India's second-biggest software services exporter, on Friday posted a lower-than-expected 3.7 per cent rise in net profit for the quarter ended on June 30, 2018, due to a one-off charge related to fair value reduction of up-for-sale Panaya business.

The company also announced a surprise element, a 1:1 bonus share - that is one free share for every share held.

The consolidated net profit in April-June at Rs 3,612 crore, or Rs 16.62 a share, was higher than Rs 3,483 crore, or Rs 15.24 a share, net earnings in the same period of the previous fiscal. "Overall, we see a good demand environment across the US, Europe and Asia Pacific. In terms of the sector demand, we see strength in energy, utilities, retail, insurance and manufacturing," Infosys CEO Salil Parekh told reporters here.

On a sequential basis, the profit, however, declined 2.1 per cent from Rs 3,690 crore posted in January-March quarter. Infosys said it accounted for Rs 270 crore reduction in fair value of Panaya business in the quarter.



"On re-measurement, including consideration of progress in negotiations on offers from prospective buyers for Panaya, the company has recorded a reduction in the fair value of Disposal Group held for sale amounting to Rs 270 crore in respect of Panaya. Consequently, profit for the three months ended June 30, 2018, has decreased by Rs 270 crore resulting in a decrease in basic earnings per equity share by Rs 1.24 for the quarter ended June 30, 2018," Infosys said in a statement.

The USD 200 million Panaya buy had been one of the flashpoints between Infosys' high-profile founders led by NR Narayana Murthy and its

former management but interestingly, the new Infosys' Board under Chairman Nandan Nilekani's leadership later gave a clean chit to the Panaya deal saying there was no merit in any allegations of wrongdoing.

In April this year, Infosys said it has decided to sell its subsidiary Panaya.

"We had identified that for Panaya and Skava we will explore sale and we started negotiations during this quarter. Based on the progress we have made at this juncture and based on our judgement at this stage, we have taken a reduction in fair value by USD 39 million and the negotiations are still in progress," Infosys CFO MD Ranganath said. **MPOST**

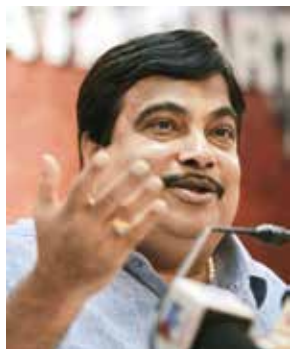
No question of closure of DCI... 3 ports to pick up govt stake: Govt

NEW DELHI: There is no question of closure of state-owned Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) as three major ports, including Visakhapatnam Port, plan to pick up government stake in the company, Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari said.

"At the department level, we have taken a decision. The three major ports are now ready to acquire DCI. We have already submitted cabinet note for approval of the cabinet," he said.

Besides Visakhapatnam, he said Paradeep Port and New Mangalore Port will buy stakes in the company.

There is also plan to restructure the company so that professionally it becomes strong, so that it can take up good jobs not only in India but abroad also, the minister said.



"So, the question does not arise about the closure of Dredging Corporation of India," he outlined.

Currently, the government holds 73 per cent stake in the company.

The sale could bring around Rs 1,400 crore to the exchequer. The company is under the administrative control of the Shipping Ministry. It is involved

in maintenance dredging, capital dredging, beach nourishment, land reclamation, shallow water dredging, project management consultancy and marine construction.

A core group of secretaries on disinvestment, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, had approved the sale of DCI.

The government think-tank Niti Aayog too had favoured disinvestment.

Gadkari further said the ministry is using the services of all IITs for performance improvement of ports in the country.

Besides, he said the government has taken decision on rationalisation of storage charges.

"All major ports are advised to take up the model of Chennai to avail railway freight concession," he said. **MPOST**

'Navi Mumbai Airport's phase I construction may cost 50% more'

MUMBAI: The construction cost of phase I of Navi Mumbai Airport is expected to go up by nearly 50 per cent to Rs 13,562 crore from earlier projected cost of Rs 9,600 crore.

In 2013, then Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan had said that phase I of the Navi Mumbai International Airport was expected to be completed at a projected cost of Rs 9,600 crore.

Navi Mumbai International Airport "Phase I is expected to be implemented at a cost of Rs 13,562 crore, and will have a capacity of one crore passengers per annum," ratings agency Crisil said in a report.

GVK group spokesperson was not available for a comment when contacted.

The second airport in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region



is planned for a minimum capacity of 60 million passengers per annum (MPPA), with the first phase capacity pegged at 10 million passengers per annum.

GVK, which is developing the Navi Mumbai Airport, had announced last week it has achieved financial closure for the construction of the first phase of the airport.

The infrastructure major

had bagged the financial bid to build and operate the second international airport in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Navi Mumbai at an investment of Rs 16,000 crores this year, beating rival GMR Group.

GVK Power and Infrastructure (GVKPIIL), a part of the GVK group, had in January this year signed a concession agreement with Cidco to create a special purpose vehicle,

GVK, which is developing the Navi Mumbai Airport, had announced last week it has achieved financial closure for the first phase of the airport

NMIAL, for developing the new airport. GVK through its subsidiary, Mumbai International Airport, holds 74 per cent stake in NMIAL, while Cidco, the town planning authority, holds the balance 26 per cent. **MPOST**

NCLAT directs Jaypee Infratech RP to submit status report

NEW DELHI: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Friday asked the resolution professional (RP) of Jaypee Infratech to submit details on the progress of the insolvency resolution process of the debt-ridden firm. A two member bench of the appellate tribunal, headed by Chairman Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya, has asked the RP to list out the stage of the corporate insolvency resolution process. "RP would file a reply with details of resolution plan including the stage at which it is in currently," said NCLAT.

It has also asked to answer whether any plan is with the RP or the committee of creditors (CoC), and whether that particular plan has been accepted or rejected. **MPOST**

SpiceJet to enter into major business partnerships with two US companies, reveals CMD Ajay Singh

WASHINGTON: Low-cost carrier SpiceJet is considering entering into major business partnerships with two American companies, including an international airline, and diversifying its activities beyond aviation, its chairman and managing director Ajay Singh said.

Acknowledging that aviation is a "fairly high-risk enterprise," the airline's chief said, "We must hedge ourselves from the risk of being in a pure aviation business and find the businesses which are connected to aviation, which would be a little more insulated from the high cost of fuel and so on.

"So, we are looking at some new areas. We will be making announcements at the appropriate time. We believe that there are significant strategic partnerships that we can enter into and we will be announcing them soon," Singh told reporters on the sidelines of the Annual Leadership Summit of US-India Strategic and Partnership Summit (USISPF) here on Thursday.

He said SpiceJet is exploring an alliance with a major international carrier and also another major American company.

Refraining from naming the partner companies in the US, Singh said it is looking at the technology sector

Refraining from naming the partner companies in the US, Singh said it is looking at the technology sector.

"We think that that's a important space to be in the digital and technology space. We want to be in the cargo, courier and logistics business. We believe that that's going to be an important part of SpiceJet's business," Singh said, noting that this would be the "first" for an Indian airline.

Expanding SpiceJet to the US is not on the cards right now, he said, adding that the company is looking more at the collaboration in terms of improving the operating performance, and finding a new technology to improve consumer experience. There would be some strategic understanding with US companies in the sphere of cargo and courier, he said. **MPOST**

IndiGo parent to seek shareholders' approval for more borrowings

NEW DELHI: IndiGo's parent InterGlobe Aviation will seek shareholders' approval for borrowing additional Rs 10,000 crore as it will be taking deliveries of a significant number of aircraft, according to a filing.

The company, which operates the country's largest airline by market share, would also be seeking nod for "creation of charges against borrowings". This would be to secure borrowings worth up to Rs 30,000 crore.

These are among the proposals that would be put up for approval at the annual shareholders' meeting scheduled to be held on August 10 in the national capital.

As per the notice for the annual meeting, the company would seek nod for "authorising the board to borrow, from time to time, an additional sum or sums of money, not exceeding Rs 10,000 crore".

The amount would be only be utilised towards the



requirements of issuing SBLs (Standby Letters of Credit) in favour of the lessors in the ordinary course of business, it added.

"The company securitises its supplementary rental obligations due towards the lessors for aircraft on operating leases and issues SBLs in favour of the lessors. The company will be taking deliveries of a significant number of additional aircraft on a operating lease basis for which new SBLs will be required to be issued to the lessors," the notice said.

Further, InterGlobe Aviation said it has initiated cost saving initiatives on the charges payable to the banks for availing such facilities.

"In order to cater for the growth and introduction of new banks for cost reduction, the company will be seeking fresh sanctions from banks/ financial institutions for issuing SBLs to lessors," it added.

In September 2016, shareholders had approved borrowing limit of Rs 20,000 crore.

Besides, clearance would be sought for creation of pledges, mortgages, hypothecations and charges on moveable and immovable properties in favour of banks, financial institutions and non-banking finance companies, among others to "secure the borrowings to the extent of Rs 30,000 crore", the notice said.

IndiGo -- which is pursuing ambitious expansion plans -- currently has a fleet of more than 160 aircraft, including ATR planes. **MPOST**

zero duty from the current 20 per cent over a period of eight years," the official added.

Other Indian goods which will get concessional duty access are popcorn, maize, jelly and jam.

Both the countries agreed on easing of visa regime under which they will provide long-term visas to businesses, the official said, adding in the next round of negotiations, the Indian side would seek concessions on textiles and sesame seed exports.

India also wants E2 visa

MUMBAI: Mukesh Ambani overtook Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma to become Asia's richest person as he positions Reliance Industries Ltd. to disrupt the e-commerce space in India.

The chairman of India's refining-to-telecoms conglomerate, Ambani was estimated to be worth \$44.3 billion on Friday with Reliance Industries Ltd. rising 1.6 per cent to a record 1,099.8 rupees, according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Ma's wealth stood at \$44 billion at close of trade on Thursday in the U.S., where the company is listed.

Ambani has added \$4 billion to his fortune this year as Reliance doubled its petrochemicals capacity and investors cheered the success of his disruptive telecom upstart Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. Then earlier this month, the tycoon unveiled plans to leverage his 215 million telecom subscribers to expand his e-commerce offerings, taking on the likes of Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc. Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.'s Ma has lost \$1.4 billion in 2018.

"We need to broaden our horizon of expectation with



Reliance," said Nitin Tiwari, a Mumbai-based analyst at Antique Stock Broking. "They are in for something really transformational."

Ambani, best known for executing large-scale projects, spearheaded construction of the world's largest refining complex in Jamnagar, owns the most-widespread mobile data network globally and claims to have India's biggest as well as most-profitable retail firm.

At this month's annual shareholders' meeting, Ambani said Reliance saw its "biggest growth opportunity in creating a hybrid, online-to-offline new commerce platform," involving the group's Reliance Retail Ltd. and Reliance Jio businesses. The "size of Reliance will more than double" by 2025, Ambani said at the meeting. **AGENCIES**

Jio will introduce a fiber-based broadband service across 1,100 Indian cities in August in what Ambani said would be the biggest greenfield fixed-line rollout anywhere in the world.

"Jio is the driver behind the surge in Reliance," said Deven Choksey, managing director at Mumbai-based KR Choksey Shares and Securities Pvt. "If the company is going to double profit a few years down the line, the stock price will also double, if not more."

A spokesman for Reliance didn't immediately reply to an email seeking comment.

Within a week of the announcements, Reliance entered the \$100 billion club after more than a decade. He used the same venue two years ago to announce his disruptive telecom venture with free offers that eventually forced smaller rivals to quit and the biggest ones to merge.

The billionaire inherited Reliance from his much-storied father Dhirubhai Ambani, who is credited with sparking an equity culture among middle-class Indians and using their savings to build the group's textile and petrochemical manufacturing units. **MPOST**

Indian mangoes, beer, yoga to get free access to S Korean market

NEW DELHI: As many as 17 Indian products, including mangoes and beer, will get free access to the South Korean market, a move that would help bridge the trade gap between the two countries, an official said on Friday.

Besides, it has also been agreed that South Korea would permit Indians to set up yoga training institutes and send yoga trainers, while the Korean would do the same for Taekwondo.

These are part of the early harvest package agreed upon

by both the countries under the review of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), a type of free trade agreement. This package will lead towards an upgradation of this trade pact.

Both the countries finalised the elements of the package during the recent visit of South Korea's President Moon Jae-in.

Similarly, Korea will duty concessions from India on 11 products, that include certain kinds of fish such as Tuna and base oil (a petroleum item).

"India will give duty concessions on 11 tariff lines to South Korea and Korea will give these concessions on 17 tariff lines to India," the government official added.

The duties would be significantly reduced or eliminated over the period of eight to 10 years by both the sides. These decisions would be implemented after approval of the Union Cabinet here and the South Korean parliament.

India will reduce customs duties on Tuna to 15 per cent from 30 per cent at present over



a period of 10 years. While the duties on base oil will be halved to 2.5 per cent over a period of 15 years.

"Korea will bring duties to zero on Indian beer from 30 per cent currently. Indian mangoes too will get access at

restricted imports of gold and silver items from South Korea to check spurt in the inbound shipments of the precious metals from that country.

The two nations implemented a free trade agreement in January 2010. Under the pact, basic customs duty on gold was eliminated. The trade gap with Korea has increased to USD 11.96 billion in 2017-18 from USD 8.34 billion in 2016-17. The bilateral trade rose to USD 20.9 billion in 2017-18 from USD 16.9 billion in the previous fiscal. **MPOST**

Further on the issue that South Korea seeking removal of restrictions on gold and silver imports, the official said that talks are on to fix regional value content (RVC).

"How much should be the value addition is the area of negotiations. We have not yet finalised that," the official added.

In August 2017, India



Dejected England, Belgium aim to leave World Cup on a high

SAINT PETERSBURG: England manager Gareth Southgate admits the World Cup third-place play-off is a game that no team wants to play, but on Saturday's match against Belgium offers the chance to finish the tournament on a winning note.

A gut-wrenching 2-1 loss to Croatia after extra-time denied England a shot at a second World Cup triumph, instead setting up a consolation game against familiar foes Belgium.

Roberto Martinez's side, who were beaten 1-0 by France in the last four, topped Group G ahead of England after an Adnan Januzaj goal settled a low-key encounter in Kaliningrad.

That game saw both coaches heavily rotate their teams, and a similar scenario is likely in Saint Petersburg, with several fringe players pushing for a start.

"The honest thing is, it's not a game any team wants to play in," said Southgate, whose side have drawn praise for the way they have briefly united a country bitterly divided over Brexit.

However, he insisted that will not alter England's approach as they look to achieve their best finish since they won the competition in 1966.

"We'll want to give a per-



formance of huge pride, there's no question about that," said Southgate.

"Every time we wear the shirt of our national team we want to play with pride, we want to play well and we want

to win."

Reserve goalkeepers Jack Butland and Nick Pope are the only two members of England's 23-man squad yet to feature in Russia, as Southgate stuck with the same line-up throughout

the knockout phase.

For Belgium and their "golden generation", many of the key players should return for the 2022 World Cup, even if Vincent Kompany and Jan Vertonghen will probably be

gone by then.

Martinez, who signed an extension until after Euro 2020 in May, can guide Belgium to the nation's best result at the World Cup. They finished fourth in 1986.

"We want to finish on a high and these players deserve to finish on a high," said the Spaniard.

"You need to try to see the opportunity of finishing third at the World Cup. That doesn't happen too often, so we need to understand that this is an important game.

"But I would accept it is very difficult when you had the ambition of getting to the final. It's very difficult to prepare for the next game."

European teams have claimed third place at the past nine World Cups. The Netherlands beat Brazil 3-0 in 2014 after the hosts were embarrassed 7-1 by Germany in the semi-finals.

England skipper Harry Kane is the tournament's top scorer on six goals, while Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku trails by two in the race for the Golden Boot.

With one more goal Kane would become the highest scorer at the competition since 2002, when Ronaldo struck eight times, including twice in the final, as Brazil clinched a record fifth title.

The Tottenham forward would be just the second England player to scoop the award, after Gary Lineker was the top scorer in 1986. AGENCIES

France focus on World Cup glory, spurred on by 2016 Euro pain

MOSCOW: France fine-tuned their preparations for the World Cup final against Croatia on Friday, desperate to overcome the bitter disappointment of losing the Euro 2016 final as FIFA declared Russia 2018 the best-ever tournament.

Didier Deschamps' team are firm favourites to win Sunday's showpiece in Moscow and become world champions for the second time -- 20 years after their first triumph in 1998.

But they will come up against a hungry Croatia side boasting one of the players of the tournament in Real Madrid star Luka Modric, who is desperate to win the trophy for the nation of just over four million people.

France failed to click in the group stages but they have gone up through the gears during the knockout rounds and look a formidable blend of youthful vitality and experience.

They will approach the match at the 80,000-capacity Luzhniki Stadium full of confidence and with the pain of losing the final of Euro 2016 on home soil to Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal spurring them on.

"The tears have dried from Euro 2016 but it's still there in a little corner of people's minds," said midfielder Blaise Matuidi on Friday.

"It will be useful for us on Sunday, even if I don't like to keep bringing up the past. It

will serve as a lesson to us and it means we know what it is to play in a final.

"We'll approach it differently and hope that we play really well and win it. It's up to us to put everything into place to achieve our dream of lifting the World Cup." Deschamps' team are packed with attacking stars such as Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann but it is their defence that has shone in the past two rounds, not conceding a single goal.

Croatia -- the smallest nation to make it to the final since Uruguay in 1950 -- have battled through three periods of extra-time to reach the final. That means they have played the equivalent of a whole extra match more than France.

But coach Zlatko Dalic said there would be no excuses despite their exertions.

"We prepared to get to the final and we want to play it," he said. "Going to extra-time might be a problem along with the fact France have had an extra day to recover but there will be no excuses."

As the tournament drifts towards its end, FIFA president Gianni Infantino declared it the best ever. "I was saying this would be the best World Cup ever. On Friday I can say it with more conviction... it is the best World Cup," Infantino said in Moscow. AGENCIES

P V Sindhu knocks out Malaysia's Cheah to reach Thailand Open semi-finals



BANGKOK: Olympic silver medalist P V Sindhu progressed to the women's singles semifinals after knocking out Malaysia's Sonnia Cheah in straight games at the USD 350,000 Thailand Open World Tour Super 500 tournament here on Friday.

The second seeded Indian continued her consistent performance with a 21-17 21-13 win over world no 35 Sonnia in a 36-minute clash.

The world no 3 Indian will next face Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung.

The drift in the hall created troubles for both the shuttlers who struggled with the length of their strokes. Sindhu was erratic initially and the result was Sonnia led 11-7 at the first interval.

After the break, Sindhu

slowly started dominating the proceedings and reeled off five points to lead 13-12.

The Indian started putting pressure on the Malaysian with her attacking game and grabbed four game points when Sonnia hit long. The Malaysian saved one game point before Sindhu sealed the first game with a smash.

After the change of sides, Sindhu moved to a 6-3 lead but Sonnia came back to level at 8-8 after the Indian committed a few unforced errors.

Sindhu managed to grab a 11-9 lead at the interval before taking nine straight points to zoom to surge ahead. Sonnia managed to stay alive by saving three match points before Sindhu sealed the issue with a stunning smash. AGENCIES

India U-16s beat Thailand's Buriram United U-17 team 2-0

NEW DELHI: The Indian U-16 football team on Friday notched up a comprehensive 2-0 win over Buriram United FC U-17 during its exposure tour of Thailand.

An early goal by Bhuvnesh in the 3rd minute and Rohit Danu's 83rd minute strike led the Indian colts to an easy win in a match largely dominated by them, both in terms of possession and chances created.

The signs of danger for the opponents were there from the first minute as Bhuvnesh tapped home a Givson cross from the flanks in the 3rd minute to give India an early lead.

India led 1-0 at half-time and a flurry of goal scoring opportunities came in the second half, although Bibiano Fernandes' boys could only convert one of the chances. AGENCIES

It's been like a dream so far: Das

NEW DELHI: "I am living a dream", said Hima Das as she tried to put in words her remarkable journey from being a stubborn footballer in a nondescript Assam village to becoming the first Indian woman world champion in athletics.

The 18-year-old Das, daughter of farmer parents at Kandulimari village in Nagaon district, has become the toast of the nation after she won a gold at the IAAF World U-20 Athletics Championships in Finland on Thursday.

She is also the first Indian -- male or female -- to have won a gold in a track event at the world level. She joined Neeraj Chopra who won a gold in javelin -- a field event -- in the IAAF World U-20 Championships in the last edition in 2016 in Poland.

Her father Ronjit Das has a 2 bigha (0.4 acres) plot of land and her mother Junali is a housewife. The small piece of land was the only source of income for a family of six.



"I know my family's condition and how we struggled. But the Almighty has something for everybody. I am a positive person and I want to look ahead in life and do something for my parents and for the country," Das told PTI from Tampere in Finland on Friday.

"But it has been like a dream so far. I am now a world junior champion," she added. Das is the eldest of four siblings. She has three younger sisters and a

younger brother. One younger sister is in class 10 while the twins -- a boy and a girl -- are in class III. Hima herself is in class XII at a college in Dhing, just one and a half kilometers from her village.

"She is very stubborn, if she wants to do something she will not listen to anybody but she will do it with aplomb. She is a strong girl and that is why she is coming up to achieve something. I hope she will do some-

thing for the country," her father Ronjit said from his village in Assam. "Physically also, she is very strong. She can kick football like any of us. I told her not to play football with the boys but she did not listen to us," her cousin Joy Das said.

It is a tough life for her parents given the meagre income but at this moment, they can't stop celebrating.

"...we are happy that she chose sports and she is doing well. Our dream is for Hima to win medals in Asian Games and Olympic Games. Since this morning, the whole village is celebrating her gold medal. A lot of our relatives have dropped in to our place and we are distributing sweets."

Das, though, is not thinking too far ahead and wants to just run faster. "I don't go out on the track thinking that I will win a medal. What I think is about running faster and faster and I believe that will translate into medals," she said. AGENCIES

Chelsea finally put an end to manager Conte 2-years reign

LONDON: Antonio Conte's two year tenure as Chelsea manager which began with a bang last year after winning the Premier League title ended sourly on Friday with the club announcing they had parted company with him.

The 48-year-old Italian had been seen as vulnerable despite winning the FA Cup last term having fallen out with both the board and senior players.

The former Italy national coach returned to take training this week but the writing was on the wall and the drawn out process was reportedly due to how much compensation the club should pay Napoli for his likely successor Maurizio Sarri.

"Chelsea Football Club and Antonio Conte have parted company," the club said in a terse statement. "During Antonio's time at the club, we won our

sixth league title and eighth FA Cup. "In the title winning season, the club set a then-record 30 wins in a 38-game Premier League season, as well as a club-record 13 consecutive league victories.

"We wish Antonio every success in his future career." Conte leaves with the best win percentage 65.1% of any of Chelsea's managers in the Premier League era. Former

banker Sarri, 59, will be Chelsea's eighth manager inside a decade as Russian owner Roman Abramovich has never shown a sentimental side to his nature regarding them, no matter the trophies they won the preceding season as Roberto di Matteo found just months after delivering Abramovich's holy grail the Champions League.

Conte -- who had a year to run on his contract -- is seen

to have contributed to his own demise by falling out both with the players and the board as the sheen of the title victory quickly disappeared.

His intense training methods angered senior players and he alienated the board with disparaging treatment of Spanish striker Diego Costa and constant carping over the club's failure to replace top players with those of similar ability. AGENCIES



Reluctant, introvert Mohammad Kaif retires from competitive cricket

NEW DELHI: Indian cricketer Mohammad Kaif announced his retirement from all forms of the game on Friday, exactly 16 years after he combined with Yuvraj Singh to script one of India's most memorable ODI triumphs at the hallowed turf of Lord's.

The 37-year-old posted an emotional message on his twitter page to bid adieu to the game, almost 12 years after he last played for the Indian team, standing out as much for his acrobatic fielding as for his effective middle-order batting.

"It made sense to do so on July 13. Each of our professional lives are defined by one moment more than any other, 16 years ago on Friday, July 13,

2002 was that moment for me... It seems apt to bid goodbye on this day," Kaif said.

Kaif played 13 Tests and 125 ODIs for India and will always be remembered for his match-winning knock of 87 at the Lord's during the epic Natwest Trophy final in 2002.

Detailing his cricketing journey which started at 11 "slowly, reluctantly, walking into a bare Green Park Hostel in Kanpur", Kaif spoke about the many milestones which defined his career.

He was a part of the Indian team that reached the World Cup final in South Africa. Along with Yuvraj Singh, Kaif was among the stars to emerge from the U-19 India stable after

leading the Colts to a maiden Junior World Cup triumph in 2000.

One of the fittest cricketers of his time, a batting average of 32 in 125 ODIs, with only two hundreds, don't tell the story of Kaif's fighting abilities coming at No 6 or 7 with only few deliveries to play.

In his 13 Test appearances, Kaif logged 2753 runs at an average of 32.01, including two hundreds and 17 half-centuries.

"...despite the other moments, July 13, 2002 was different...With Viru (Virender Sehwag), Sachin Paaji, Dada (Sourav Ganguly), and Rahul (Dravid) back in the pavilion, 326 seemed impossible," Kaif



recalled. "My own family, by the way, decided not to watch, went off to see a movie and

missed the rest of the game. However, no one told Yuvraj and me that we were expected

to lose. So we expected to win," he said.

"Our 121-run stand, and the win, coming 19 years after India's 1983 World Cup win, also at Lord's was incredibly special. It's pretty amazing to be part of a magical win."

Kaif, who has won the Ranji Trophy for UP, last played first class cricket for Chhattisgarh.

"Do I have any regrets? Yes. I guess I wouldn't be human if I didn't. I wish I'd played longer for India, I wish I'd played better in the few Tests I did get to play and I wish we had a system where someone would have sat down with a still introverted 25-year-old and told him why he never played a Test again after a Caribbean series where

he got 148 not out," he said.

"But regret fades, that fact of being an India cricketer and the wonderful life it gives you, lasts and lifetime," he added.

Kaif will always be remembered as being one of the finest fielders that India has ever produced.

During the five years that he was an India regular, it was his electric reflexes inside the 30 yard circle, especially the cover region, that made him special.

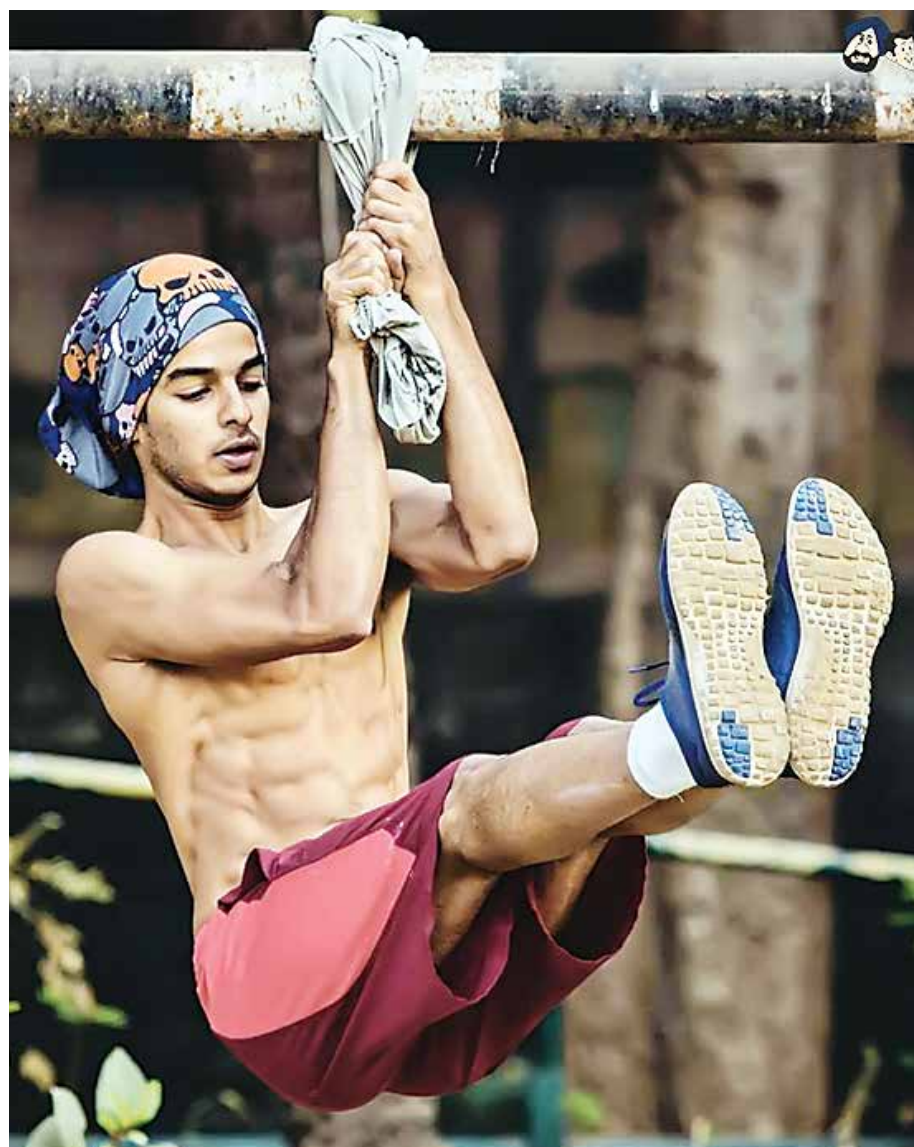
Along with Yuvraj Singh at point, Kaif formed the backbone of Indian fielding during the time Sourav Ganguly led the Indian cricketing renaissance. Apart from his Lord's knock, Kaif's hundred against Zimbabwe in the Champions

Trophy 2002 will also remain in memory as he lifted the team from the dumps after the top order found itself back in the pavilion for less than 100 on the board.

However, issues with his technique made him vulnerable against top quality pacers, something that was exposed thoroughly during the 2006 tour of South Africa.

He never played for India again but remained a quality player in domestic cricket leading UP for many years.

He finished with 7581 first class runs with 15 hundreds across 129 matches. Kaif is already a cricket analyst and a respected hindi commentator. AGENCIES



Ishaan feels fortunate to get opportunity to prove himself

MUMBAI: Actor Ishaan Khatter who is all set for release of his forthcoming film *Dhadak* feels fortunate that he got an opportunity to work in films similar to his family members.

Whether he feels any pressure to maintain his family's stature in the film industry, Ishaan said: "I have only got encouragement and lessons from my family, so I don't associate negative things like pressure with them."

"It's a state of your mind. We can take expectations of audience in the form of respon-

sibility or pressure. Our family is in love with this profession and I am really fortunate that I have got an opportunity to prove myself and to do what I love to do... My effort will be to put my heart and soul in my work and I will try to make not only my family, but the entire country happy with my work."

Ishaan said his brother Shahid Kapoor inspires him and that he "always looks up to him".

"He is my elder brother. I have learned a lot from him even before he came into films.

He has inspired me on a personal level and as an actor, I think he has done impressive work by proving himself time and again," he said.

Asked about Shahid's reaction to the trailer of his film, Ishaan said: "He hasn't watched the film yet. He was really happy after watching the trailer. He told me it was all good and positive and didn't find any reason to criticize it."

Dhadak - romantic drama film directed by Shashank Khaitan, is a remake of the 2016 Marathi film *Sairat*. IANS

Priyanka loves the idea of getting married

The 35-year-old actor says that her marital status would not affect her feminist opinions

Actor Priyanka Chopra, who is reportedly dating American singer Nick Jonas, says her marital status will not affect her feminist opinions, and she would like to get married some day.

The 35-year-old actor spoke about the things that bring her joy in life and love, reports *etonline.com*.

"I love the idea of getting married. I totally want to get married at some point," Priyanka said.

"And I don't think marriage makes you smaller or bigger or more feminist or not. Feminism basically is women saying give us our own choices without judging us. That's all it is. It's not about berating someone. It's not about proving a point. I totally would love to get married," she added.

Priyanka calls herself "super romantic".

"I'm super mushy, and I think why not? You know, when you love someone or when you care about somebody making them feel special and giving attention is the most important thing." The

actor feels "most beautiful" when she is happy.

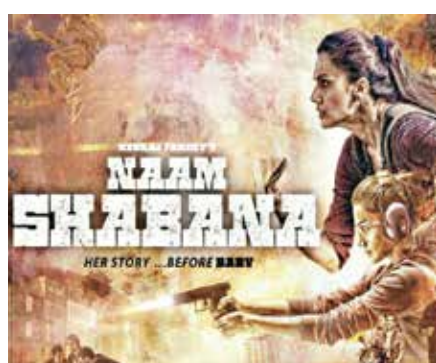
"I really feel like the best thing a woman can wear is her confidence. Your clothes, your shoes, your bags, all of that is like, that's the packaging. But when you have confidence, the world buys whatever you sell."

“Feminism basically is women saying ‘give us our own choices without judging us’. It’s not about berating someone”

"I've been very lucky in that department. I've had very special things done for me. I like thoughtful things done for me. I'm not the chocolate and flowers kind of girl," she added. IANS



Audience prefers to see me in serious roles: Taapsee



After cementing her place in Bollywood with hard-hitting films such as *Pink* and *Naam Shabana*, Taapsee Pannu feels the audience prefers to see her in "serious roles", even though she debuted in Hindi movies with a light-hearted *Chashme Baddoor*.

The 30-year-old actor says she is waiting to "shift gears" into a massy, commercial cinema with a film like *Judwaa 2*, in which she starred opposite Varun Dhawan last year.

"I have been busy doing other films, my calendar was so full. Also, I think audience have loved me so much in this type (referring to serious) of a role that they are not ok seeing me there. "I am like, let me do it for my breathing space. I don't know if I

“I think audience have loved me so much in serious roles and they are not ok seeing me in commercial films much”

should feel good or bad about it. But I am still waiting and struggling to get a film like *Judwaa 2* again to shift gears," Pannu said.

The actor, who made her cinematic debut in 2010's Telugu film *Jhummandi Naadam*, said she can afford to take the risks in the South film industry as she has "build a certain rapport with people there".

"I have worked for about eight years in South Indian cinema. I can take that risk over there. I am newer to Hindi cinema.

"The audience here knows me but not as prominently as it is there. The day the audiences know me well here too, and come to watch my films I will do that," she adds. PTI



'Not here to influence but entertain THE AUDIENCE'

NEERA BHARDWAJ

The 26-year-old singer, Ammy Virk is earning name and fame with the magical voice he has and the acting skills he showcases in Punjab film industry.

Very famous for his super-hit and the heart-warming song 'Qismat', Virk is back with a new song - 'Hath Chumme', which talks about cars, drugs, girls etc. The song has been composed by B Praak and written by Jaani.

The singer feels happy about the love and appreciation he got for 'Qismat', but at the same time says that in the competitive world of entertainment, there has to be a new thing every time to entertain the audience. "We cannot keep making one kind of songs because no one would listen to it all the

time," he further states.

Opening about what he thinks about being an influence and a noted personality, he states, "I think this very idea of influencing people through songs is wrong. I feel that we are entertainers and we make songs to entertain people and not to teach them."

Ammy believes that no one can teach people to follow something. He says that people who want to drink, drive cars or take drugs won't wait for the singers or film-makers to influence them to do so, they will do it somehow because that is what they want.

"My songs about cars, girls or drugs aren't the reason for

them to be influenced. It will serve as an excuse for their deeds," he mentioned.

With the wave of biopics in the industry, Ammy too is set to come with a film very soon. Sharing his excitement, he says, "I am very excited about this film and I really hope to do justice to the role." The biopic is on a legendary Punjabi singer's life.

Considering himself as an entertainer, the Punjabi singer believes that no industry is small or big and he is grateful that he could get so much of exposure. He says that he is happy that he isn't limited to singing but is expanding his horizons, trying different things in the industry, experimenting with his skills.

As for debuting in Bollywood, Ammy thinks any genre would serve the purpose of entertaining the audience. But,

he is willing to work with Katrina if given a chance.

WAS TIRED OF trying to be something I wasn't: Johnson

LOS ANGELES: Dwayne Johnson has revealed that after reaching the heights of fame as *WWE* wrestler "The Rock", he was asked to drop the nickname.

According to *Entertainment Weekly*, Johnson made the revelations on Jamie Foxx's digital series 'Off Script'.

The 46-year-old actor said that he was pressurized to drop his wrestling persona to further his acting career.

Opening about how he left his long-made identity as a wrestler, he said, "I was told at that time, 'Listen, you can't talk about wrestling. You can't go by 'The Rock'. You can't be as big," Johnson said.

Johnson said he did not like the forced personality change and "was tired of trying to be something I wasn't".

Johnson's attachment to

his fans also motivated him to reinstate the name and he decided to act on it.

"It's the most important relationship I have," the *San Andreas* star said.

"So finally I reached a point where I said, 'Alright, two things have to happen: I'm gonna surround myself with a different group of people, different management, and then I'm gonna make sure that I just gotta be me. He said, 'Call me Rock if you want to call me Rock.'" PTI

