

millenniumpost

PUBLISHED FROM DELHI & KOLKATA

VOL. 3, ISSUE 106 | Thursday, 20 April 2017 | Kolkata | Pages 16 | Rs 3.00

NO HALF TRUTHS

▼ NIFTY 9103.50 (-01.65) ▲ SENSEX 29,336.57 (+17.47) ▲ DOW JONES 20,527.34 (+04.06) ▲ NASDAQ 5,879.55 (+30.08) ▲ RUPEE/DOLLAR 64.58 (+0.05) ▼ RUPEE/EURO 69.19 (-0.04) ■ GOLD/10GM 29,900.00 (-00.00) ▼ SILVER/K 49,250.00 (-550.00)

KIN OF DEAD TODDLER RANSACK APOLLO CRYING NEGLIGENCE **PG3**



CHINA 'STANDARDISES' NAMES FOR 6 PLACES IN ARUNACHAL **PG5**



MPs BACK MAY'S CALL FOR SNAP ELECTION IN JUNE **PG10**



WILL REVISIT MY OWN STRUGGLES WHILE PLAYING NARGIS: MANISHA **PG16**



Quick News

43 killed as bus falls into river in Shimla

SHIMLA: Forty-three passengers were killed when a private bus plunged into River Tons in remote Nerwa area of Shimla district in the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday.

The passengers were on their way from Vikasnagar in Uttarakhand to Tuni and the accident took place on the Uttarakhand-Himachal border in Himachal territory, Deputy Commissioner Shimla, Rohan Chand Thakur said.

The bus was carrying 56 passengers SP, Shimla, D W Negi said 43 bodies have been recovered and the search is on for the rest.

Police along with medical and rescue teams have been mobilised from Sirmour and Shimla districts to help in rescue and relief operations at the spot, about 190 km from here.

Leave encashment for defence personnel cleared

NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday approved leave encashment of up to three months for those defence personnel who died or were disabled while in service between 1991 and 1999. The decision will benefit the families of 9,777 officers and other personnel of the defence services who died or were invalidated out of service between December 30, 1991 and November 29, 1999 with less than 15 years of service.

This period is very significant as a large number of casualties took place during the Kargil conflict and in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast, the government said. The decision on the leave encashment scheme was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The CBI is under the influence of PM Narendra Modi

LALU PRASAD

In today's paper

CITY	
STALLS, SHOPS GET KMC NOTICE	4
NATION	
PAK DY HIGH COMMISSIONER SUMMONED	5
EDIT	
SEEKING STABILITY	8
INTERNATIONAL	
XI RESTRUCTURES MILITARY	10
BUSINESS	
TRUMP INKS H-1B EXEC ORDER	12
SPORT	
RONALDO HATTRICK SINKS BAYERN	15

FOR ADVERTISING

kindly contact at 9810195709 or mpostdelhi@gmail.com

FOR SUBSCRIPTION

kindly contact at 8800854665 or millenniumpost.circulation@gmail.com

BENGAL CM HITS OUT AT BJP FOR ITS 'DIVISIVE' POLICIES

Mamata asks regional parties to unite against BJP

OUR CORRESPONDENT

BHUBANESWAR: Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said all regional parties must work together for better federalism even as she accused the BJP of indulging in "divisive" politics to defame Hindutva.

"Our effort will be to ensure that all regional parties work together for better federalism in the country. They should be strong," Banerjee, also the president of the All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC) told reporters at Puri.

Banerjee, who is on a three-day visit to Odisha since Tuesday night, came down heavily on the BJP and accused it of indulging in divisive politics.

"They (BJP) wanted to divide the nation in the name of religion, region and caste. They pit Hindus against Muslims, Christians against Hindus, Odias against Bengalis, Biharis against Bengalis, and so on... This is not Hindutva," she alleged.

Claiming that she was a real Hindu who believes in taking everyone together, Banerjee said the BJP's attitude towards others was not acceptable.

"According to them (BJP) the Odisha government is bad, the Ben-

gal government is bad, the Bihar government is bad and all non-BJP state governments are bad. How are you good if you go on dubbing others bad," she said.

Banerjee claimed that Hindutva was not something practised by the BJP and dubbed the BJP members as "black spot" on Hindutva. She alleged that they divide people instead of taking everyone together. "I'm a Hindu but not the one who defames religion. While the Hindu belief talks about the ideology of moving forward and taking everyone along, the saffron party

is acting against the ideology and defaming Hindutva," she added.

Noting that the regional parties respect all, Banerjee said, "How can the leaders of Delhi say others are bad when you are unable to take care of Delhi?"

On the FIR filed against her party leaders in connection with Narada chit-fund case, she said, "These decisions are taken with evil intentions and are politically motivated. The TMC is against the BJP ideologically but they are fighting against us at a personal level. We will take up the challenge and handle the



matter legally."

Banerjee is likely to meet Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. Political experts said her meeting with Patnaik with whom she has always maintained cordial relations assumes significance as Banerjee is trying to unite non-BJP chief ministers and regional parties before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Banerjee visited the Jagannath temple late on Wednesday afternoon. She was greeted by the priests who took her inside the temple. She went to the sanctum sanctorum where the idols of Jagannath, Balam and Subhadra are kept. There was enthusiasm among locals to catch a glimpse of the Bengal CM. They stood on both sides of the road leading to the temple. Banerjee walked down the street barefoot.

BJP is trying to create trouble ever since Banerjee left for Odisha on Tuesday evening. A priest of Jagannath temple said on Tuesday that the doors were closed for Banerjee for her statement on the consumption of beef. On Wednesday two BJP Yuva Morcha members were arrested when they raised "Go back Mamata" slogans. The security arrangements around the temple was tight.

Advani, Bharti, Joshi to stand trial in Ayodhya case

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Top BJP leaders L K Advani, M M Joshi and Uma Bharti will be tried for criminal conspiracy in the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition case as the Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed the CBI plea to restore the charge against them.

The court also clubbed the trial in the matter pending against the leaders and 'karsevaks' and ordered the day-to-day trial with the proceedings to be completed in two years.

"We have allowed the CBI appeal against the Allahabad High Court judgement with certain directions," a bench comprising Justices P C Ghose and R F Nariman said. The apex court, however, noted that Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh enjoys Constitutional immunity and can be tried only after he ceases to hold the office. Kalyan Singh was the chief minister of UP in 1992.

The court said separate trials being conducted in trial courts at Raebareilly and Lucknow will be clubbed and conducted in the capital of Uttar Pradesh only.

It also said that the trial judge of Lucknow "shall not be transferred" till conclusion and delivery of judgement in



the sensational case. The court further said that no party shall be granted adjournment without the sessions judge being satisfied with the reasons for it.

It also directed the probe agency CBI to ensure that prosecution witnesses appear on each and every date for recording of evidence in the case and the trial court should start the proceedings within four weeks from Wednesday.

It, however, made it clear that there would be no de novo (fresh) trial in the matter.

It had also said since 25 years have already passed, in the interest of justice, it would consider ordering a time-bound trial on the day-to-day basis, to be completed preferably within two years.

Senior advocate K K Venugopal, appearing for Advani and Joshi, had vociferously opposed the proposal for holding a joint trial and transferring their case from Raebareilly to Lucknow. **More reports on P7**

CENTRE CLEARS ₹3,174 CRORE

EC gets funds for paper trail machines

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission's plan to go for paper trail machines in the next Lok Sabha polls to add an additional layer of transparency in voting is set to materialise as the government on Wednesday cleared Rs 3,174 crore for the purpose.

A total of 16,15,000 Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines would be purchased to cover all polling stations. Several parties have been pressing for the use of these machines to dispel doubts that the EVMs are not tampered with.

Sixteen parties had recently petitioned the EC to revert to paper ballot system for greater transparency. The BSR, the AAP and the Congress had attacked the EC on the issue of alleged tampering of EVMs.

The paper trail machines leave a paper trail which helps an elector confirm whether the EVM has faithfully registered the vote has cast to a particular candidate.

The funds would be given to the Commission in two instalments — the first of Rs 1,600 crore in this fiscal and the rest in the next fiscal.

The clearance was given by the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a brief discussion. The decision was taken in the absence of Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad though the issue relates to his ministry.



» The VVPAT is a machine which dispenses a slip with the symbol of the party for which a person has voted for. The slip drops in a box but the voter cannot take it home.

In a statement, the poll watchdog said it will "closely monitor" the production of VVPATs for timely delivery well before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

"With this, the Commission will ensure the total compliance of the orders of the Supreme Court (on the use of VVPATs) and its commitment to using VVPATs with every EVM at all polling stations in the country in General Elections 2019," it said.

Between September 2013 and March this year, the Commission has written 38 times to the government on the procurement of VVPATs, according to an affidavit filed by the poll panel in the Supreme Court on the issue.

BSF jawan who complained of bad food sacked

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: A BSF jawan, who posted a clip on social media complaining of bad quality food being served to the troops, was on Wednesday dismissed from service following an inquiry.

Officials said Tej Bahadur Yadav was sacked by the border guarding force on the basis of a report of a staff court of inquiry (SCoI).

The inquiry, they said, found the constable-rank jawan guilty of making false charges.

"The action of dismissal of the jawan has been taken under the Border Security Force Act that is applicable to all the personnel serving in the paramilitary force," a senior officer said.

"Yadav has been found guilty on certain charges of indiscipline including uploading the said video in violation of laid down procedures and rules. He has an option to appeal against the verdict within three months time," he added.

Yadav, in January this year, had alleged in his video post that bad quality food was being served to the soldiers. **See P6**

GOVT DECIDED TO REMOVE RED BEACONS FROM ALL VEHICLES INCLUDING THAT OF PM

No 'lal batti' cars from May 1

DHIRENDRA KUMAR

NEW DELHI: Come May 1, 'lal batti' cars or vehicles with red beacons will be a thing of the past as the government has barred their use by VVIPs, including the President, the Prime Minister and chief ministers.

Seeking to end the VIP culture, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided that beacon lights will be removed from all vehicles, except emergency vehicles, like ambulances and fire brigade.

The vehicles with beacon lights, which are seen as a symbol of VIP culture, "have no place in a democratic country," the government said.

"After May 1, no one will be able to put red light atop his/her vehicle. The blue light will be used only for emergency vehicles in the country...Neither the states nor the Centre will have the power to give any special permission (for use of beacon lights)," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said after the Cabinet meeting.

He said the use of red beacons atop vehicles has been a matter of discussion and debates for long as to why certain people have special privileges on road.

The matter was under dis-

Trinamool Congress-led Govt in West Bengal under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee was the first to remove red beacons followed by Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in 2013 during his 49-day regime



ussion for some time and the Prime Minister took the decision and informed the Cabinet," Jaitley said, adding amendments will be made soon in the Central Motor Vehicles Rules to give effect to the decision.

A rule that empowers the Centre or state governments to allow the use of red beacon lights to dignitaries will be altogether removed from the statute books, the minister said.

"There will be no exception for anyone. The reason is very clear that the rule itself is being removed from the rule book," he added. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari was the first Union Minister who took the red beacon off his official vehicle immediately after the Cabinet meeting.

Gadkari said: "this government is a government of masses and has decided to

abolish VIP culture of beacon lights and sirens."

Beacons, however, will be allowed on vehicles concerning emergency and relief services, ambulance, fire service etc. In light of the decision, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways will make necessary provisions in the law.

The move is first at the national level, but there are precedents by state governments of not using the red beacons. The Trinamool Congress-led government in West Bengal under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee was the first to remove beacons from VIP vehicles in Bengal. This was followed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in 2013 during his 49-day regime. Kejriwal continued the practice after the party came to power with an unprecedented mandate in 2015.

All eyes on CM's chair as OPS, Palaniswami plan reunion

MPOST BUREAU

CHENNAI: The dramatic late-night announcement by finance minister D Jayakumar on Tuesday that the AIADMK be rescued from T T V Dhinakaran and family have cleared the decks for talks between the two factions; now the big bones of contention would be the chief minister's chair and crucial portfolios.

The sheer necessity for political survival has forced the two groups to work towards a broad consensus for a possible merger.

While the trial proceedings in the two money laundering cases against Dhinakaran picked up steam in recent weeks, the FIR filed against him by the Delhi crime branch for allegedly bribing EC officials, is



a huge blow to him.

Beleaguered AIADMK (Amma) faction leader TTV Dhinakaran on Wednesday struck a conciliatory note, saying he had no problem with the merger of rival party factions and felt the rebellion against him was due to some "fear".

The Deputy General Secretary of the V K Sasikala faction of the AIADMK also said that he had "stepped aside" on Tuesday night itself in the interest

of the party and made it clear that the MLAs' meet called by him was not a show of strength.

Meanwhile, rebel AIADMK leader and former Chief Minister O Panneerselvam on Wednesday described the ministers' revolt against the rival Amma faction leader TTV Dhinakaran as the "first success" of his "dharma yudhi" against V K Sasikala.

Panneerselvam said he had launched the 'dharma yudhi' with the help of his supporters, including MPs and MLAs, in an effort to ensure that the AIADMK did not go into hands of Sasikala's family.

He was reacting to the ministers' decision late Tuesday night to keep away Sasikala, Dhinakaran and their families from the AIADMK and the affairs of its government.

Sonu responds to fatwa by shaving off his head

MPOST BUREAU

MUMBAI: Shave off his head, said a cleric, enraged by Sonu Nigam's tweet on loud sermons. So the Bollywood playback singer did just that at a press conference he had himself tonsured by a celebrity hairstylist.

He had called the press to talk about his tweets on Monday which led to an online furore and a fatwa being issued against him by the Kolkata-based cleric, Syed Sha Atef Ali Al Quaderi.

Before hairstylist Aalim Hakim got into the act, Nigam stressed that his tweets were against the use of loudspeakers in morning sermons and not aimed at any particular religion.

"I only spoke against the use of loudspeakers. Everybody has a right to his opinion. I have the right to have an opinion and it should not be misconstrued. Loudspeakers are not a necessity; they are not a part of any religion," Nigam said.

His intention, he pointed out, was not to hurt anybody's sentiments. "If I



have done anything wrong, please forgive me. My intention was just to talk on a social topic and not a religious topic," he added.

The singer said it was wrong to focus on one particular tweet where he described the broadcasting of sermons on loudspeakers as 'gundagardi'

(hooliganism).

"People took one tweet of mine where I mentioned 'gundagardi' and ignored other tweets where I also talked about temples and gurudwaras," he said. "I am a secular person, a neutral person. You will rarely find people who are neutral. So, I am the minority here."

After the conference got over, he went into a room to get his head tonsured.

Nigam had hinted in a tweet earlier in the day that he planned to shave off his head.

"Today at 2 pm Aalim will come to my place and shave my head. Keep your 10 lakhs ready, Maulavi," he had tweeted, tagging a new report on the fatwa.

Cleric Syed Sha Atef Ali Al Quaderi took exception to that and announced a reward of Rs 10 lakh to anybody who would tonsure Nigam and garland him with a string of old shoes.

Nigam took the challenge up and called Hakim to the press conference a move that he also made public on Twitter.

The singer said he wanted to respond to the 'fatwa' in the language of love.

The cleric, however, is not satisfied with Nigam's gesture. "He only heard half of the fatwa. I had also mentioned a garland of old shoes," Syed Al Quaderi told a news channel.

Air pollution

may cause year-round runny noses

New findings suggest that people living in large cities and industrial areas with polluted air, particularly in the developing world are at higher risk of developing chronic sinus problems

Air pollution in cities like New Delhi or Beijing may cause people to have year-round runny noses and chronic sinus problems, warn scientists including one of Indian origin. Although human population studies have linked air pollution to chronic inflammation of nasal and sinus tissues, direct biological and molecular evidence for cause and effect has been scant. Researchers found that mice continually exposed to dirty air have that direct biological effect.

Scientists have long known that smog, ash and other particulates from industrial smokestacks and other sources that pollute air quality exacerbate and raise rates of asthma symptoms, but had little evidence of similar damage from those pollutants to the upper respiratory system. The new findings have broad implications for the health and well-being of people who live in large cities and industrial areas with polluted air, particularly in the developing world.

"In places like New Delhi, Cairo or Beijing, where people heat their houses with wood-burning stoves, and factories release pollutants into the air, our study suggests people are at higher risk of developing chronic sinus problems," said Murray Ramanathan, associate professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in the US.



Chronic sinusitis can cause congestion, pain and pressure in the face, and a stuffy, drippy nose. Numerous studies have reported significant social implications of chronic sinonasal disease, including depression, lost productivity and chronic fatigue.

To see how pollution may directly affect the biology of the upper airways, the researchers exposed 38 eight-week-old male mice to either filtered air or concentrated Baltimore air with parti-

cles measuring 2.5 micrometers or less, which excludes most allergens, like dust and pollen. The aerosolized particles, although concentrated, were 30 to 60 per cent lower than the average concentrations of parti-

cles of a similar size in cities like New Delhi, Cairo and Beijing. Nineteen mice breathed in filtered air, and 19 breathed polluted air for 6 hours per day, 5 days a week for 16 weeks.

The researchers used water to flush out the noses and sinuses of the mice, and then looked at the inflammatory and other cells in the flushed-out fluid under a microscope. They saw many more white blood cells that signal inflammation, including macrophages, neutrophils and eosinophils, in the mice that breathed in the polluted air compared with those that breathed in filtered air.

For example, the mice that breathed in the polluted air had almost four times as many macrophages than mice that breathed filtered air.

"We've identified a lot of evidence that breathing in dirty air directly causes a breakdown in the integrity of the sinus and nasal air passages in mice," said Ramanathan.

"Keeping this barrier intact is essential for protecting the cells in the tissues from irritation or infection from other sources, including pollen or germs," he said. P11



Delhi food truck festival concludes



OUR CORRESPONDENT

INDIA'S BIGGEST Food Truck Festival, the Delhi Food Truck Festival (DFTF) 2017, a two day affair finally came to an end and captured many eyeballs for not only being conducted at a massive level but also for being the first food truck event to offer plethora of fun and engaging activities. The fest had already been trending up ever since its inception and has become a buzzword in the culinary circles for showcasing the best of the Food Trucks!

History says the first food truck festival was conducted in Los Angeles and post then, food truck festivals have been happening in all parts of the world such as Chicago, New York, Berlin etc. With the trend emerging in India, the Capital was expected to host a Big Show after being recently conducted in Bangalore and Bombay and DFTF 2017 left no stone unturned for

this to happen! "We had incorporated many authentic activities to create a wholesome experience for all kind of audiences," said Shivangi Gupta, one of the organisers. Talking about the vision she says, "Being the debut, we were not focusing on the commercial success but wanted all the visitors to have a good time and have a one-of-a-kind experience and feel the difference."

Delhi Food Truck Festival powered by India Gate Basmati Rice, was an initiative by VMS Events and Radio City 91.1 and saw 18k people attending the fest during both the days.

Be it Rain Dance to soothe everyone amidst Delhi's 42°C heat, or Live Performances by Jassie Gill and Babbal Rai on Baisakhi to Wiltinger adding a craft beer flavour to the food for beverage aficionados, all fascinated the food aficionados and kept them expecting for more fun at Delhi's biggest Food Truck Festival.

FLOWER ART WORK



In the scorching summer, Delhiites witnessed a refreshing week when fragrant flowers were brought from Korea and was displayed by 15 Korean artists in an exhibition named, 'Floral Art & Lifestyle-II' organized by Korean Cultural Centre India which talked about 'Wedding' - the second chapter of Life.

New study to decode what makes Game of Thrones so popular



Hooked to the fantasy world of the 'Game of Thrones' TV series? Scientists have set out to discover what makes the doom and death-ridden epic franchise so popular among viewers across the world. An international team of researchers has devised a questionnaire for fans of the series to understand what it is about the show that people love, and cannot let go, despite key characters being killed off each season, or what has even annoyed and upset them about the programme.

The team will share what they learn once the research is complete. "We've sensed that 'Game of Thrones' is significant, and important, a 'game-changer', but we're not yet sure how," said Professor Clarissa Smith from the University of Sunderland in the UK. "All of us have been involved in previous audience projects, of different kinds. Some of us researched

responses to the films of *The Lord of the Rings* and then *The Hobbit* a few years back," said Smith. "Some of us are currently researching the revived *Star Wars* franchise. But 'Game of Thrones' is different, clearly," she said. Over the past 25 years, many commentators argue that 'fantasy' has changed beyond recognition, with an increasing mixing of Science Fiction with fantasy, published fantasy has also expanded and become ever more complex.

"In film, we have seen the huge expansions in technical capacity to make 'worlds' look real," said Smith.

The Lord of the Rings, *Avatar*, and *The Hunger Games* have transformed the public face of fantasy, as well as in TV series like 'The Vampire Diaries', 'Outlander', 'Supernatural' and 'True Blood'. "We're seeing worlds that have steadily become more present, and more varied," said Smith. "With 'Game of Thrones' a

new set of dimensions has been added. Not just that the book series is huge and unfinished. More, perhaps, that this is such a doom-filled series, where the moment you form affection for a character, s/he is likely to suffer horribly, and die," she said.

"Hanging over everything is the coming winter, the threat from the North, the White Walkers, all set in a world that is not ours, yet in a hundred ways reminds many people of ours," she said.

The questionnaire will be open until the end of the upcoming Season Seven, that is set to premiere on July 16 this year. Once the season ends in August, the team will report on what it achieved with a summary of the main findings. P11



ART SPICE The Art Gallery

In Association With

LP Luxe POINT 18 214

Gallerie Splash

Shyamal Mukherjee Manu Parekh P. Gnana K. Ravi

Songs of India

"Enjoy a grand adventure that blends the north and south, east and west of India in a single journey, weaving our art and cultural heritage into a comprehensive and magical experience. Come, rediscover the spectacular journey of India through a cornucopia of remarkable paintings by Indian artists."

On View Till May 13, 2017

at

The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa
Bangla Sahib Road, New Delhi - 110001, India
Tel : 011 - 42500200, info@artspicegallery.com
www.artspicegallery.com

10 am to 7 pm (open all days)

We offer the opportunity to rent our conveniently located gallery for art exhibits/fine art events.

P. Gnana Seema Kohli P. Gnana K. Ravi

ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

THE METROPOLITAN HOTEL & SPA

CRAFT HOUSE Fashion & Lifestyle

millennium post

artspicegallery.com

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only.

"MILLENNIUM POST", Published & printed by Durbar Ganguly on behalf of Front Row Media Pvt. Ltd. from 36/4, Prince Gulam Mohd. Shah Road, Kolkata - 700 033 & printed at Aajkaal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., BP-7, Sector-V, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700 091, Editor: Durbar Ganguly, Executive Editor: Arya Rudra, Resident Editor (Kolkata): Tarun Goswami. Email: durbarganguly@gmail.com, mpostcal@gmail.com, Editorial and Marketing Office: Tivoli Court 1A, Ballygunge Circular Road, Block-A, Flat-94, 1st Floor, Kolkata-700 019. For marketing, contact: 9836292306, 9830532306. For editorial, call: 9836072100

Schoolteacher missing from Monday found dead in ground

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Mystery shrouds the death of a schoolteacher whose body was found on a playground near her house.

The incident occurred at Farakka in Murshidabad on Wednesday morning. The incident triggered tension among the local residents. The family members of the woman registered a murder case in this connection so far.

The victim had been missing from Monday evening. Police said that the victim, a teacher of a private school in Farakka had gone missing while returning home from school. The other teachers of the school told the police that she left for her house after school got over. But she did not return home. The family members of the victim also lodged a missing diary in the local police station as they did not find any trace of the victim. The victim's family members searched for the woman in the locality and also called up some of the relatives but failed to get any trace of the victim.

Some of the local residents on Wednesday morning found the body lying on a ground. After being informed, police reached the spot and recovered the body of the victim and sent the body for post-mortem examination.

According to the police the lady's *dupatta* was wrapped around her neck which suggests that she might have been strangled to death. Police are also investigating if the woman was tortured before being murdered. As per the preliminary investigation, police suspect that the teacher was murdered. The crime had taken place somewhere else and miscreants dumped her body on the playground after murdering her.

IN A SPOT AGAIN

Kin of dead toddler ransack Apollo crying negligence

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Family members of a four-month-old girl who died at Apollo Gleneagles Hospital in Kolkata on Wednesday ransacked a portion of the hospital alleging negligence.

Meanwhile, the state Health department has ordered a probe into the death of the toddler. The private hospital authorities also formed a three-member committee to probe into the alleged negligence. The hospital authorities have, however, claimed that there was apparently no medical negligence and the infant had died following two cardiac arrests.

The incident triggered tension among the patients and their relatives in the hospital as a mob went on a rampage ransacking a portion of the hospital. The incident had also left the staff members of the hospital anxious. The agitation continued for nearly one-and-half

hours before a huge contingent of police reached the spot and brought the situation under control. Family members of the victim lodged a complaint at Phoolbagan police station against the hospital authorities.

The four-month-old baby, Kuheli Chakraborty, a resident of Thakurpukur area was taken to Joka ESI Hospital following some ailments. She was shifted to the Apollo Gleneagles Hospital on April 17. It was learnt that the patient was bleeding in her intestine. The doctors decided to conduct colonoscopy on the patient on Tuesday. The family members of the victim alleged that she was not given food on April 17 for conducting colonoscopy. When the family members asked the hospital authorities why the baby was kept in empty stomach on Monday for nearly 12 hours but the test was not done that day, the hospital authorities told them that the anesthetic drug



should be administered on the patient for getting the test done. The colonoscopy was done on the patient by applying anesthetic drugs but soon after, the family members on Wednesday morning were told that the baby has died.

The family members alleged that an overdose of

anesthetic drugs could have led to the patient's death. Some of the family members went to Phoolbagan police station this morning and lodged a complaint against the hospital authorities. As the news of the baby's death spread, the relatives and neighbours reached the hospital and staged dem-

onstration. The incident turned violent when the mob started ransacking a portion of the hospital. Senior police officers rushed to the spot and pacified the mob. Following the tension, the hospital authorities decided to close the main gate of the hospital.

The hospital authorities, however, said that the baby suffered a cardiac arrest after she was administered anesthetic drugs. She was put on ventilation but the patient faced another cardiac arrest and she eventually died. There was no negligence on the part of the hospital, added the authorities. The doctors and nursing staff members of the hospital tried their best, officials of the hospital said. A three-member committee has been constituted to probe into the incident following the allegation of negligence. The state Health department is also carrying out a separate probe in this regard.

New set: 22 more bike taxis launched



Minister Suwendu Adhikari flagged off the bike taxis on Wednesday

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The step to introduce 22 more bike taxis has been taken due to the success of Phase I of the pilot project when similar service was introduced for Rajarhat and New Town, state Transport department minister, Suwendu Adhikari, said.

Adhikari flagged off the bike taxis on Wednesday. Sujit Bose, MLA and Director of WBTC and Alapan Bandyopadhyay, Principal Secretary of Transport Department, were also present in the programme. This time, another pri-

vate company – Radhashree Road Stars Private Limited – launched the bike taxis.

The new company also has to follow the norms that the state Transport department has framed for bike taxis. For the first one kilometre, the fare would be Rs 20 and Rs 5 for each of the consecutive kilometre. An app has also been launched using which the bike taxis can be booked.

Since the first launch of the bike taxis in Rajarhat and New Town on March 16 till March 31, around 6,000 downloads have been recorded and a total 623 people have taken the rides.

Come June, rural electrification project to be complete in state

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Soon, Bengal will be among the first few states to complete the rural electrification project successfully.

Come June and the project will witness completion with state Power minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay laying emphasis that the rural electrification work is all set to be complete as soon as infrastructure in four villages of Sunderban area gets over. This apart, the electrification work is more or less complete throughout the state.

"Infrastructural works have been going on in four islands. The work is expected to be completed by the end of June this year. The Power department has been facing hurdles in some



parts as many villagers were reluctant to get an electricity connection due to financial constraints. Despite the challenges, the state government will achieve 100 percent electricity coverage by June," Chattopadhyay added. Senior Power department officials,

however, claim that Bengal is the first state to complete the rural electrification work. It may be mentioned that the Centre had also applauded the state government for performing exceedingly well in the rural electrification work in comparison to

other states.

It may also be mentioned that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, after coming to the power, had asked the power department to provide electricity to the entire Sunderban area through power grid. Banerjee had taken a pledge to electrify each and every village across the state. The state government is trying hard to resolve the issues with the involvement of local panchayat functionaries and the zilla parishads.

According to West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL), state's nodal distribution agency, the total number of subscribers has gone up to 1.72 crore from around 88 lakh in 2011. A few years ago, the pace of electrifica-

tion work in Bengal was quite slow in comparison to the other states in the country but Banerjee government has done a major revamp in infrastructure development.

In some parts, people opposed the setting up of electric poles but the issue has now been resolved through continuous dialogue and interaction. The officials of the state power department are, however, trying to solve the issue by talking to those who have expressed their reluctance to get an electricity connection done due to financial reasons. The department is also trying to amicably resolve various issues by engaging the panchayat functionaries. The district administrations were also approached in this regard.

HIDCO allots 139 EWS flats through lottery

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO) on Wednesday allotted around 139 Economically Weaker Section (EWS) flats to people through lottery in which around 5,000 applicants participated.

The lottery was held at Netaji Indoor Stadium on Wednesday afternoon for the flats that are coming up at New Town. HIDCO will return the money to the unsuccessful applicants within a month. Around 20 people have been kept in the waiting list. After allotment, HIDCO authorities will now examine the documents submitted by the allottees. Senior HIDCO officials felt that the yearly income of some of the allottees may be more than the stipulated amount and in that case their allotment will be scrapped. It is because of this that 20 people have been kept in the waiting list.

To make the lottery transparent, women applicants and senior citizens have been asked to select the names through lottery. The names of the applicants were kept in one box and the application numbers were kept in another. They were asked to take out two chit papers, one each from the two boxes. Earlier, HIDCO had allotted EWS flats to the land losers of New Town.

After coming to power, Chief

The lottery was held at Netaji Indoor Stadium on Wednesday afternoon for the flats that are coming up at New Town. HIDCO will return the money to the unsuccessful applicants within a month

Minister Mamata Banerjee abolished the chairman's quota in allotting the plots. There are allegations of nepotism against the erstwhile Left Front government in allotting plots of land. The then Housing minister, Gautam Deb, distributed the plots among people known to him without publishing advertisements in newspapers. Banerjee made Debashis Sen, an IAS officer as the chairman of HIDCO, the post which is usually reserved for political personalities.

There was a lot of enthusiasm among the applicants as a result of which HIDCO had to host the lottery at Netaji Indoor Stadium. The applicants did not complain of any nepotism as the lottery took place in their presence and names of the allottees were put up outside the stadium.

Bio-lab to come up at Abash to promote organic farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The state government has decided to set up a bio-laboratory at Abash in West Midnapore at a cost of more than Rs 1 crore to promote organic farming.

The decision to set up the laboratory has been taken considering that the western region of the state has immense potential in growing organic crops.

All sorts of tests that are necessary for organic farming can be undertaken in the proposed bio-laboratory. Preliminary tasks needed to set up the lab have already been undertaken and the work to set it up will start being.

This comes at the time when the state agriculture department has taken several measures to ensure increase in organic farming.

Simultaneously, the state government has allotted around 25 acre of land to the Centre to set up a dedicated groundnut research station at Abash in West Midnapore.

There is one such research station in Jaunpur and the second of its kind is coming up in Bengal. Research related to groundnut cultivation across the country would be carried out in the station that would come up in West Midnapore.

But the eastern and north eastern states would get additional benefit with the setting up of the research station in Bengal.

It has also been learnt that the state government has also proposed to the Jindals to take up a project of agriculture farming in their plot at Salboni in West Midnapore.

Stop individual counselling of medical students, Centre to MCI

PRADIP CHATTERJEE

KOLKATA: The Centre has instructed the Medical Council of India (MCI) to stop individual counselling of medical students by the private hospitals throughout the country.

It has asked the highest regulating body to fill up the undergraduate medical seats in the private medical colleges through central counselling that would be conducted by the respective state governments on the basis of the merit list prepared by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on the basis of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET).

Earlier, the private medical colleges across the country used to fill up the private medical seats through the counselling conducted by the private medical colleges on their own. Most of these medical colleges used to hold their own examinations to admit candidates in those private medical seats.

It may be mentioned here that there were allegations of irregularities and nepotism

in the admission of candidates in the private medical seats. It is often alleged that the private medical colleges take huge capitation fees from the candidates.

In Bengal, for filling up the government-owned seats, private medical colleges used to admit candidates on the basis of the recommendation by the state government but for their own seats the private medical colleges in the state used to conduct their own examination.

The state government hardly had any control over the admission of candidates in the private medical seats.

But from this year, the rule is going to change as the Centre has asked the MCI to issue clear instructions to the private medical colleges to admit candidates in private seats on the basis of the central counselling carried out by the respective state governments.

It may be mentioned that from this year all the admissions would be done on the basis of the NEET which would be conducted by the CBSE.

It was learnt that various private medical colleges may pursue legal suit challenging the decision of the Centre as the claimed that they have the right to conduct their examination filling up the medical seats.

The Universities, Deemed Universities, Private & Minority Medical Colleges have claimed their right to prepare their own merit list as per IMC amendment Act, 2016.

It may be pointed out that CMC Vellore has already announced their admission tests among the candidates who will qualify the NEET. Many other universities and private medical colleges have decided not to join the central counselling and will make their own merit list.

Till last year, all the states used to conduct their own entrance examination but from this year all the medical colleges in the country be it government or private has to admit candidates on the basis of the merit list prepared by the CBSE on the basis of the NEET.

Trinamool, GJM announce candidates for civic polls

AMITAVA BANERJEE

DARJEELING: With April 24 being the last date of filing of nomination for the Hill municipal polls, political camps are busy announcing names of their candidates. Trinamool Congress and the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha made parts of their candidate list public on Wednesday. Filing of nominations had commenced from Tuesday.

Darjeeling with 32 municipal wards; Kurseong with 20, Mirik with 9 wards and Kalimpong with 23 wards will be going to polls on May 14.

"We have announced the names of 10 candidates for the Kalimpong Municipality. Names of the remaining candidates for Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Kurseong and Mirik will be announced soon," stated N B Khawas, TMC leader. Party

insiders state that the TMC list for Darjeeling could be made public on Thursday.

Incidentally, the Hills will be witnessing a triangular fight during this Municipal election with the major players being the TMC-GNLF coalition, GJM and the JAP. Kalimpong is expected to witness a very close contest with different forces and issues at play.

With the recent upgradation of Kalimpong into a district from a sub-division, a long standing demand of the people of Kalimpong, the TMC is expected to reap benefits. Even the Jan Andolan Party claims credit for the creation of the Kalimpong district as JAP had metamorphosed from the Kalimpong District Demand Committee (KDDC).

The 15 development and culture boards created by the

state government with their bases in Kalimpong could work in favour of the TMC feel observers. Having entered into a coalition with the GNLF will emerge as an added advantage with the GNLF having a dedicated support base in the Hills.

The upgradation of Mirik from a block to a sub division will act to the advantage of the TMC-GNLF combine opine observers. "We will fight for civic amenities including good roads, drinking water, proper sewerage system as this is a municipal election. We will fight for development, democracy and good governance" stated Aroop Biswas, TMC observer for Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

However the GJM is a strong force to reckon with. All the previous boards of the Hill Municipalities were under the sway of the GJM.

Govt to organise Civil Service Day on April 21 at Uttirnya, CM's dream project

PRITESH BASU

KOLKATA: For the first time, the state government has decided to organise Civil Service Day that will be attended by around 700 senior officials.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will be addressing the programme that has been organised with focus on "role of civil service in nation building".

The programme will be held on April 21 in the newly-constructed open air stage – Uttirnya – at Alipore which will also be inaugurated by the Chief Minister on the same day.

According to the sources in the state secretariat, Centre's Department of Personnel and Training had sent letters to all the state governments and union territories for the past few years requesting them to organise the programme in the state headquarters.

This is for the first time when the state government decided to hold a programme that will be attended by



officials of the West Bengal Civil Service, Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service. Some officials of the Indian Revenue Service and Commercial Tax Service will also be attending the programme.

Administrative officials of joint secretary rank and above and police officers of deputy commissioner rank and above will be attending the programme. Since the programme will be spanning around one-and-a-half hours, officials

who are mainly posted in the city and its adjacent places will be taking part in the programme. "It is expected that around 700 officials will be present in the programme," an official said adding that some senior officials will also be addressing the gathering.

He further said that since the programme is of only of one-and-a-half hours or so, officials from the districts are not going to be a part of it.

All ministers have also been invited to be present in the programme which is being organised by the state Personnel, Administrative Reforms and E-Governance department.

The Public Works Department, that constructed the open-air stage, is providing the logistic support for the programme that will start at 6 pm on Friday. Uttirnya is a state-of-the-art open-air stage with the capacity to accommodate 1,968 people at a time and it is one of the dream projects of the Chief Minister.

Bengal received benefits of many Central schemes: Irani

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Bengal government has received the benefits of many Central schemes, Union Textile minister Smriti Irani said in the city on Wednesday.

She urged them to go to the people and strengthen the organisational base of the party

She alleged that the state government had not informed people about the various schemes provided by the Centre. "The benefits which people are getting are all schemes of the Centre," she said. She urged party workers to go to the people and inform them about the schemes. She held a meeting with party workers on Wednesday morning. She urged them to go to the people and strengthen the organisational base of the party.

It may be mentioned that around 20 BJP leaders have visited Bengal in the past 10 days. Each and every leader has asked the state unit to strengthen the organisational base of the party. The state unit had miserably failed to organise party workers in the past two years. The party could not meet those who took membership by sending SMS two years ago.

However, steps have now been taken to organise party meeting up to the block level as the party is gearing for the panchayat election scheduled to be held in 2018. The recent success of the party in Kanthi south by-election has given moral boost to party leaders and workers.

Irani said the state government had failed to stop atrocities against women which was on the rise.

Sector V awaits facelift, work on in full swing

DEBAMOY GHOSH

KOLKATA: State Urban Development minister Firhad Hakim said several development projects and decisions have been taken to give a facelift to Sector V, the first information technology hub in Bengal.

The Urban Development department has already started work to implement those projects at the earliest.

An exclusive gate for Sector V, a new administrative building, a fresh property tax structure for plot holders, Mastiff Asphalt layer in road surface are examples of the projects that would be done in near future.

Nabadiganta Industrial Township Authority (NDITA), the implementing agency for the developments in Sector V, has planned them in their recent board meetings.

While informing the upcoming development works, state Urban Development minister Firhad Hakim said: "We do not want to repeat the mistakes that had been done by the erstwhile Left Front government 30 years back. The infrastructure of this tech-sector was so poor that techies had decided to shift from here to other states. It was really unfortunate."

He further added: "The new 'Sector V Gate' will soon come up as the identity of this tech-sector. People will identify this information technology hub by that gate."

On this issue, a senior state government officer informed that the gate will likely be located at the backside of Sector V near the large waterbody, Kolkata Metropolitan Develop-



While informing the upcoming development works, state Urban Development minister Firhad Hakim said: "We do not want to repeat the mistakes that had been done by the erstwhile Left Front government 30 years back. The infrastructure of this tech-sector was so poor that techies had decided to shift from here to other states. It was really unfortunate"

ment Authority (KMDA) will set up the new administrative building for NDITA behind Swasthya Bhawan, the officer added.

"Like New Town, Sector V will also have separate cycle tracks. Most of the places in Sector V will have wi-fi connectivity, LED streetlights and roads surface will be covered

by Mastiff Asphalt," said the minister.

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur had conducted in-depth research for coming up with a comprehensive master plan on Sector V's traffic management.

However, with the decision to set up a 7.5 km link road from Sector V to Sec-

tor VI at Bantala, the state government is trying to develop a smooth connectivity between two information technology hubs.

"Jadavpur University experts are working on the construction of the road. It will take much less time to reach from one sector to other," the minister said.

New police commissionerate to be set up in Hooghly district

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The state government is planning to set up a police commissionerate in Hooghly district. If everything goes according to plans, the new police commissionerate will be named Chandannagar Police Commissionerate.

This will be the sixth police commissionerate in Bengal after the change-of-guard in the state after Howrah, Bidhannagar, Barrackpore, Asansol-Durgapur and Siliguri police commissionerates.

As many as nine police stations including Bhadreswar, Rishra, Serampore, Chinsura, Dankuni and two women police stations will be under the police commissionerate. The remaining 17, including a woman police station, will remain under the jurisdiction of the state police that will be headed by the Superintendent of Police.

According to sources in the state Home department, the proposal was mooted to ensure better policing in the area and the bifurcation has been done in such a manner that all the police stations under the jurisdiction of the proposed police commissionerate are along the river Hooghly.

According to plans, the headquarters of the police commissionerate will be Chinsura while the headquarters of the Hooghly rural part will be Singur.

It may be mentioned that soon after the change-of-guard in the state; Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had taken steps to set up separate police commissionerates in urban parts of the districts.

At the same time, the area that was under the jurisdiction of Kolkata Police was also doubled.

AT ESPLANADE

Stalls, shops get KMC notice for using industrial ice to cool liquids

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Wish to enjoy a glass of chilled juice or lassi in this heat? Think again.

Several shops in Esplanade area were raided and industrial ice seized by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) on Wednesday. These are the shops from where scores drink everyday to quench their thirst. And now, it has come to light that the ice which is used is the same one that is used in mortuaries to preserve dead bodies.

Notices have been served against the owners of those shops. A shop on Mirza Ghalib Street that used to supply industrial ice has also been served notice. The KMC is all set to take the legal course against them.

Acting on a tip off, a KMC team led by Atin Ghosh, member, Mayor in Council (health) visited around 16-17 shops sell-



ing lassi and fruit juice in areas surrounding Esplanade. It was found that the owners had been using industrial ice to cool the liquid, which is a strict no-no according to regulations.

Atin Ghosh said the ice blocks which were found in the shops had been seized and destroyed. He said for quite some time KMC had been receiving complaints that some shop owners were using industrial ice to cool lassi and fruit juices. There are over 50 stalls and another 50 handcarts in Esplanade area selling these items in summer. Because of excessive heat, people have a

tendency to take them. Hundreds of people visiting Esplanade and its neighbourhood areas take cold lassi and fruit juice every day. "So we have to be careful and such drives would be conducted in the future too to ensure that industrial ice is not used to cool the liquid," Ghosh added.

The KMC is also conducting drives to stop selling of cut fruits in the city. Though the civic authorities have warned people not to eat cut fruits that are kept in the open, people do not listen to the warning and continue to take them. Drives against coloured drinks, that is, locally made serbats are also being conducted. The bottles containing coloured drinks are sent to the laboratory for tests and non-permissible colours have been used. In such cases, the bottles are destroyed and cases are being initiated against the shop owners.

Fire in resto near Jadavpur 8B bus stand kills one

OUR CORRESPONDENT



OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: One person was killed and two others injured in a fire that broke out at a restaurant near Jadavpur 8B bus stand on Wednesday morning.

Police and fire officials suspect that the fire might have broken out after a gas cylinder stocked inside the restaurant exploded. As the fire took place at a busy area, there was a tension among the local residents. Many curious people started gathering near the spot of the incident. The local residents tried to take part in the rescue operation but they faced problems as smoke engulfed the area.

The matter was informed to the fire brigade department. Two fire tenders rushed to the spot to douse the flame and they took nearly an hour to bring the situation under control. The police cordoned off the entire area, however, this led to a huge traffic jam prompting the police to divert Jadavpur-bound traffic.

Local people said that they

spotted smoke billowing out of the restaurant situated close to the KPC Medical College and Hospital this morning. When the local people rushed to the spot they found that a fire engulfed the restaurant. Three workers of the restaurant suffered burnt injuries. Police rushed to the KPC Medical College and Hospital where one was declared brought dead. The victim has been identified as Nanda Bera. The condition of two others was stated to be critical. The doctors said that the two others received burn injuries on their body.

Police and fire officials have started a probe in this connection. They are examining if the restaurant had proper fire license or not. The fire officials are checking whether proper firefighting equipment were installed at the restaurant or not. The cause of the fire and the extent of the damage are yet to be ascertained by the Fire department. Police are investigating if it was an accident or there was any foul play behind the incident.

Youth drowns in river, rescue operations on

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A youth drowned in River Hooghly on Wednesday but the police divers could not find his body till Wednesday night but the efforts continued throughout the night to rescue the body.

Rahul Bhattacharya, an 18-year-old youth had gone for a bath in the river after a football match in his locality. Police learnt that he slipped while taking a bath and drowned in the river. His friend tried to rescue him but in vain.

Bhattacharya, a Class XII student was a resident of Salkia. His family informed that the youth was playing football in a nearby field with his friend.

"All the 5-6 youth had gone for a bath in a ghat adjacent to a local temple. Bhattacharya drowned during the high tide," said a family member.

"Another youth, a friend of Bhattacharya had also drowned in the river but the divers managed to rescue him. We are expecting that the divers will find the drowned youth as well," he added.

The disaster management force later came to help the police divers, but they were also unable to find the youth.

"I think the youth did not know swimming but his friend had insisted him to go for a bath," said a local resident.

'All the eggs are normal', say tests

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: After carrying out necessary tests, the West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences confirmed that there was "no existence of any plastic egg and were normal in biological origin".

It may be recalled that on March 30 there was a complaint of "plastic eggs" being sold in different markets of the state. Subsequently, steps were taken to undertake necessary tests to ascertain the genuinity of the complaint.

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation had collected samples of 38 eggs from different markets and the Animal Resource Development department had sent the samples to the West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences.

Scientists conducted tests in the Laboratory of Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences for three consecutive days from March 31. Around 22 tests including examination of internal quality of the egg yolk, molecular weight of albumin by page electrophoresis,

fatty acid estimation of the egg and total protein and quantification of albumin were being carried out.

The tests revealed that "all the eggs were normal in biological origin and there is no existence of any plastic egg in the seized samples".

At the same time, sensory evaluations were also being conducted on fried and boiled eggs. Tests confirmed "the originality of the eggs and its biological character. Moreover, DNA test was conducted using PCR technique to identify the origin of the eggs by chicken specific primer. It revealed that all the examined eggs are of hens in origin. There was a strong rumour that "plastic eggs" were being sold at different markets and it led to panic among people. Local civic bodies had carried out raids in markets and samples were checked and sent for necessary tests. Finally, it came to an end with the statement of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee when she said that there was no problem with the eggs produced in Bengal.

Shyam Sundar Co and Jewellers goes traditional in new collection

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Shyam Sundar Co Jewellers have brought out an exclusive line of designer gold jewellery collection named *Bandish aur Raagdari* owing its roots to the signature style of the Indian gharanas.

The specially-crafted designer gold and diamond ornaments are real glowing tributes to our good old gharanas and signature styles of exponents of the day. The brand's latest campaign of *Bandish aur Raagdari* was shot at heritage locations of Benaras, Lucknow and Bishnupur with Kaushiki Chakraborty who is not just the Brand Ambassador but also the face of the latest campaign



for Shyam Sundar Co Jewellers.

Speaking on the occasion, Rupak Saha, Director, Shyam Sundar Co Jewellers said: "I welcome you all to the launch of our new collection inspired from *Bandish aur Raagdari*. The new exclusive collection eulogises our traditional gharanas and it gives us great pleasure to present before you all

the exclusive designs that have been made keeping in mind our rich culture and the intricacies of traditional jewellery in the most affordable and contemporary styles and designs. There could not have been anybody other than Kaushiki to showcase this line who is herself an embodiment of gharana music and classical tradition."

Swabujdwip: Bengal's latest eco-tourism hotspot

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Imagine walking alongside a 'sal' forest and the gushing Kanshabati river while on a short trip not very far away from Kolkata.

To all travellers' delight, Bankura district administration is all set to promote Swabujdwip. The eco-tourism there has gathered huge popularity among those who visit Bankura. The area, surrounded by 'sal forest' on one side and a stream of Kanshabati on the other, is also near to Mukutmanipur and Jhilimili — two famous tourist destinations. Susunia hills are also close to the area.

"The mindset of Bengali tourists has changed now as



people tend to go to those places more and more. Most of them are not eager to go out of state in short trips and prefer nearby areas," said a tourism department source.

The Bengal government and West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation took several steps to promote

these places of natural beauty. Many packages were made for enthusiastic tourists.

"In Bankura, Swabujdwip is one of the popular tourist spots at Raipur block. The river Kanshabati has bifurcated in a place here and reunites again after going some distance. The island in between two bifurcated streams is known as Swabujdwip," said an officer of the district administration.

"Spending time on the shore of the river, going for fishing are the most popular attractions for the tourists. This is one of the best eco-tourisms in this region," the officer added.

The state government has framed an adventure tourism policy in some areas of Bankura and Purulia. The state

Tourism department began to work on a draft plan following the instruction from the CMO. The proposal has been prepared and senior officials of the department will examine it before sending it to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for consideration.

It may be recalled that the Chief Minister had announced to promote tourism in these sectors during her district visit to Bankura. She had particularly mentioned the areas around Susunia hills to be promoted.

"An interesting thing is that this river will never dry up. We have arranged CCTV surveillance in the area so that no tourists feel unsafe here," said Raipur BDO Dipankar Das.

Eastern Railway celebrates 'World Heritage Day'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Eastern Railway celebrated 'World Heritage Day' at Regional Rail Museum, Howrah, on Tuesday.

There was a debate competition where school students participated and cultural programmes were held to highlight the history and heritage of Indian Railways in general and Eastern Railway in particular. Moreover, joy rides for school students was also organised as part of the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, S N Agrawal, General Manager, Eastern & South Eastern Railway, said that Regional Rail Museum, Howrah, is one of the pride of Eastern Railway. The museum displays history of Eastern Railway as a whole, Howrah station and Railways in Eastern India. It also puts up pictorial history of East Indian Rail-



way, Eastern Railway, East Central Railway, East Coast Railway, South Eastern Railway, Northeast Frontier Railway, Chittaranjan Locomotive Works and Metro Railway, Kolkata. He further said that 150-year-old steam locos, carriages, saloon cars are preserved to evaluate the gradual evolution that led to progress in different fields. Century-old drawings, forms, documents, fascinating collection of philately are also

preserved to demonstrate the rich heritage of the rail system.

It is stated that The Hall of Heritage has a collection of rare photographs and glimpses of rich history of East Indian Railways and the Howrah station building. It is housed in a building which is the replica of Howrah station building. The Sanskriti Express which travelled throughout India to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore has now been preserved at the Regional Rail Museum for the visitors.

The first electric locomotive which dates back to 1960, hauled different prestigious trains including Howrah — Delhi Kalka Mail, Coalfield Express, Black Diamond Express, Deluxe Express (now, rechristened as Poorva Express) has been preserved in the Museum.

পশ্চিম পূর্ব পশ্চিম

কর্মশালা ভিত্তিক প্রযোজনা

নতুন নাটক

সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়ের

লেখকের

মুখোমুখি

সৃজনে : মালবিকা মিত্র স্বপন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বিধাত দেব সরকার
কেয়েল রায় সুশান্ত দাস মনোজিত দাস সুজিত ঘোষ মদন হালদার
অভিনয়ে : তরুণ পাল অনিবার্ণ চ্যাটার্জি রাতুল মজুমদার শৌভিক বেরা
রাজু কুণ্ডু সঞ্জীব সিনহা রজত হালদার স্বপালী ঘোষ মেঘা ভট্টাচার্য

নির্দেশনা : অরুণ রতন গাঙ্গুলী

উপদেষ্টা

সৌমিত্র মিত্র

A Purba Paschim Production in Collaboration with
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India

China 'standardises' names for 6 places in Arunachal

BEIJING: China on Wednesday announced that it has "standardised" official names for six places in Arunachal Pradesh and termed the provocative move as "legitimate", days after it lodged strong protests with India over the Dalai Lama's visit to the frontier state.

The state media here said the move was aimed at reaffirming China's claim over Arunachal Pradesh. China claims the state as 'South Tibet'.

"China's Ministry of Civil Affairs announced on April 14 that it had standardised in Chinese characters, Tibetan and Roman alphabet the names of six places in 'South Tibet', which India calls 'Arunachal Pradesh', in accordance with the regulations of the central government," state-run Global Times reported on Wednesday.

The official names of the six places using the Roman alphabet are Wo gainling, Mila Ri, Qoidengarbo Ri, Mainqika, Bumo La and Namkapub Ri. Standardisation of Chinese names to six places in Arunachal Pradesh is a "legitimate" action, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang said at a briefing.

The Dalai Lama's activities are against Indian government's commitment to China, he said.

Asked about the timing of the announcement, he said China is now doing a second census of localities and an important part of it is to standardise names in ethnic language.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC). While China claims



Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet, India asserts that the dispute covers Aksai Chin area which was occupied by China during the 1962 war.

The two sides have so far held 19 rounds of Special Representatives talks to resolve the boundary dispute.

China's move comes just days after the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, which was seventh since the 81-year-old spiritual leader fled from Tibet through Tawang and sought refuge in India. During the Dalai Lama's Arunachal Pradesh visit, China had warned India that it will take "necessary measures" to defend its territorial sovereignty and interests.

Commenting on the standardisation of the names of six places, Chinese experts said that it was a move to "reaf-

firm the country's territorial sovereignty to the disputed region", according to the daily. "The standardisation came amid China's growing understanding and recognition of the geography in South Tibet.

Naming the places is a step to reaffirm China's territorial sovereignty to South Tibet," Xiong Kunxin, a professor of ethnic studies at Beijing's Minzu University of China, was quoted as saying.

Xiong said that the legalisation of the regions' names is a part of the rule of law.

"These names have existed since ancient times, but had never been standardised before. Therefore, announcing the names is like a remediation," Guo Kefan, a research fellow at the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences, said.

China's provocative move comes just days after the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, which was the seventh since the 81-year-old spiritual leader fled from Tibet through Tawang and sought refuge in India

Standardising the names from the angles of culture and geography could serve as a reference or leverage when China and India negotiate border issues in future, Guo said.

"The South Tibet region is located alongside China's southwestern border and India's north-eastern border where Sino-Indian border disputes are centered," the report said.

It claimed that India "abruptly announced that it was officially designating the region as 'Arunachal Pradesh' but the Chinese government has neither recognised India's occupation of the region, nor the legitimacy of the province". During the Dalai Lama Arunachal Pradesh visit, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju, who accompanied the Tibetan spiritual leader, had asserted that that Arunachal Pradesh is "an inseparable part of India".

Investigating agencies doing best to bring back Mallya: Jaitley

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday said investigative agencies are doing their best to ensure extradition of controversial businessman Vijay Mallya, who was arrested in London yesterday and later released on bail.

"I think the government and all the investigating agencies are certainly putting (in) their best efforts because the agencies do believe that an offence has been committed for which the person (Mallya) is required in India," the minister told reporters here.

The minister further said Mallya's extradition is part of the "judicial process" in the UK. "It's part of the judicial process in that country and the judicial process functions on certain considerations," he said in response to queries regarding Mallya's extradition. Mallya, who has been declared a proclaimed offender by Indian courts, was arrested in London by the Scotland Yard yesterday on India's request for his extradition on fraud charges.

He was, however, released on bail a few hours later on a bail bond worth 6,50,000 pound. He is required to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on May 17.

The 61-year-old liquor baron has to face charges in



Indian courts in connection with loan default cases.

Mallya, whose now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines owes more than Rs 9,000 crore to various banks, had left India on March 2, 2016.

The Indian government has since revoked his Indian passport, but he has repeatedly dismissed all charges against him.

In January, an Indian court ordered a consortium of lenders to start the process of recovering the loans.

India had placed a formal extradition request for Mallya as per the Extradition Treaty between India and the UK through a note verbale on February 8.

Earlier in January this year, a CBI court had issued a non-bailable warrant against Mallya in the Rs 720-crore IDBI Bank loan default case. He is the owner of a Formula One team.

FM may take up H-1B visa issue with US authorities

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday indicated that he would take up the visa issue with the US authorities during his visit to America.

"These (IT industry issues) are matters of discussion with the appropriate authorities there. Once I do discuss and get an opportunity, I will let you know," he told reporters when asked whether he would take up the concerns of the Indian IT sector with the US administration. The Indian IT industry has expressed serious concerns over the US government moving towards tightening the rules for grant of H-1B visa, mainly used by domestic IT professionals for short-term work.

Jaitley is leaving on Wednesday night on a five-day visit to the United States to attend the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and IMF as well as deliberations of G20 nations.

No assurance that Virbhadra won't be arrested: ED to HC

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday refused to give any assurance in the Delhi High Court that it will not arrest Himachal Pradesh CM Virbhadra Singh when he appears before it tomorrow to record his statement.

The Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister has been summoned by the ED to appear before it tomorrow for recording his statement in a money-laundering case against him, his wife Pratibha Singh and others.

The submission was made before Justice R K Gauba by the ED during the hearing of Singh's plea for quashing of the money-laundering proceedings against him.

The court was hearing arguments on behalf of Singh and will continue to hear them on April 24.

The stand taken by the



agency comes in the wake of the charge sheet filed by CBI against Singh and his wife in a disproportionate assets (DA) case.

CBI had filed the charge sheet hours after the Delhi High Court on March 31 had refused to quash the FIR lodged against Singh in the DA case.

The high court, which rubbished the Chief Minister's claim that the FIR was the result of a "political vendetta", paved the way for criminal proceedings which were stalled

due to an October 1, 2015 order of the Himachal Pradesh High Court restraining the CBI from arresting, interrogating and filing the charge sheet against the accused.

ED had earlier termed as "premature" Singh's plea for quashing of the money laundering proceedings. It had said the plea seeking stay on the proceedings was "not maintainable" as the inquiry into the matter was in a preliminary stage.

ED had in 2015 lodged the case against Singh and others under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after taking cognisance of a criminal complaint filed by CBI in this regard. CBI had lodged a separate disproportionate assets case against Singh and others alleging that he and his family members had amassed wealth of Rs 6.1 crore between 2009 and 2011 disproportionate to the known sources of income.

Jadhav case: India summons Pak deputy high commissioner

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday summoned the Pakistan deputy high commissioner on the issue of death penalty being given to Kulbhushan Jadhav by a military court there and made a fresh demand for consular access to the retired Indian navy officer.

Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner Syed Haidar Shah was called by the external affairs ministry which reiterated that Jadhav was innocent and false charges were framed against him, according to sources.

Shah's summoning comes five days after Indian envoy Gautam Bambawale had met the Pakistan foreign secretary and sought a certified copy of the charge sheet and the army court order in the case, besides consular access to the retired Indian navy officer.

"We definitely want to appeal against the judgement



but we cannot do it unless we have the details of charges and a copy of verdict. So, my demand was that the details of the charge sheet and a copy of the verdict be provided to us," Bambawale had said after the meeting.

Expressing disappointment over Pakistan turning down India's request for consular access to Jadhav, the Indian envoy had also said, "They have denied our request for consular access 13 times (in the last one year).

"I have forcefully asked for consular access on the basis of the international law and on humanitarian grounds as he is an Indian national."

HC says govt taking steps to secure Jadhav's life & release

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it would not interfere with the process relating to the release of death row convict Kulbhushan Jadhav from a Pakistani jail, as the government was taking all steps to safeguard his life.

The Pakistan army chief had on April 10 confirmed the death sentence awarded to Jadhav, a former Naval officer, by a Pakistani military court after he was convicted of "espionage".

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Anu Malhotra observed that at a time when the entire energies of the government are required to be devoted to addressing such a serious matter, this petition has sought to "divert our attention".

"We have no doubt at all that the respondent (central govern-

ment) are best placed to take the decisions, as also all appropriate steps to safeguard the life and liberty of the citizens of this country. In view of the above, as the concerns raised in petition are being addressed by the respondent, no intervention by us in the matter is called for," the bench said. The high court accepted the stand of Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain that the Union of India was making every possible endeavour with urgency to get Jadhav back.

"We find no reason to disbelieve the submission made by ASG when he informs this court that every possible endeavour is being made by the Government of India to safeguard the life and liberty of its citizen," it noted.

Guj HC notice to Centre, state on plea against OBC list

OUR CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat High Court on Wednesday sought the stands of the Union and the state governments on a plea seeking cancellation of a 1994 official resolution which had inducted people of 39 castes into the OBC list.

The plea by BJP corporator Ajmal Thakor of Visnagar Nagarपालिका in Mehsana district also sought a fresh survey to identify other backward communities and create a new list of the Other Backward Class.

The division bench of Chief Justice R Subhash Reddy and Justice V M Pancholi issued notices to the Union and the state governments as well as the national and state OBC commissions on Thakor's petition.

Thakor in his plea filed through his counsel Rohit Patel contended that the inclusion of 39 castes in the OBC list was not based on any review or recommendation of the OBC panel and that it was against the Supreme Court's 1993 order in Indra Sawhney case.

In the Sawhney case, while directing periodic review of the list every ten years, the apex court had ordered that no caste be included without recommendation or review of the commission.

The 1994 official resolution was made by the state government alone and was based on Parikshit Majumdar Commission's recommendation of 1953 in the old state of Saurashtra, it said.

NATION BRIEFS

SPECIAL COURT CONCLUDES ARGUMENTS IN 2G SCAM CASE

NEW DELHI: A special court on Wednesday concluded final arguments in 2G spectrum allocation scam case involving former Telecom Minister A Raja, DMK MP Kanimozhi and others as accused, six years after the CBI filed the first charge sheet. Special Judge O P Saini, who is exclusively dealing with the scam related cases, is likely to pronounce the verdict in the three cases within three months. The court has been hearing the three cases—two filed by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate—against Raja and others and the third filed by the CBI against Essar Group promoters Ravikant Ruia, Anshuman Ruia and others.

INLD MP DUSHYANT CHAUTALA TIES KNOT IN GURGAON

GURGAON: A host of dignitaries including Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Baba Ramdev attended the wedding ceremony of INLD MP Dushyant Chautala who tied the knot with Meghna, daughter of an IPS officer. Haryana Governor Kaptaan Singh Solanki, Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu, HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar, Steel Minister Birender Singh, MoS for External Affairs V K Singh and MoS for Information and Broadcasting, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and MoS for Agriculture Sanjeev Balyan were present at the function held at a hotel here on Tuesday evening.

GOVT APPROVES LEAVE ENCASHMENT SCHEME FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL

NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday approved leave encashment of up to three months for those defence personnel who died or were disabled while in service between 1991 and 1999. The decision will benefit the families of 9,777 officers and other personnel of the defence services who died or were invalidated out of service between December 30, 1991 and November 29, 1999 with less than 15 years of service. This period is very significant as a large number of casualties took place during the Kargil conflict and in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast, the government said.

Technology is solution to all problems, says Prabhu

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on Wednesday advocated for the use of cutting edge technology in the transportation sector, stressing that technology is the solution of every problem.

"We need to modernise, upgrade our infrastructure and find technology solution. All problems can be solved through technology...Right technology is the answer," he said here while inaugurating an event on the use of modern



Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu releasing the 'Action Plan 2022', in New Delhi on Wednesday. Chairman, Railway Board, AK Mittal and Director General (S&T), Railway Board, Akhil Agrawal are also seen

technology in railway signalling system here. The public transporter has organised a workshop on

adaptation and sustainability of modern technologies in railway signalling with focus on skill development and Make in India.

He said there is a need to focus on safety as it is a much larger issue.

"There is a need for upgradation of signalling and balancing it with safety. With safety, there is a greater need for upgradation of signalling. We have to identify new technology and also for training required to use it," Prabhu said.

He said cutting-edge technology in communication can be used in transportation sector.

Adaptation of modern technologies like Centralised Traffic Control, Automatic Train Protection and Automatic Signalling provide low-cost solution for safety at higher speeds and throughout enhancement.

"We should constantly develop, modernise (the system) and make it suitable for contemporary times," Prabhu said.

200 KVs, 125 Navodaya Vidyalayas running headless, says report

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: At least 200 Kendriya Vidyalayas and 125 Navodaya Vidyalayas across the country have no principals, as per a report submitted to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD). The report also highlights shortage of over 10,000 teachers, including those for primary classes, in KVs.

The revelation comes against the backdrop of demands from aspiring teachers and education stakeholders for filling up vacant positions in various institutions including the prestigious IITs and central universities such as the DU.

According to the annual report for the year 2015-16, submitted by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, which

The revelation comes against the backdrop of demands from aspiring teachers and education stakeholders for filling up vacant positions in various institutions including the prestigious IITs and central universities such as the DU

manages operations of the KVs across the country, out of total 1,081 posts for principals, 200 of them are vacant while position of Vice-Principals is vacant in 113 schools. "10,039 teaching posts including TGTs, PGTs and PRTs are also vacant in Kendriya Vidyalayas besides 14,144 non-teaching posts," the report pointed out.

At present 1,142 Kendriya Vidyalayas are functioning under the KVS, including

three abroad -- Moscow (Russia), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Tehran (Iran) -- with an aim to cater to the educational needs of children of transferable central government officials including defence and paramilitary personnel by providing a common programme of education.

The Union Cabinet had last month approved setting up of 50 new Kendriya Vidyalayas and creation of 650 regular posts to provide quality

education to around 50,000 students.

Similar faculty shortage has been pointed out in the annual report of the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti which supervises functioning of the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) in the country. JNVs are government-funded residential schools set-up in each district of the country for gifted students.

"Out of 589 sanctioned posts of principals in JNVs 125 are vacant while 53 schools do not have vice-principals. A total of 2,023 teaching posts and 1,734 non-teaching posts are also lying vacant in JNVs across the country," the annual report said.

Both KVs and JNVs follow the curriculum of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

I-T crackdowns on bureaucrats unearth Rs 20 cr black income

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Income Tax department has detected undisclosed income worth over Rs 20 crore after it conducted searches against some bureaucrats based in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Official sources in the tax department said raids were carried out in the last two days against four government functionaries in these states including against a general manager of the Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirmam Nigam Ltd (UPRNN) in Dehradun for alleged "misuse of official position" and subsequent charges of tax evasion. "Documents showing undisclosed investments in farm houses spread over hundreds of bighas and immovable properties in other cities have been seized," a senior official said. The tax sleuths have also

made an inventory of some costly assets and posh vehicles like Range Rover, an Audi and a BMW car from the premises of the official and his family.

They said the I-T teams were surprised to find 15 large LED television sets fitted in the farm house which was constructed on a land earmarked to setup a factory. A well-equipped gym, a guest house and an under-construction swimming pool were also found there.

"The department is probing tax evasion to the tune of a few crores against the official and his associates based in Rishikesh," they claimed, without elaborating further.

In another search operation against a local body chairman in UP's Siddharthnagar district, the department detected tax evasion to the tune of Rs 10 crore as per preliminary estimates."

Akhilesh's pet 'Samajwadi Smartphone Yojana' in limbo

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW: The Samajwadi Smartphone Yojana, a pet project of former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav which promised free smart phones to people, appears as good as scrapped with the Yogi Adityanath government taking no decision on its continuation.

"No decision has been taken by the Uttar Pradesh government to continue the scheme," Additional Chief Secretary (IT and Electronics) Sanjiv Saran told a news agency here.

Saran, however, did not elaborate on the issue. Official sources said the scheme would have put a huge burden on the state exchequer. Over 1.4 crore people, especially youngsters, have already registered themselves online for the scheme, which was launched by Akhilesh amid much fanfare last year, months ahead of the Assembly elections.

"Persons who are at least 18 years old as on January 1, 2017, have an annual income up to Rs 6 lakh, have passed Class X, and who are not government employees or their children" were eligible for the free smart phone



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during his Janata Darbar in Lucknow on Wednesday

The registration process for the scheme had begun on October 10. The online registration process was also aimed at establishing Akhilesh's effort to usher in "digital democracy" in the state and bridge the digital divide. In January this year, the online registration for the scheme was stalled in view of an Election Commission order after a complaint was filed by the BJP, which said it violated the Model Code of Conduct as the UP Assembly election schedule

had already been announced. The Uttar Pradesh government recently scrapped the Samajwadi Pension Scheme of the previous government and ordered a detailed review of its beneficiaries. CM Yogi Adityanath, who was reviewing various schemes being run by the Social Welfare Department of the state, asked the officials to review the list of beneficiaries under the pension scheme and find out whether they were deserving candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria.

No liquor shops near religious places, Adityanath tells officials

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday warned state officials of action if the ban on liquor shops in important religious places like Ayodhya, Vrindavan, Chitrakoot and Deva Sharif was not strictly implemented.

In a meeting with officials of the Excise Department, he also directed that a new excise policy be chalked out with a view to increase the state's revenue.

"Strict action will be initiated against officials in case total prohibition was not imposed around religious places and officials responsible will be punished," the chief minister warned officials during the meeting held late last night.

Adityanath directed officials that the 8,544 liquor shops whose location has to be changed following a Supreme Court order banning liquor sale along highways should be allowed to open only at a prescribed distance from schools, places of worship, hospitals and populated areas.

There should be total prohibition in the one kilometre area around Kanshi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, Krishna Janmasthan in Mathura and Sangam in Allahabad, he said.

Adityanath also told the Excise Department officials to chalk out on priority, a new excise policy with a view to increasing revenue.

BSF sacks jawan who had posted video on bad food

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: BSF jawan Tej Bahadur Yadav who had posted a video online complaining about poor quality food being served to the troops on icy heights along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir, has been dismissed on charge of indiscipline.

A spokesman for the Border Security Force said constable Yadav "was found guilty of all the charges and awarded dismissal from service."

The order comes five months after he posted the video on Facebook, triggering public outcry over the working conditions of troops guarding the country's frontiers.

The BSF had conducted a Summary Security Force Court (SSFC) where Yadav was tried on two counts of making "false allegations" on social media regarding the quality of food, and carrying two mobile phones while on operational duty, the spokesman said.

He said making "false allegations" about the quality of food was an act "prejudicial to good order and discipline" of the force, and that he did not adhere to formal grievance redressal mechanism available.



Tej Bahadur Yadav

The spokesman alleged that constable Yadav did not obey a general order of the force and carried two mobile phones while on operational duty which was against the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Yadav also posted photographs in uniform on social media in contravention of instructions, he said.

The SSFC began its proceedings from April 13 during which "all opportunities" were given to Yadav to defend himself, the spokesman said, adding he can appeal against the punishment to an appellate authority within three months.

Yadav, clad in battle fatigues and carrying his service rifle, had in January this year posted a video on Facebook, claiming poor quality food like watery

'dal' and burnt 'chapatis' were being served to the troops serving across the inhospitable terrain.

While the government procures essentials for the soldiers, the higher-ups "sell them off" in an "illegal" manner in the market making the lower level personnel in the force suffer, he had alleged.

The jawan, who was part of a BSF unit posted along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, had also said in the video that a watery soup-like dal, which he claimed had only turmeric and salt, and a burnt chapati were served to them.

Yadav was serving in the 29th battalion of the force and had been transferred to a BSF battalion in Jammu during the inquiry.

Dinakaran cautious, claims MLAs meet not show of strength

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI: Beleaguered AIADMK (Amma) faction leader TTV Dinakaran on Wednesday struck a conciliatory note, saying he had no problem with the merger of rival party factions and felt the rebellion against him was due to some "fear".

The Deputy General Secretary of the V K Sasikala faction of the AIADMK also said that he had "stepped aside" last night itself in the interest of the party and made it clear that the MLAs' meet called by him was not a show of strength.

"They might have done this (revolt) due to some fear. Maybe there was some dis-



TTV Dinakaran

satisfaction against me. But I don't know," he told reporters. He said he had no regrets over the revolt against him.

"I wonder what the apprehension is about. When they make such sudden announcement there must be some fear," he said. However, none of the actions should affect the party and its government,

Dinakaran said, adding he was even "stepping aside" in their interest.

The Deputy General Secretary and nephew of Sasikala said the MLAs' meeting called by him later on Wednesday should not be seen as a show of strength. "All MLAs have been asked to come. It is not a show of strength... I am not trying to show any numbers," he said.

He said he had asked the MLAs to be patient and united and give no room for rivals to exploit the situation.

"I myself would have announced it (of keeping away from the party) if they had told me about their decision," he said referring to the last night's decision of senior ministers

BSP to fight UP urban body polls on party symbol after 22 yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW: The BSP on Wednesday decided to contest the upcoming urban body elections on the party symbol after a gap of more than two decades and stressed on dealing with fresh challenges through a new strategy.

At a meeting of party leaders of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhnad convened by party supremo Mayawati, detailed discussions were held on the issue of upcoming urban body elections in the state, and it was decided that they will be contested on the party symbol, said a statement issued here.

Though the BSP's base is



Party supremo Mayawati

not as strong in urban areas (as in rural areas), the decision has been taken in view of the growth in people's support in urban areas as well, the release said.

"The party will try to give good results with the help of sarv samaj (entire society)," it said quoting the party chief.

The BSP has not fought

the urban body polls on party ticket after 1995 but Wednesday's decision was taken following a demand to this effect from its leaders who felt it was time to make the party's presence felt in the state, especially after the debacle in the recent assembly polls, party insiders said.

Reviewing the present political situation, Mayawati directed the leaders to increase the BSP's support base among the sarv samaj while facing new challenges, the release said.

"There is a need to work with renewed vigour and missionary zeal through a new strategy to deal with new challenges before the BSP movement," she said.

3 municipal corporations go to polls in Maharashtra

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: Polling is underway in three municipal corporations -- Chandrapur, Latur and Parbhani -- in Maharashtra on Wednesday.

The stakes are especially high for the ruling BJP as it is not in power in any of these three corporations and is looking to make inroads.

According to the State Election Commission, till 1.30 pm, 29.2 per cent, 37.31 per cent and 34 per cent voter turnout had been registered in Chandrapur, Parbhani and Latur, respectively.

Chandrapur is the home turf of senior BJP leader and Finance Minister Sudhir Mun-

gantiwar. At present Congress is in power in this 66-member civic body.

As many as 460 candidates are in the fray whose fate will be decided by 3.02 lakh voters.

In the 70-member Latur corporation, it will a test of political clout for BJP leader and state minister Sambhajirao Nilangekar and the local Congress MLA Amit Deshmukh.

Congress, which controls the corporation, had got a drubbing in the recent local body polls in Latur district.

The city had faced acute water crisis last year and government had to transport water by railway waggons at the peak of summer.

NATION BRIEFS

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY'S PASSENGER TRAFFIC, EARNINGS REGISTER GROWTH

KOLKATA: In the financial year 2016-17, South Eastern Railway has carried 259.06 million originating passengers as against 256.88 million passengers carried in 2015-16 registering an increase of 0.85%. Out of total 259.06 million passengers, 137.10 million were suburban passengers and 121.96 million were non-suburban passengers. South Eastern Railway's earnings from passenger traffic in 2016-17 has been Rs. 1924.75 crores as against Rs. 1838.82 crores earned from passenger traffic in 2015-16, achieving a growth of 4.67%.

ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING, YARD REMODELING COMMISSIONED AT DADRI

NEW DELHI: Dadri Electronic Interlocking with massive yard remodelling involving Up & Down main lines, common loop and ICD & NTPC yards with construction of new platforms & 5.03 KM 3rd line connecting it to all lines has been commissioned on April 16 within 150 minutes of traffic block without any NI. The work involved insertion of total 19 new points with 4 over runs and removal of 10 points effecting UP and Dn main lines and Goods movement into NTPC and ICD yards.

THIEVES DON'T SPARE EVEN POLICE, STEAL THEIR JEEP IN UTTAR PRADESH

LUCKNOW: In Uttar Pradesh, thieves do not spare even the police stations when they strike. This was evident when a police jeep with a beacon was stolen from the premises of Ghazipur police station. The theft came to light this morning, creating an embarrassing situation for the administration since the new government is giving top importance to law and order. After the theft was noticed, the police swung into action and the jeep was recovered. The accused was also arrested. "A case been registered and the accused has been arrested. Action will definitely be taken for negligence," Senior Superintendent of Police Manzil Saini said.



West Central Railway's Jabalpur division secures Rajbhusha proficiency shield during its 62nd Railway Week celebration event on Tuesday

Pb Cabinet nod to fee regulation rules



Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh presides over a cabinet meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH: Private schools in Punjab will not be able to increase fees by more than 8 per cent annually as the state Cabinet on Wednesday gave its nod to the rules for regulation of fee of unaided educational Institutions.

The rules lay a cap on the annual fee hike by private schools at 8 per cent of the previous year's fee, Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal said adding that this applied to all other funds charged by the school as well.

The move is aimed at curbing the excessive fees being charged by private schools across the state, an official spokesperson said after a meeting chaired by Chief Minister

Captain Amarinder Singh.

The spokesperson pointed out that the Punjab Regulation of Fee of Unaided Educational Institutions Act, 2016 had already been enacted following directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The Punjab State Regulation of Fee of Unaided Educational Institutions Rules, 2017 were approved by the cabinet on Wednesday, he added.

The Cabinet also decided that persons of national eminence in the field of industry, technology or technical education would be appointed as Chairmen of the Board of Governors of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University, Bathinda and the IK Gujral Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar.

Cabinet approves e-bidding for sand mining

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab Cabinet on Wednesday approved fresh mine auctions through progressive e-bidding to boost the state revenue and bring greater transparency into the mining sector. The decision will bring to an end the earlier practice of granting contracts of mines through reverse bidding process, an official spokesperson said.

The decision, taken by the state cabinet under the chairmanship of CM Amarinder Singh, is expected to increase the government revenue receipt to around Rs 300 crore, the spokesperson said. It will also ensure uninterrupted supply of sand and gravel (bajri) to the consumers at fair price, he added.

The state government would soon implement the Integrated Mines and Minerals Management System (i3MS) to bring greater transparency into the system, he said. AGENCIES

CBI initiates preliminary enquiry into paper leak

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The issue of army recruitment examination paper leak in February has come under the scanner of the CBI which has initiated a preliminary enquiry into it.

Sources said the CBI had received a complaint from the Defence Ministry alleging that the examination paper of Army Recruitment Board for lower level posts was leaked a day before the test was scheduled on February 26.

The agency has started a preliminary enquiry into the alleged leakage of the question paper of the Common Entrance Examination to be held in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa, they said.

The army had to cancel the examination following the crime branch of Thane police busting the recruitment racket.

Police had arrested 18 people from Maharashtra and Goa for their alleged involvement

in the leak.

Thane police had said 350 students were also detained for questioning and later let off.

The test was cancelled at examination centres in Kamptee, Nagpur, Ahmednagar, Ahmedabad, Goa and Kirkee.

The examination was to be held for a number of posts including those of soldier clerk, strongman and soldier tradesman at 52 centres across the country.

The police had received information that an institute which conducts coaching classes for army job aspirants had given the paper to some aspirants in advance for a price.

The middlemen had also arranged for fake domicile and residence proof for students hailing from other places so as to enable them appear for the examination in that zone.

The beneficiary was to pay around Rs four to five lakh to the middlemen, the officials had said. AGENCIES

Cracker shop fire: Toll rises to seven

INDORE: The death toll of fire in Ranipura area here has risen to seven, with two more persons succumbing to injuries late last night, a municipal official said on Wednesday.

The fire started at a firecracker shop in Ranipura area on Tuesday afternoon, and spread to the adjoining shop selling polythene bags and five other outlets. Owner of the firecracker shop, Gurbinder Singh Narang, and another person, Jagdish Solanki, were found dead on the spot on Tuesday. Others who died at the government-run M Y Hospital during treatment were identified as Suresh Sharma, Chetan, Sudarshan, Raja and Karan, police said.

The district administration has ordered a magisterial probe into the incident. Collector P Narhari said the shop where the fire started was authorised to keep only samples of firecrackers, but the owner had illegally stocked a huge quantity. AGENCIES

EC full bench talks J&K by-poll issue with Home Secretary

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission and the Home Ministry on Wednesday discussed measures to ensure a violence-free bypoll to the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat like cutting down on the number of polling stations for better security.

Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi and his two Election Commissioners held talks with Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi, who assured them of providing adequate paramilitary forces for the bypoll to be held on May 25, official sources said.

The assurance from the Union Home Secretary assumes significance as there were voices

CEC Nasim Zaidi and the two Election Commissioners held talks with Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi, who assured them of providing adequate paramilitary forces for the by-poll to be held on May 25

within the Mehbooba Mufti-led coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir for postponing the bypoll, citing law-and-order situation in the Valley.

There were large-scale violence during the bypoll to the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat on April 9 in which eight people died. Several trade and travel bodies had made representations to the state government seeking postponement of polls

the Chief Electoral Officer of the state had suggested to the Election Commission to reduce the number of polling booths.

As per the revised list, there are more than 1,200 polling booths in the Anantnag constituency which are spread over four districts. The Centre had sent 30,000 paramilitary personnel to the Valley for poll duty but majority of them had been brought back after the elections were postponed to May 25.

Conducting elections in this parliamentary seat will be a daunting task for the EC as well as the state government as several areas in South Kashmir have presence of local as well as foreign militants, the sources said.

KVIC marks centenary celebrations of Gandhi's Satyagraha in Bihar



PATNA: As part of the Gandhi's Champaran Satyagrah centenary celebrations, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), on Wednesday organised several programs at Patna and Motihari, the district headquarters of East Champaran.

Chairman VK Saxena informed that KVIC had set up the largest pavilion in Gandhi Maidan. "Selfie with Gandhi and honey-bee information centres were hotspots and most visited places at

Patna and Motihari as well," he said. Saxena also informed that the state unit of KVIC had organised a state-level exhibition at Town Hall Maidan in Motihari, where local Khadi institutions and Prime Minister Employment Generation Program units of five districts of Bihar and adjoining states took active part. KVIC also distributed five charkhas and one looms each in those 13 villages - where Mahatma Gandhi had visited during his Satyagrah in 1917. AGENCIES

SC VERDICT ON BABRI DEMOLITION CAME AS A SETBACK TO PARTY'S VETERANS INCLUDING LK ADVANI

Uma unperturbed, says 'ready to sacrifice life for Ram temple'

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Unfazed by the apex court order that she be tried for "conspiracy" in the Babri mosque demolition case, Union minister Uma Bharti today said she is ready to sacrifice her life for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"Grand Ram temple in Ayodhya is my dream. Ready to go to prison or be hanged for India and Ram Mandir," the senior BJP leader told reporters here. Bharti, who said she would go to Ayodhya on Wednesday night, cancelled her visit apparently after being advised by the party leadership.

Asserting she was "proud, unapologetic" and does not repent her role in the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign, Bharti said she is ready to face whatever punishments come her way as she fights for the construction of Ram temple.

The Water Resources Minister was speaking after the Supreme Court allowed the CBI's plea seeking trial under "conspiracy" charges against BJP leaders L K Advani, M M Joshi and her in the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition case.

She dismissed the conspiracy charges.

"There was no conspiracy. Everything was in the open. I took part in Ram temple campaign with pride and confi-



Union Minister for Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation Uma Bharti addressing a Press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday

dence. I had given up the post of Chief Minister for the sake of the tri-colour.

"I will do whatever it takes to see the Ram temple is constructed...Ram temple will be built, koi maai ka laal use rohani sakta (no one has the power to stop it from being built)," Bharti said, adding she was present at the mosque site on December 6, 1992.

Hitting out at the Congress for seeking her resignation, Bharti referred to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and claimed that then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had sought to justify the killings post the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

"When thousands of Sikhs died in the riots, Sonia Gandhi

was at the house of her husband. Rajiv was trying to justify the massacre.

"So, can we say she was part of a conspiracy? The Congress has no moral right to seek my resignation," she said.

At the same time, Bharti said she is not the type of a person who wants to stick to any post and recalled she had quit chief ministership in Madhya Pradesh over a decade ago after a court convicted her in a case involving the national flag.

"I gave up the chief minister's post after a court convicted me. In this (Ayodhya) case, the trial is yet to begin. The charges are yet to be proved," she said but added, "The post of a minister is too small for me."

Top BJP leaders meet, discuss SC verdict

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Top BJP leaders on Wednesday discussed the political and legal fallout of the Supreme Court verdict on the Babri mosque demolition that has come as a setback to the party's sidelined veterans including L K Advani.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president Amit Shah, union ministers Arun Jaitley, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadhkar and M Venkaiah Naidu were huddled for two hours at Modi's residence but a senior party leader played down the meeting's significance, saying it had a number of issues, including the Kashmir crisis, on its agenda.

The meeting was held against the backdrop of the apex court verdict allowing the CBI to put Advani, 89, Murli Manohar Joshi, 83, and Uma Bharti, 57, on trial after restoring the criminal conspiracy charges against them.

A senior leader insisted that it was a pre-scheduled meeting. It is understood that the

apex court verdict and its implications – political as well as legal – were also discussed with the leadership exploring various options to deal with it.

Some BJP leaders said the party would not like the message to go out that the "heroes" of its most resonant Hindu-tva movement, spearheaded by Advani in early 90s, were tried for criminal conspiracy when it was in power at the Centre as well in Uttar Pradesh.

For the record, senior leader and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the party will study in detail the court verdict before offering comments. Prasad asserted that BJP highly respects its leaders like Advani and Joshi.

The party has held the position that the demolition of mosque was not planned but a spontaneous act of agitating 'kar sevaks' and there was no conspiracy behind its razing on December 6, 1992 at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

The uneasy relationship that Modi and Shah share with Advani and Joshi also does not help the party.

Law of land should prevail, guilty must be punished: Cong

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Wednesday said the guilty in the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition case should be punished.

"The Supreme Court has spoken. Let justice be done and the guilty punished, Congress chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala said, reacting to a Supreme Court order restoring a criminal conspiracy charge against BJP leaders L K Advani, M M Joshi and Uma Bharti.

The Congress also urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure that his ministers maintained a "high standard of morality". Uma Bharti is the Minister for Water Resources in the Modi Cabinet.

"The law is equal for everyone irrespective of stature, caste, creed, religion or region," he said.

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal also expressed satisfaction over the order and hoped that Modi would remember his "pronouncements" on morality.

Lalu accuses PM of 'crafting' Advani trial

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PATNA: RJD chief Lalu Prasad on Wednesday alleged that the Supreme Court order allowing trial of top BJP leaders in the Babri Masjid case was a "well-thought-out politics" of the Prime Minister to remove L K Advani's name from the Presidential race.

"The CBI is under the influence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It stood in the Supreme Court and sought permission to run trial against Advani and others in the Babri Masjid demolition case," Prasad alleged.

"Since Advani's name was in circulation as a probable for the post of President, Modi through well-thought-out politics struck out his (Advani's) name," he alleged.

"It is well known that the CBI does what the government desires," the RJD chief claimed.



RJD Chief Lalu Prasad at a Press conference in Patna

Prasad was reacting to the apex court order allowing the CBI plea and restoring criminal conspiracy charges against Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti. "The BJP makes no difference between itself and others while playing dangerous politics against anyone considered opposed to Modi," he claimed.

Gaikwad issue: Air India writes to Delhi Police

NEW DELHI: Air India is believed to have written to the Delhi Police asking why action has not been taken yet on the complaint filed against Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Gaikwad who had assaulted a staffer of the airline last month.

Following the incident on March 23, an FIR has been registered in the matter.

Sources said Air India has written to the Delhi police on why there is delay in taking action against the MP.

The airline is understood to have said that the morale of the employees is being impacted as no action has been initiated against the MP despite nearly a month after the incident, they added.

There was no official comment from Air India or the Delhi Police.

The incident and subsequent flying ban on Gaikwad had generated a lot of political heat before the ban was removed. MPOST

I-T searches in TN, K'taka and Kerala; documents seized

CHENNAI: The Income Tax department on Wednesday conducted searches at about 80 locations in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala in connection with its tax evasion probe against a group involved in chit fund operations.

Officials said a number of documents have been seized during the raids and bank lockers and accounts identified even as the searches on the group, identified as Gokulam, and its associates are still continuing. Efforts to reach the company, based here, over phone or email did not fructify.

No cash seizures have been made so far, they said.

The raids were conducted at about 43 locations in Tamil Nadu, 29 in Kerala and six in Karnataka apart from few others. They added that the department was acting on some "vital" inputs on alleged generation of black money by chit fund or ponzi route and hence the operations were launched early this morning. The firm is said to be involved in various sectors like education, health care and film production, they said.

Officials made it clear that the action had no political connection within Tamil Nadu or outside it.

The department here had conducted multiple searches few days back and had raided the premises belonging to Tamil Nadu Health Minister C Vijayabaskar and others, days before the April 12 bypolls at RK Nagar Assembly constituency, which have now been postponed by the EC after reports of illegal money power being allegedly used to influence the polls. AGENCIES

Judicial probes on Manipur encounters 'biased': Army to SC

NEW DELHI: A day after it was rapped by the Supreme Court for remaining silent over rape and murder charges against its personnel in Manipur, the Army on Wednesday said the judicial probes conducted into these charges were "biased" and slanted against them due to local factors.

It alleged that the district judges, who were locals, had conducted the judicial inquiries into the alleged killings and local factors came in the way of the probe reports which went against the armed forces.

"The problem in every

case is that the slant of judicial inquiry was against us. Judicial inquiries which have been done by a district judge proceeded against us by the virtue of their local apprehensions or local positions. Army's job is not to kill its own people," Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi told a bench of Justices M B Lokur and U U Lalit. Citing an example, Rohatgi said if the Army goes after two terrorists holed up in a civilian area and in cross-fire some people are killed, then it cannot be held guilty for these casualties.

"We are in our own country.



If army is disbelieved, then the whole system will go haywire and cannot work. The inquiry officers were biased due to their local considerations," Rohatgi said, adding the judicial probes were not conducted by the High Court which had tasked

the district judges to inquire into the allegations of extra-judicial killings. He said the Army in Manipur was operating in a very difficult situation and needed to be trusted as it cannot stage-manage the killing of its own people.

"Army is operating in insurgency-prone areas of Manipur in difficult circumstances and it cannot be disbelieved. It cannot be said that I have stage-managed to kill my own people," he said, adding that compensation has been paid wherever the High Court has directed.

To this, the bench said

"compensation cannot be a substitute for everything".

Rohatgi responded to the remark saying none of the kin of the victims have complained and compensation was paid to their satisfaction.

"In criminal law, victim compensation is immaterial and the victim satisfaction can only be considered when there are compoundable offences," the bench said. The Attorney General urged the apex court that no decision should be taken on the judicial inquiry reports of district judges due to their local bias. MPOST

Note ban: ED attaches Rs 12 cr assets in Sekhar Reddy case

CHENNAI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth Rs 12 crore of two accused in connection with its money laundering probe against sand mining baron J Sekhar Reddy and others post demonetisation.

Officials said the agency issued a provisional attachment order here attaching the assets of Ashok Jain and Mahaveer Hirani under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

"The investigations revealed that Rs 10.25 crore of cash and 6.5 kg gold (valued at Rs 1.80 crore) seized by the Income Tax authorities from the premises of Jain and others are assets involved in the process of money laundering and are liable to attachment pending confiscation." Accordingly, the said assets worth Rs 12 crore were attached provisionally," the agency said in a statement.

Both Jain and Hirani had been arrested by the ED in this

case in December last year. A total of five people have been arrested till now in this case including Reddy by the central probe agency. The agency had filed a criminal complaint against Reddy and others based on a CBI FIR in the case which was registered after the I-T department first searched his and his associates' premises in November last year.

The Reddy case and the other involving Delhi-based lawyer Rohit Tandon and Kolkata-based businessman Paras Mal Lodha are being probed by at least four agencies – the ED, the Income Tax department, the CBI and Delhi Police, and are considered the most high-profile black money cases being investigated in the aftermath of the notes ban.

An attachment of assets action under PMLA is aimed to deprive the accused from obtaining benefits of their ill-gotten wealth and it gets confirmed after an order of the Adjudicating Authority of the said Act within 180 days. MPOST

The agency had filed a criminal complaint against Reddy and others based on a CBI FIR in the case which was registered after the I-T department first searched his and his associates' premises in November last year

ISRO set for 1st developmental flight of 'game-changer' rocket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD: Indian Space Research Organisation plans to undertake next month the first developmental flight of a "game-changer" rocket capable of launching four-ton class of satellites from Sriharikota spaceport, says its Chairman A S Kiran Kumar.

ISRO rockets (launch vehicles) at present have the capability to launch satellites up to 2.2 tons; it depends on international launchers to orbit satellites heavier than that.

"Next month, we have scheduled the launch of GSLV-



ISRO Chairman A S Kiran Kumar

Mk III-D1", Kiran Kumar said. The Bengaluru-headquartered space agency plans to undertake the second developmental flight within a year.

"By the time two developmental flights are over, we will be working towards making more launches so that it (GSLV-Mk III) becomes operational", he said. ISRO views operationalisation of this rocket as a "game-changer" for it, he said.

"Once we build our own four tonne capacity, we will be able to significantly reduce our launch from outside; then we are also looking at building satellites within that four-tonne capacity, so that you can do all the launches within the country," Kiran Kumar said.

The GSLV-Mk III-D1 launcher will carry GSAT-

19 satellite which has a mass of 3200 kg.

The satellite would carry Ka and Ku band payload along with a Geostationary Radiation Spectrometer (GRASP) payload to monitor and study the nature of the charged particles and influence of space radiation on spacecraft and electronic components.

The satellite would employ advanced spacecraft technologies including bus subsystem experiments in electrical propulsion system, indigenous Li ion battery and indigenous bus bars for power distribution, among others.

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SC039154
Santalalith Thermal Power Station
P.O. - Santalalith Thermal Plant, Dist. - Purulia, Pin - 723 146

Notice Inviting E-Tender
Ref. No.: WBPDC/STPS/NT/17-18/27/STPS Date: 20.04.2017
NIT No.: WBPDC/STPS/NT/17-18/27/STPS

E-tenders in prescribed format are invited at <https://wbenders.gov.in> by the General Manager, STPS, WBPDC, from eligible and resourceful Contractors/Companies in 02 (two) part bid system for Annual Contract for Operation work of New Intake Pump House at Viringi. Tender Document Download Start Date: 15.04.2017 at 10.00 hrs. Bid Submission End Date: 26.04.2017 at 17.00 hrs. Contact Person: D. Bhattacharyya, DGM (M&C), Tel.No.: 03251 260218. For details please visit: <https://wbenders.gov.in> ICA/T/869/3/2017

KOLKATA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Abridged e-NIT No. 06/SE(EC)/WS/KMDA of 2017-2018

e-Tender is invited by the Superintending Engineer, East Circle, WS Sector, KMDA, 'C' Block, 2nd Floor, Unnayan Bhavan, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 700 091 from eligible and resourceful contractors for the following works: Name of work : Design drawing, construction and commissioning of Clear Water Underground Reservoir 1.00 ML Capacity together with Pump House on UGR, including supply and installation of related Electro-Mechanical works over pile foundation along with trial run for 6 months and renovation of existing Raw Water Intake Jetty, Water Treatment Plant and Clear Water Reservoir with pump machinery at Bhatpara Municipality on Turnkey Basis under AMRUT. Estimated Amount : Rs. 3.44,00,000/- Earnest Money: Rs. 6,88,000/- Time of Completion: 450 days. Last date & time of submission of bids online is : 15.05.2017 at 18.50 hrs. For details contact the above office or visit our both websites. KMDA/T-361A-Contd(6)/2017-18
Visit Website : www.kmdaonline.org/www.wbtenders.gov.in

KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e-TENDER
ABRIDGED NIT

The Director General (Electrical), KMC invites online re-tender under two part Bid system for the following works :

1) NIT No. : KMC/LTG/Z-IV/11/17-18
Name of work : Operation of Electrical Installation at all the Institutions under Br.-XII (For 3 Years). Estimated Amount: Rs. 17,86,044.24. Earnest Money: Rs. 36,000.00

2) NIT No. : KMC/LTG/Z-IV/12/17-18
Name of work : Operation of Electrical Installation at Santoshpur Municipal Market, Ramlal Bazar and Jadavgarh Municipal Market (For 3 Years) BR-XII. Estimated Amount: Rs. 17,86,044.24. Earnest Money: Rs. 36,000.00. Period of Completion: 1095 Days (for Sl. No. 1-2). Last Date and Time of Completion of Bid: 05.05.2017 upto 12.00 Noon (for Sl. No.1-2). The Bid forms and other details are available on and from 18.04.2017 from 11.00 A.M. from the website: <https://etender.wb.nic.in> (for Sl. No.1-2).

The Director General (S & D), KMC invites online percentage rate tender under two bid system for the following work:

NIT No. : KMC/DG (S_D)/SD/CEN/755B/16-17
Name of work : Improvement of Drainage System adjacent to 33A, 33B & 33C, Canal South Road under Br.-VII. Estimated Cost: Rs. 25,06,659.76. Earnest Money: Rs. 51,700.00. Period of Completion: 45 Days. Last Date and Time of submission of Bid (Online) : 03.05.2017 at 2.00 P.M. The Bid forms and other details are available on and from 18.04.2017 at 11.00 A.M. from the website: <https://etender.wb.nic.in>

CORRIGENDUM
NIT No.: KMC/DG(S-D)/SUREN/III/17-18/033 of Sewerage & Drainage Dept. Published in this Newspaper on 10.04.2017 (Key No.: 29/17-18). Tender will be opened on 28.04.2017 at 1.00 P.M. instead of 26.04.2017 at 1.00 P.M. Other terms and conditions remain unchanged. 57/17-18

WB HIDCO
N. I. O No.03 of G.M (E)-IV of 2017-2018
Sealed Quotation is invited from the agencies having ability in execution for the work Supply manpower for traffic assistance during diversion of vehicular traffic around Narkel Bagan More at 3rd Rotary in New Town, Kolkata (Phase-III)[Location-A & B separately]. Last date of receiving application- 20/04/2017 up to 3.00 P.M.
General Manager (Engg)-IV
WB HIDCO
ICA/T/857(3)2017

DAMODAR VALLEY CORPORATION
e-Tender Notice
Damodar Valley Corporation invites online bids (e-tendering with online reverse auction) from eligible bidders for :

NIT No.	Description of Work	Estimated Cost (₹)	Tender Downloading Period & Time
BT/A (Const)/T/2016-17/WC/E/06/E-03	Annual Rate Contract for maintenance of electrical system of 400 KV switchyard (except 400 KV GIS made by Hyosung Corporation, Korea) at DVC, BTPS-A	20,19,465/-	From 21.04.2017 (10.00 Hrs.) to 22.05.2017 (upto 10.30 hrs.)
BT/A (Const)/T/2016-17/WC/E/07/E-05	Annual Rate Contract for operation and maintenance of ESP of BTPS-A (1 x 500 MW)	29,19,791/-	

For further details and to participate in the tender, please log on to DVC Website: <https://etender.dvc.gov.in> (Inf./12/04/17-18)

Nabadiganta Industrial Township Authority
Unnayan Bhavan, 1st Floor, Block - A, Sec-II, Kol - 91
NOTICE INVITING E - TENDER
Separate e-tenders are invited by the Executive Officer, Nabadiganta Industrial Township Authority for the under mentioned works, through electronic tendering (e-tendering) from eligible and resourceful Contractors having sufficient credential and financial capability for execution of works of similar nature.

NIT No. : WBMAD/NDITA/01/2017-18 Dated: 18.04.2017

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Value put to Tender (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)
1.	On call emergent repair of road, footpath etc. as and where necessary within Sector-V under NDITA. [Area bounded by left lane from J. K. Saha bridge up to College more, College more to Nayapatty (left side) encircled by Salt Lake By-pass Road.] Tender ID: 2017_MAD_109170_1.	61,17,068.00	1,22,341.00
2.	On call emergent repair of road, footpath etc. as and where necessary within Sector-V under NDITA. [Area bounded by left lane from College more to Ring Road & right lane from College more to Nayapatty encircled by Salt Lake By-pass Road up to Box Bridge.] Tender ID: 2017_MAD_109170_2.	59,24,728.00	1,18,495.00
3.	On call emergent repair of road, footpath etc. as and where necessary within Sector-V under NDITA. [Area bounded by right lane from J. K. Saha Bridge up to College more, right lane from College more to SDF, SDF to Bowlers Den (both side) encircled by Salt Lake By-pass up to Chingrighata.] Tender ID: 2017_MAD_109170_3.	57,28,757.00	1,14,575.00
4.	On call emergent repair of road, footpath etc. as and where necessary within Sector-V under NDITA. [Area bounded by right lane from College more to Ring Road & left lane from College more to SDF encircled by Ring Road.] Tender ID: 2017_MAD_109170_4.	50,51,057.00	1,01,021.00
5.	Construction of house for compactor machine at the plot beside Weigh Bridge at Sector-V under NDITA. Tender ID: 2017_MAD_109170_5.	24,68,338.00	49,367.00

Time of Completion: 365 days for Sl. No. 1 to 4 & 90 days for Sl. No. 5. Bid Submission Start Date: 20.04.2017 at 11.30 hrs. Bid Submission End Date : 04.05.2017 up to 17.00 hrs. Technical Bid Opening Date: 08.05.2017 at 11.00 hrs. For details contact the Office of NDITA at Unnayan Bhavan, Salt Lake City on all working days during office hours or visit : www.ndita.org or www.wbdma.gov.in

EDITORIAL

Distraction from the real problem

News of former liquor baron Vijay Mallya's arrest on Tuesday in London saw television channels scrambling for "expert analysis". Some even went to the extent of congratulating the Indian government on the arrest, while others began speculating on the fate that awaited Mallya. Reports later in the day that he was granted bail threw cold water at all the excitement generated. The former Rajya Sabha MP owes 17 banks in India an estimated Rs 9000 crore, besides standing accused of money laundering and fraud under Indian law. Much to the embarrassment of Indian authorities, he had fled the country on March 2, 2016—the day public sector banks moved the Debt Recovery Tribunal against him. A consortium of banks, led by the State Bank of India, had hoped to restrain the former liquor baron from leaving the country and sought a security deposit from him to ensure his attendance at the debt recovery tribunal proceedings against him. Suffice it to say, they were unsuccessful in their attempts. Even since his escape, New Delhi has been attempting to get British authorities to extradite him to India. Although both countries have signed an extradition treaty, the process of bringing Mallya back is going to be long drawn. All the hoopla surrounding him deflects from the real problem at hand, which is the mountain of corporate debt that Indian banks, especially those in the public sector, are trapped under. As per recent reports in a leading news daily, the gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of state-owned banks surged 56.4% to Rs 614,872 crore during the 12-month period that ended last December. What's even more frightening is that the volume of NPAs is set to grow further in the following two quarters. Stressed assets now make up over 12% of the total loans in the banking system. The situation in public sector banks is far worse. Their stressed loans are at least 16%, which is more than three times that of private banks. Real credit growth is now negative, the lowest in over two decades. Nearly 20% of India's corporate debt is held by firms that are not generating enough profits even to service their annual interest — forget about the principal sum they owe. Under the tenure of former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, a whole host of steps was initiated to tackle the problem.

One of the major tasks that Rajan has undertaken during his tenure is the proposed clean-up of bank balance sheets initiated under the RBI's Asset Quality Review, much to the chagrin of wasteful major corporate borrowers. The RBI's asset quality review covered 36 banks (including all those in the public sector). What the AQR revealed to some extent was the actual scale of the NPA problem. Besides the steps initiated during Rajan's tenure, the RBI and the Centre have not covered any significant ground in tackling the problem. Senior economic advisors to the Centre proposed a "bad bank"—a private or state-owned public asset reconstruction agency that would buy up bad debt from banks. In its bid to tackle the problem, the RBI has come up with this idea probably with the understanding that many of its schemes—Flexible Refinancing of Infrastructure, Asset Quality Review and Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets, among others—have not produced the necessary results. Many have posed the argument that under the current schemes introduced by the Central bank too much discretion is left at the hands of banks. Rajan, however, was never a major votary of the idea. He argued that this approach would just transfer the bad loans from banks to another firm. The focus, he argued, should be on how to restructure bad loans. With a significant amount of NPAs, banks are forced to push up the risk premium, which in other words amounts to raising the cost of lending. "That's exactly why there is such a huge gap in the commercial lending rate and the policy rate of the RBI. This, in short, is the price of crony capitalism. It is not just banks that are impacted. The resulting high-interest rate regime precludes investments, erodes the competitive ability of Indian business and leaves a big hole in our wallets through payouts on EMIs," according to a leading Indian business daily.

There are wrongdoers among the Indian business community who have raised the cost of borrowing for the common man. NPAs in our public sector banks represent a massive transfer of wealth from the Indian taxpayer to India's business empires. Given the strong bond that exists between major corporate houses and political parties, there is little action against loan defaulters. Politicians and government officials are involved in the decision-making process to grant loans to businesses. Mallya is merely the tip of the iceberg. The likes of Reliance, Vedanta, Essar, Adani, and Jaypee owe the banks even more money. For the moment, banks have missed the Central bank's deadline to clean up their balance sheets by March 2017, since their efforts were redirected from recovering bad loans to implementing the government's demonetisation initiative. The Centre's latest Budget provided Rs 10,000 crore for recapitalisation of public sector banks in 2017-18. Experts contend that this is markedly below the Rs 25,000 crore the government had set aside in the previous year. Banks are in desperate need for recapitalisation so that they can start lending to sound companies with smart business proposals, thereby kickstarting economic activity. The onus of repairing weak lenders with necessary capital lies with the government. "At its current level, India's NPA ratio is higher than any other major emerging market (with the exception of Russia), higher even than the peak levels seen in Korea during the East Asian crisis," the 2016-17 Economic Survey grimly notes. The knock-on effect of these bad debts has been deleterious for the entire economy. Don't get distracted by all the hoopla surrounding Mallya.

Hoping for good rains

The India Meteorological Department on Tuesday predicted a normal monsoon for the country this year — 96% of the long-period average. A weakening El Niño and a stronger Indian Ocean Dipole have given forecasters hope for a favourable outcome this year. For the uninitiated, these weather phenomenon impact sea surface temperature and general weather patterns. Doubts, however, remain about the intensity of showers. The Met department predicted a 38% chance of near-normal rainfall and said there were signs that the rains will be well distributed this time around. A more detailed forecast of rainfall distribution in various regions will be available in early June when the IMD is armed with more data on the El Niño and Indian Ocean Dipole. India saw drought years in 2014 and 2015. Despite the IMD's forecast of 'above normal' rains in 2016, India received 3% less than the average. Vast parts of states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala are already reeling under severe drought due to deficient pre-monsoon rains. With the massive shortfall in irrigation facilities, good showers are necessary this year to trap enough soil moisture for a healthy kharif crop. What a good harvest season will do is help keep inflation down and rural consumption up. The monsoon season last year did little to recharge our water bodies adequately. Earlier this year, the government said that water levels in India's 91 major reservoirs were at 41% (less than half) of their storage capacity.



Beyond the immediate challenge of replacing currency in circulation following the November 2016 currency exchange initiative, policy actions should focus on reducing labour and product market rigidities to ease firm entry and exit, expanding the manufacturing base, and gainfully employing the abundant pool of labour

Quote martial

But from each crime are born bullets that will one day seek out in you where the heart lies

PABLO NERUDA

The blame games between the mainstream parties notwithstanding, unless the Central and the state governments act fast to pull Kashmir out of its present spiral of anger and violence, 2017 might be worse than what Kashmiris have been through since armed violence started here in the early 1990s

Seeking stability

China forges ahead with global revival

At last, the eight-year-old crisis is giving way to global output and trade gaining momentum while India's policy-makers seem to be making little progress with easing constraints to investment and growth revival to lift a stagnating economy, let alone job creation to write about.

And the Modi Government's focus is increasingly turning to an outright "pro-poor" agenda, as the Prime Minister kicks off elections in more states, buoyed by BJP's spectacular win in UP. The ruling party is far ahead of any credible opposition visible to challenge its supremacy in the run-up to 2019 for renewal of national mandate, with a target of adding another 120 seats in the next Lok Sabha.

Doubling of farmer incomes, power for all, and houses for all are some of the goals set for 2022 which would see Prime Minister's "New India" emerge. In this milieu, harder issues like restoring credit culture in the highly stressed banking system for providing adequate working capital and reviving corporate investments remain intractable.

IMF's World Economic Outlook, April 2017, notes a cyclical recovery in investment, manufacturing, and trade to raise world growth projections to 3.5 per cent (from 3.1 per cent in 2016) and 3.6 per cent in 2018. Developed economies, chiefly the USA, are growing faster than anticipated while improved outlook is also noticeable in Europe and Japan.

On the other hand, the Outlook notes, emerging market and developing economies have accounted for the bulk of the downward revisions to global growth in recent years and have been a source of uncertainty around the WEO forecasts. Most of the downward revisions to growth have been in China and India, especially during 2011-13.



Representational Image

Whereas China's growth remained strong, reflecting continued policy support, activity has slowed in India, IMF said, "because of the impact of the currency exchange initiative", as well as in Brazil, which has been mired in a deep recession. China has surprised forecasters with a first quarter growth rise in 2017 of 6.9 per cent.

However, economists opine that it could be the peak for the year and that growth trajectory would moderate in the coming quarters. Apparently, high growth was fuelled by Government-led infrastructure spending and property boom. IMF assumes a successful rebalancing of China's economy to lower, but still high, trend growth rates.

For India, the WEO expects an acceleration of activity, resulting from the implementation of necessary structural reforms. But IMF's growth forecast for 2017 at 7.2 per cent is a result of trimming by 0.4 percentage point, from its October forecast, primarily because of the temporary negative consumption shock induced by cash shortages and payment

disruptions from the recent currency exchange initiative. For 2018, growth should rise to 7.7 per cent.

According to IMF, medium-term prospects are favourable, with India's growth forecast to rise to about 8 per cent over the medium term due to the implementation of fundamental reforms, loosening of supply-side bottlenecks, and appropriate fiscal and monetary policies. The economy's strong pace in recent years flowed from critical structural reforms, favourable terms of trade and lower external vulnerabilities.

Beyond the immediate challenge of replacing currency in circulation following the November 2016 currency exchange initiative, IMF said, policy actions should focus on reducing labour and product market rigidities to ease firm entry and exit, expanding the manufacturing base, and gainfully employing the abundant pool of labour.

Policy actions should also consolidate the disinflation underway since the collapse in commodity prices through agricultural sector reforms and

infrastructure enhancements to ease supply bottlenecks.

India has also been urged to boost financial stability through full recognition of non-performing loans and raising public sector banks' capital buffers as well as securing public finances with well-targeted subsidies and implementation of GST. Globally, inflation is rising on the back of an uptick in commodity prices, and a broad-based increase in headline inflation rates is projected in both advanced and emerging market and developing economies. India has already begun to experience price pressures which could get accentuated depending on the monsoon prospects this year.

In emerging market and developing economies, IMF's WEO says, growth remains uneven and generally below these economies' average performance in 2000-15. Factors weighing on their outlooks include China's transition to a more sustainable pattern of growth that is less reliant on investment and commodity imports.

Also, high debt levels every-

where; sluggish medium-term growth prospects in advanced economies and domestic strife, political discord, and geopolitical tensions in several countries are have become major constraints to orderly growth and progress of world economy.

On protectionism, a "salient threat" that could lead to trade warfare, IMF has warned any broad-based increase in import costs caused by heightened global trade protectionism would put a dent in global output. A possible increase in trade barriers in some, could translate into generally subdued demand growth for emerging market and developing economies, it said.

While IMF sees sure signs of growth gaining momentum, its Economic Counsellor Maurice Obstfeld also poses the question whether it would be sustained. While consumer and business confidence in advanced economies could rise further, the world economy still faces headwinds. For one thing, trend productivity growth remains subdued across the world economy.

One set of uncertainties stems from macroeconomic policies in the two largest economies, USA and China. Given the faster US recovery to an estimated 2.3 and 2.5 per cent for 2017 and 2018, the Fed is ahead of other major central banks in rate hikes. Also, US fiscal policy seems likely to turn more expansionary over the next couple of years.

The resulting inflation could lead to a faster pace of rate rises, sparking sharp dollar appreciation and possible difficulties for emerging and some developing economies. In China, though rebalancing process continues, with declining current account surplus and a larger GDP share of services, any rapid credit growth may cause financial stability problems down the road.

(The views expressed are strictly personal.)

dear EDITOR

TIGHTER LAWS NEEDED

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

SUNIL DUTTA Via email

millenniumpost.in

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

What fate awaits the Valley?

Has Kashmir's spiral of violence slipped out of control? Asks Sheikh Qayoom

An alarming spurt in violence in early spring has been marked by attacks on civilians by militants, the army using a civilian as a shield against stone-pelters, the lowest ever voter turnout in a parliamentary by-election and the use of social media as a tool to stoke passions. These are all indications of bad days ahead for Kashmiris, who were looking forward to a calmer summer in 2017.

If this is bad news, what is even worse is that the situation appears to be slipping out of the hands of both the state and the non-state actors in Kashmir's sordid drama of pain and suffering. In the Srinagar parliamentary by-poll on April 9, just seven per cent of the voters came out to exercise their franchise. Eight civilian protesters died while trying to ensure the boycott of an election that was otherwise ignored by a vast majority of Kashmiris.

The fallout of the unprecedented low voter turnout and violence in Srinagar forced the deferment of the Anantnag by-poll that was scheduled on April 12. While the Election Commission pushed this to May 25, all indications on the ground suggest it would have to be deferred to October or beyond.

In other violence, two civilians were killed in the south Kashmir districts of Pulwama and Shopian for their political affiliations. Bashir Ahmad Dar of Rajpora town in Pulwama was killed on April 15 by gunmen for his affiliation with the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) while a day later, a young lawyer was killed in Pinjura village of Shopian district for his affiliation with the National Conference (NC). The young lawyer had served as a public prosecutor during the NC government in the state.

On April 16, a video clip was uploaded on social media of a trader of Pulwama town denouncing India and begging for his life with guns pointed at him. In another video from the same district, a civilian was seen



An expression of protest sprayed on a wall in old city Srinagar

(Representational Image)

cursing himself for being an activist of a mainstream political party and vowed never to even look at politics in the future. The recent "video war" in the Valley started after images of a CRPF trooper being heckled by youths during the April 9 election were uploaded on social media.

This was followed by the video of a youth tied to the front of an army jeep, apparently to avoid attacks from stone-pelters. Then, massive Valley-wide protests by students broke out on April 17 after videos showing students of a Pulwama college being ruthlessly beaten by the security forces were uploaded on social media the previous day.

To stoke the use of social media as a tool to stoke passions, the authorities on Monday again ordered the suspension of mobile internet services in the Valley. Also, the internet speed of fixed-line broadband connections has been

lowered to prevent uploading of videos. Following attacks on the families of policemen, the state police department issued an advisory on April 16 asking its men to exercise extreme caution while visiting their hometowns.

On Monday, Amnesty International took serious note of armed groups targeting civilians. The human rights watchdog condemned attacks on civilians for their political affiliations and also on the families of state police force. The operations of the security forces have been highly compromised by civilian protests while they are on, especially in south Kashmir districts.

The Army chief, General Bipin Rawat, visited the state on Sunday. He met Governor N.N. Vohra in Jammu and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval in New Delhi. Gen. Rawat has reportedly expressed displeasure

against a youth being tied to an army jeep to avoid stone-pelting. A FIR has been lodged by the state police against the military personnel involved in the act.

The opposition NC has demanded the dismissal of the PDP-BJP government, accusing it of "Pushing Kashmir into darkness". The PDP and BJP leaders have, in turn, accused the NC of having left behind the Aagean Stables of trouble during its long years of rule.

The blame games between the mainstream parties notwithstanding, unless the Central and the state governments act fast to pull Kashmir out of its present spiral of anger and violence, 2017 might be worse than what Kashmiris have been through since armed violence started here in the early 1990s.

(The views expressed are strictly personal.)

At death's door

Around 3 million people are estimated to be severely food-insecure in north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan, and Somalia. Jonathan Pound looks at why famine still plagues Africa

The severe food insecurity situation that is afflicting several countries in Africa is unprecedented in terms of magnitude, severity, and multifaceted causes. While early warning systems, which have been augmented in recent years by a proliferation of remote sensing analysis, have become increasingly efficient in forewarning about droughts and proposing actions to mitigate their impact, conflict has become a key driver of severe food insecurity in Africa, particularly in north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia.

In 2016 and 2017, while intra-country conflicts were the main catalyst that put populations at risk or in famine conditions, it was also an amalgam of elements including droughts, record high food prices and economic downturns, which combined to push millions of people into food insecurity across the continent, and concurrently eroded capacities of households and governments to respond effectively.

In aggregate, nearly 3 million people are estimated to be severely food insecure and at risk of famine in north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan where famine has already been declared. Conflict acutely impinges on households' productive capacity, physically denying access to agricultural land and inputs, while the persistent threat of violence can negatively affect farmers' planting decisions. It also adversely impacts pastoralists' livelihoods, significantly restricting mobility, which is critical for sustainable natural resource management.

People pushed to the brink

In South Sudan, large displacements and insecurity following a renewal of violence in mid-2016 hampered cultivation and harvesting activities for the main 2016 crop. In particular, the area planted in the most productive regions was well below average. The reduced plots were mainly sowed with vegetables due to their shorter growing period compared to staple cereal crops, in an attempt to mitigate potential losses due to the inherent threat of violence. Moreover, a macroeconomic collapse, high food prices exacerbated by currency depreciation and the exhaustion of households' coping mechanisms further undermined resilience, engendering famine conditions for an estimated 100,000 people. This figure is likely to increase as the hunger season peaks until July 2017 and if humanitarian access is not adequate and timely.

Similarly, the protracted conflict in north-eastern Nigeria has caused massive displacement, resulting in a widespread disruption in marketing and agricultural activities. Significant cutbacks in the planted area to food crops were the main result in affected areas, notably in Borno State. With both supply shortfalls emanating from reduced house-



Representational Image

holds' production and non-functioning markets, 5.2 million people are projected to be severely food insecure in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states in the forthcoming lean season (July-September). Furthermore, record or near-record high food prices, underpinned by the depreciation of the currency and insecurity, intensified food insecurity conditions.

The situation is also extremely grave in Somalia. Here, three consecutive poor rainfall seasons have resulted in sharply reduced harvests and severely affected livelihoods of pastoral and agro-pastoral households. Widespread animal deaths were reported. The situation could deteriorate significantly, heightening the risk of famine, if the upcoming Gu rainy season (April-June) performs poorly as predicted by latest forecasts. In the worst-case scenario, households' purchasing power could decline to levels observed in 2010-11, when famine was declared, and in areas where humanitarian assistance is unable to reach due to insecurity, famine would be expected.

Currently, however, humanitarian access is relatively better than in 2011 and previously inaccessible areas of southern Somalia

are now open to humanitarian operations.

Stability, peace vital

It is, therefore, paramount that peace and stability are attained to achieve sustainable long-term food security and to capacitate a country to respond to the precursors of famines effectively. Such conditions will aid in facilitating and scaling up investment in agriculture and rural livelihoods. An example would be Ethiopia where decade-long economic growth, relative peace in the country and the implementation of effective safety-net programmes helped avert famine despite the drought conditions in 2016.

Similarly, the ability of humanitarian agencies to access food-insecure populations is impeded by conflict, and this contributes to intensifying and prolonging food insecurity. Particularly in emergency situations, rapid distribution of humanitarian assistance is crucial to prevent a worsening of conditions.

While conflict is a key catalyst, limited agricultural productive capacity in the context of erratic weather and droughts also undermines national coping capacities. With less than 10 per cent of Africa's total arable land equipped for irrigation, food crop pro-

duction, particularly for small-scale farmers who lack resilience, is highly susceptible to reduced rains. Therefore, even in periods of stability, production shocks can have a significant impact on food security, as was the case in Southern Africa in 2016 that witnessed a substantial increase in humanitarian needs due to the El Niño-induced drought. Moreover, a generally static per capita cereal production growth in the preceding ten years (2006-2015), at the continent level, has limited the ability to absorb supply shortfalls.

Africa's stock-to-use ratio of cereals, which can be used as an indicator to infer the level of a country's vulnerability and exposure to supply/demand shocks, has been stable in recent years, while by comparison, this ratio increased in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia. Although this does not indicate deterioration in the continent's coping capacity, it highlights a rigidity to respond to agricultural shocks.

High food prices

On top of conflict and drought in 2016, price spikes that reached record levels in several countries had further detrimental impacts on food security, particularly given

the large proportion of a household's budget allocated to food purchases. Currency depreciations, notably in Nigeria and South Sudan, as well as several countries in Southern Africa, exacerbated price rises and constrained food access. Policies are, therefore, needed to cushion the impact for the poorest households from excessive food price increases. Furthermore, in the context of a conflict situation, the potential to capture any benefits of higher food prices for net producers is virtually non-existent.

Africa as a continent has achieved a reduction in the proportion of undernourished since the 1990s and recorded growth in cereal production (in absolute terms). However conflict, which has emerged as the dominant cause of food crises, has halted, and in some cases, reversed gains of the preceding years in some countries. More is needed to ensure peace, which will help to promote further investment in structural factors that can impede sustainable and long-lasting food security.

DOWN TO EARTH
(The writer is an economist at the Food and Agriculture Organization's Global Information and Early Warning System. Views expressed here are strictly personal.)

Urban consumer bias

Agriculturists deserve justice and empathy, not sympathy, writes Sanjay Bhoosreddy

Urban consumers with decent salaries are agitated whenever the price of agricultural and associated commodities rise by one or two rupees. In such situations, all of us want the government to intervene immediately. But after working for farmers and animal rearers, I've realised that the urban consumer and the media are unable to see the complete picture, and are insensitive to the farmer's plight.

Many urban consumers ask why should the farmers or animal rearers be paid more for their produce than the cost of inputs plus additional money for their basic needs and living? To elaborate the point, let's take the case of a dairy farmer. Presuming the farmer has three to four hybrid exotic cows. Without taking the readers into the details of the economics of farming or animal rearing, the earnings of the poor farmer would be as follows: his gross revenue would be around Rs.9,500/- to Rs.10,000/- per cow per month (PCPM) of which Rs.6,500/- to Rs.7,000/- is the expenditure PCPM of feed, fodder, health care, etc. It means that PCPM the farmer's net revenue is only Rs.3,000/- to Rs.3,500/-. Presuming three animals produce milk then his net income is around Rs.10,000/- per month. This income is not the farmer's net revenue because this includes the labour cost borne by himself and his family members also. If you take out the labour cost of minimum two persons at the rate of Rs.3,000/- each, a total of Rs.6,000/- then what remains with the farmer is net income Rs.4,000/- for all the efforts of the family to earn their livelihood through animal husbandry.

If the farmer decides to go for wage employment in government projects under MGNREGA then he, his wife and adult children would earn Rs.3000/- per person per month for working only 8 hours a day for 26 days. It ensures the family the total earnings of Rs.9,000/- to Rs.12,000/- from their wages alone and that too without any input cost and risk involved. This is a far-reaching issue for the nation as the poor economics of the agriculture production systems would push the farmers to non-agricultural activities. This scenario would be highly undesirable for the agriculture sector and ultimately for the country as it would



Representational Image

adversely affect the food security program and, thereby, the food sovereignty of the Nation.

If the dairy cooperatives decide to pay the farmers even one rupee more for his produce, then there is great hue and cry by everybody especially the urban middle class which is amplified by the media. So is in the case of eggs or any such agro and allied products.

The urban consumer need not make an issue for a genuine and desirable increase in price for the agriculturists' produce. Why do we expect the farmer to earn a maximum of only 10-15 per cent on his produce? Why should the farmer account only for his food and bare minimum basics as earnings from his vocation? Don't the farmers deserve good health, good education for his children, decent housing, healthy living and future for his family? If urban consumers attempt to answer these fundamental questions, then only the society would do real justice to the farming community. They deserve justice, empathy, and not sympathy.

Now let's compare how much the same urban consumer pays to a multinational corporation for their potato fries. While standing in long queues, urbanites are happy to pay a minimum of Rs.1,500 a kg for potato fries but are unwilling to pay only a meagre Rs.15/-

for a kg of raw potato. The potato fries cost the MNC food chain not more than Rs.150/- a kg, but we are happy to shell out Rs.1,500/- a kg for the same without a murmur. We pay up rather gladly and relish the junk food in the urban environs. To the MNCs, we are happy to pay 1,000 to 1,500 times as profits for their products, but we get jitters in paying the poor farmers a rupee extra for their produce, which he and his entire family work upon for one full crop cycle of 4 to 5 months. Further, when these MNCs offer the consumer a combo meal at a little-discounted price, the urban consumer feels jubilant to get the best bargain.

There is a bias in urban consumers and, therefore, the price discrimination against agricultural or animal products. The urbanites, on the one hand, desires that the farmers provide agro produce at a throwaway price but on the contrary want their salaries/wages to be linked to all types of indexes. Why are the urban consumers not ready to pay to the farmers or the animal rearers for their hard earned and due remuneration for their produce?

This mindset is very unfortunate. The urban consumer does not appreciate the risk, which the Indian farmers or animal rearers go through. Farmers have to contend with uncertain rains

and weather conditions, and the animal rearers have to face risk like a sudden eruption of disease and lack of fodder due to drought. There are other unforeseen situations apart from the exploitation by the middlemen, lack of post-harvest infrastructure.

It's high time that instead of sympathising with the farmers and animal rearers the urban consumers appreciate the value of their produce and empathise with their hard working conditions. It is an endeavour in which not only the farmer or animal rearers are involved, but their entire family works the entire year round. They are wholly dependent on the little remunerations from their agro produce for their livelihood, which cannot be restricted to only their food requirement but also for their health, decent housing, education, clothing, and planning for the future of their family. In the ultimate analysis, the solution lies in consumers resolving to pay a remunerative price to the farming community for their produce so as to ensure adequate and quality food for all, which is a sine qua non for the healthy survival of any nation.

(Sanjay Bhoosreddy is an officer in the Indian Administrative Service. The views expressed are strictly personal.)

The urban consumer does not appreciate the risks Indian agriculturists go through. Farmers have to contend with uncertain rains and weather conditions, and animal rearers have to face risk like a sudden eruption of disease and lack of fodder due to drought. There are other unforeseen situations apart from exploitation by the middlemen and lack of post-harvest infrastructure

tweet
RETWEET

PRASHANT BHUSHAN
@pbhushan1

NITIN PAI
@acorn

Govt claims credit for Mallya arrest, after allowing him to flee. But why does it hide names of other big defaulters?

KARUNA NUNDY
@karunanundy

It's distressing to see the Delhi media & national public discourse treat the protesting Tamil Nadu farmers with disdain. I suspect bias.

PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI
@priyankac19

#FreeSpeechProblem when bad laws are used against idiotic speech, having to stand up for the idiotic speech.

Tej Bahadur has been sacked for exposing the food our jawans at the border get to eat but for news media Sonu Nigam rocks TRPs.

IRAN COMPLIES WITH 2015 N-DEAL

Trump orders review on lifting sanctions on Iran



WASHINGTON: The Trump administration said on Tuesday it was launching an inter-agency review of whether the lifting of sanctions against Iran was in the United States' national security interests, while acknowledging that Tehran was complying with a deal to rein in its nuclear program.

In a letter to US House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, the top Republican in Congress, on Tuesday US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Iran remained compliant with the 2015 deal, but said there were concerns about its role as a state sponsor of terrorism. Under the deal, the State Department must notify Congress every 90 days on Iran's compliance under the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). It is the first such notification under US President Donald Trump.

"The US Department of State certified to US House Speaker Paul Ryan on Wednesday that Iran is compliant through April 18 with its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," Tillerson said in a statement. "President Donald J. Trump has directed a National Security Council-led interagency review of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that will evaluate whether suspension of sanctions related

to Iran pursuant to the JCPOA is vital to the national security interests of the United States," Tillerson added.

He did not say how long the review would take but said in the letter to Ryan that the administration looked forward to working with Congress on the issue.

During his presidential campaign, Trump called the agreement "the worst deal ever negotiated," raising questions over whether he would rip up the agreement once he took office. The historic deal between Iran and six major powers restricts Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of international oil and financial sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Iran denies ever having considered developing atomic weapons although nuclear experts have warned that any U.S. violation of the nuclear deal would allow Iran also to pull back from its commitments to curb nuclear development.

Those commitments include reducing the number of its centrifuges by two-thirds, capping its level of uranium enrichment well below the level needed for bomb-grade material, reducing its enriched uranium stockpile from around 10,000 kg to 300 kg for 15 years, and submitting to international inspections to verify its compliance. AGENCIES

Panama Papers: Pakistan SC verdict can oust Sharif as PM

ISLAMABAD/ KARACHI: A looming Supreme Court decision that could disqualify Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif over corruption allegations had the country on edge Wednesday, as a drawn-out investigation related to the "Panama Papers" leaks neared a conclusion.

Disqualifying Sharif would leave his party in power, but it would cause intense turmoil at a time when Pakistan is experiencing modest growth and improved security after years of violence, and the civilian government and powerful military have appeared to come to uneasy terms. Sharif has denied any wrongdoing, but the Supreme Court agreed to investigate his family's offshore wealth late last year after opposition leader Imran Khan threatened street protests. The Supreme Court could take a range of steps. It could clear the prime minister, or order a further judicial commission of inquiry or even declare him ineligible to hold office, as it did in 2012 with then-Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani over a contempt of court case. AGENCIES

POLL SUGGESTS VOTERS BACK THERESA MAY'S U-TURN

MPs back May's call for snap election in June



LONDON: British lawmakers on Wednesday approved Prime Minister Theresa May's decision to call a snap general election on June 8. The House of Commons voted for an early election by 522 votes to 13 -- a majority of 509.

May raised a motion calling for a vote in the House of Commons on Wednesday. She made an unexpected announcement on Tuesday that she would seek an early election less than halfway through her government's five year-term. She said an election was needed to prevent opposition parties at Westminster "frustrating" the Brexit process and provide long-term "certainty and stability".

The next general election was expected in 2020, but the Fixed Term Parliaments Act allows for one to be held earlier if two-thirds of MPs back the move. May has repeatedly said since becoming the Prime Minister in July that she would

not hold an early general election.

Speaking at the Prime Minister's Questions on

Wednesday, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn welcomed the prospect of an election but suggested May's U-turn on the

issue proved she could "not be trusted".

May responded by saying she is "very proud" of her

government's achievements, including delivering record levels of employment and spending more money on the health service than ever before.

"We will be fighting for every vote, while the right honourable gentleman (Corbyn) would bankrupt our economy, weaken our defences and is simply not fit to lead."

She accused opposition MPs of trying to thwart the Brexit process.

"What the people of the United Kingdom voted for last year was for the UK to leave the European Union. We must set that process in motion, there is no turning back."

"But it is clear from the statements that have been made by the Scottish nationalists and others that they do want to use this House to try to frustrate that process. I will be asking the British people for a mandate to complete Brexit and make a success of it," May said. AGENCIES

May says early elections will boost her in EU talks, Brexit negotiations to start thereafter

LONDON: Prime Minister Theresa May said on Wednesday an early election would strengthen her at the "most crucial point" in Britain's divorce talks with the EU, as she prepared to ask parliament to approve a vote in just seven weeks' time. May surprised allies and opponents on Tuesday when she announced her plan to bring forward an election that was not due until 2020.

The former interior minister, who became prime minister without an election when her predecessor David Cameron quit after last year's referendum vote for Brexit, said she needed to strengthen her hand in negotiations which will reshape Britain and test the cohesion of the EU. "I've taken this decision because I genuinely believe it is in the national interest," May told BBC radio.

"If you look at the timetable, had the election been in 2020 we would have been coming up to the most crucial part of the negotiations, at the end of the negotiations, in what would be starting to be the run-up to a general election."

She is expected to win the necessary backing of more than two-thirds of parliament in a vote that is likely to take place soon after 1300 GMT. The European Union's "real political" negotiations on Britain's exit from the bloc will start after the snap British election in June, an EU spokesman said on Wednesday. "The real political negotiations on article 50 with the UK will start after the elections foreseen for the 8th of June," European Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas told a press conference. AGENCIES

2 Bangladesh war crimes convicts sentenced to death

DHAKA: Two Bangladesh war crimes convicts were sentenced to death by a special tribunal for committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War against Pakistan on Wednesday.

Moslem Proddhan and Syed Mohammad Hussain, who is absconding, were sentenced to death by the three-member International Crimes Tribunal for committing atrocities like "genocide, rape and extermination" committed during the war for freedom.

The tribunal led by Justice Anwarul Haque ordered to carry out the execution either hanging by the neck or shooting by a firing squad, whichever the government decides. The tribunal described as "system crimes" the offences committed by the two convicts, both in their mid 60s.

They were held guilty of six charges, including abductions, tortures, mass murders and genocide, levelled by the prosecution. Moslem was arrested in July 2015 from Kishoreganj after a warrant was out for him. The court on Wednesday instructed the home minister and the Bangladesh Police chief to initiate measures to arrest Hussain. It asked officials concerned to apprehend Hussain with the help of the Interpol if necessary as he is believed to be hiding

in Malaysia.

Both the convicts hailed from northern Kishoreganj, where Husain served as local commander of Rajakar Bahini, a Bengali-manned auxiliary force of Pakistani troops, while Proddhan was a member of the local unit. Describing the court's decision to recognise wartime rapes equivalent as genocide as a "extraordinary achievement", Prosecutor Turin Afroze said this is the first instance, where the mass rape in 1971 has been recognised as "genocidal rape" and the highest punishment has been handed for it.

Defence counsel Abdus Sattar Palwan refrained from commenting saying they respect the law and the tribunal. "The matter of appeal will be decided after discussing it with the client," he said. The convicts can appeal against the tribunal's decision within a month of the verdict.

Bangladesh launched the belated process of trying 1971 war criminals in 2010. All the accused who were tried until now were civilians and mostly belonged to fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami, which was opposed to the independence.

The International Crimes Tribunal, set up for the trying the war criminals, have so far convicted 48 persons, of whom 30 received the death sentence. AGENCIES

Xi restructures military, consolidates control

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping has announced a military restructure of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to transform it into a leaner fighting force with improved joint operations capability, state media said.

Centered around a new, condensed structure of 84 military units, the reshuffle builds on Xi's years-long efforts to modernize the PLA with greater emphasis on new capabilities including cyberspace, electronic and information warfare.

As chair of the Central Military Commission, Xi is also



commander-in-chief of China's armed forces.

"This has profound and significant meaning in building

a world-class military," Xi told commanders of the new units at the PLA headquarters in Beijing, according to the official

Xinhua news agency report late on Tuesday. All 84 new units are at the combined-corps level, which means commanders will hold the rank of major-general or rear-admiral, the official China Daily reported on Wednesday, adding that unit members would likely be regrouped from existing forces given the Chinese military was still engaged in cutting its troops by 300,000, one of the wide-ranging military reforms introduced by Xi in late 2015.

Those reforms include establishing a joint operational command structure by 2020 and rejigging existing military

regions, as well as streamlining troop numbers particularly in non-combat facing roles. The previous seven military area commands were regrouped into five, and the four military departments - staff, politics, logistics and armaments - were reorganized into 15 agencies last year. The 84 units will come under the 15 agencies. Retired PLA Major-General Xu Guangyu, a senior researcher at the Beijing-based China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, said the restructure represented the second major phase of Xi's reforms. AGENCIES

Erdogan, Trump to meet in May before Nato summit

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will meet Donald Trump in May, the Turkish foreign minister said on Wednesday, after the US president congratulated the Turkish leader for winning a referendum on enhancing his powers.

"We will determine a date for the two presidents to meet in May before the NATO summit as previously confirmed by the leaders," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said.

The NATO summit is scheduled to be held in late May in Brussels and Trump is due to attend. Cavusoglu did not specify if the meeting would take place on the sidelines of the summit or at another venue. After Erdogan's narrow win in Sunday's referendum on creating an executive presidency, Trump congratulated the Turkish leader in a phone call on Monday, in contrast to the muted reaction of European leaders to the result, which has been challenged by the opposition.

Cavusoglu said that during their call the two leaders had expressed a common desire to meet in Washington "to improve bilateral relations".

Turkey hopes ties with the Trump administration will improve after relations soured between the NATO allies during Barack Obama's term over Syria and Turkey's calls for US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen to be extradited. Gulen is accused of ordering last July's failed coup and Ankara has repeatedly called for his extradition. The preacher vehemently denies Turkey's accusations. Last month, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met Turkish leaders. AGENCIES

Clinton apologised to Obama on election night

WASHINGTON: Hillary Clinton apologised to the then President Barack Obama shortly after conceding defeat to Donald Trump on election night, according to a new book.

"Mr President, I'm sorry," Clinton told Obama over phone as her unexpected election loss became a reality, according to a Washington Post review of the book 'Shattered' which is about the Democratic presidential candidate's failed 2016 campaign. The book 'Shattered: Inside Hillary Clinton's Doomed Campaign' reveals how in a flurry of calls the White House urged Clinton to concede defeat. "You're going to come up short," Steve Schale, the best vote-counter the Democrats had in Florida, told campaign officials.

The call with Schale marked the beginning of a riveting account of the final, dreadful hours of Clinton's long pursuit of the presidency, as told by reporters Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes in their insidery new book. Shortly after 11:00 PM on



election night, after Wisconsin was called by Fox News, Allen and Parnes report that the campaign fielded a series of calls from the White House pushing Clinton to concede, even though the margins in many states were extraordinarily close. President Obama thought it was over and did not want a messy recount. First came a call from White House political director David Simas to Clinton's campaign manager, Robby Mook. "POTUS (President of the United States) doesn't think it's wise to drag this out," Simas was quoted as

saying. But as Clinton was dragging it out, she got a call from Obama. "You need to concede," urged Obama, who repeated the message in a follow-up call to Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta, according to the book. At last, Clinton said, "Give me the phone." And then the first woman who was going to be president got her opponent on the line and said two words she never expected to say, "Congratulations, Donald." Moments later, Obama was back on the phone, this time making a consolation call. AGENCIES

WORLD BRIEFS

BERNIE SANDERS MOST POPULAR POLITICIAN IN US: POLL

WASHINGTON: Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is the US' most popular active politician, viewed favourably by 57 percent of registered voters, according to a new poll. Sanders is particularly popular among people aged between 18 to 34, who gave him a 62 per cent approval rating. He also has majority support among those over the age of 50, according to the latest Harvard-Harris survey.

IN MOSUL, IRAQI SNIPERS TRACK JIHADISTS AROUND THE CLOCK

MOSUL: A few hundred metres from an iconic mosque in west Mosul, Iraqi sniper Salah al-Zuheiri has his eye glued to his scope as he searches for Islamic State group jihadists. Iraqi forces are battling to retake Mosul from IS, after the group overran the city in 2014 and its leader proclaimed a "caliphate" from the mosque in its Old City. IS "fighters are within range. We're tracking them day and night," says Zuheiri, a sniper with the Iraqi federal police who has taken up position some 300 metres (yards) from the Al-Nuri Mosque. Inside a darkened room in a four-storey building retaken from the jihadists, Zuheiri tries to steady his rifle on sandbags.

FEMALE AHMADI PROFESSOR STABBED AT HOME IN LAHORE

ISLAMABAD: A woman Ahmadi professor was found stabbed to death in her house in the residential colony of Pakistan's top Punjab University (PU) in Lahore on Tuesday. Saleemuddin, a spokesperson for Jamaat Ahmadiyya Pakistan, said Professor Abdullah was an Ahmadi and it was very likely that she had been killed because of her faith. Tahira Abdullah, the deceased professor, had retired from the varsity's molecular genetics department and was working at PU on a contractual basis. According to reports, she was teaching cell biology at the post-graduate level.

ITALY CALLS FOR RELEASE OF JOURNALIST HELD IN TURKEY

ROME: Italy has called for the release of an Italian journalist who has been held in custody in Turkey for more than a week since he was detained while doing research for a book. Gabriele Del Grande was arrested on April 9 close to Turkey's border with Syria and transferred to a migrants center in the city of Mugla. The Italian foreign ministry was working to ensure that he was not been charged with any crime.

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
MATERIAL PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION DIVISION
MAIDAN GARHI, NEW DELHI-110068

e-Tender Notice

Online bids (Technical & Financial) are invited from eligible printers for "Empanement of Offset Printers" at IGNOU Headquarters. The online bid complete in all respect should be uploaded on CPP Portal on or before 11/05/2017 by 12:00 hrs and an A/c. payee Demand Draft/Pay Order of Rs. 1,000/- (non-refundable) towards Tender Fee and notified EMD both in favour of IGNOU, New Delhi (Both in Original) alongwith copy of NSIC Certificate and sample of work must reach office of Registrar, MPDD, Room No. 12, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi on or before 11/05/2017 by 14:00 hrs. The tender documents alongwith other details may be downloaded from the Central Public Procurement (CPP) Portal: <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. The prospective bidders may visit CPP portal regularly for any latest information.

Sd/-
Registrar, MPDD

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed one boy namely **Kake S/o Ranjeet Thakur**, R/o H. No. 2534, 1st Floor, Gali Shankar Wali, Bazar Sita Ram, Delhi. Age 19 years, Height 49". Complexion Sallow, Face Round. Wearing green colour T-Shirt, black Pajama and black Sleeper in feet. has been missing since 25.03.2017. In this regard a D.D. No. 24-PPT, Dated 04.04.2017 has been registered at P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about his please inform undersigned.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph.No.: 011-24368638, 24368641

SHO
P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23271751, 23279338

DP/4593/CD/17

FRESH WARNING TO NORTH KOREA

US V-P to North Korea: 'The sword stands ready'

Vice-President Mike Pence says working with allies to put pressure on N Korea

YOKOSUKA: From the wind-swept deck of a massive aircraft carrier, Vice-President Mike Pence on Wednesday warned North Korea not to test the resolve of the US military, promising it would make an "overwhelming and effective" response to any use of conventional or nuclear weapons.

Pence, dressed in a green military jacket, said aboard the hulking USS Ronald Reagan that President Donald Trump's administration would continue to "work diligently" with allies like Japan, China and other global powers to apply economic and diplomatic pressure on Pyongyang. But he told the sailors, "as all of you know, readiness is the key."

"The United States of America will always seek peace but under President Trump,



the shield stands guard and the sword stands ready," Pence told 2,500 sailors dressed in blue fatigues and Naval baseball caps on a sunny, windy morning aboard the carrier at the US Yokosuka naval base in Tokyo Bay.

"Those who would challenge our resolve or readiness should know, we will defeat any attack and meet any use of conventional or nuclear weapons with an overwhelming and effective American response," Pence said.

Pence also said the US would protect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, the sea lanes vital to global shipping where China has been staking claim to disputed territory.

From two continents, Pence and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned that North Korea's latest failed missile launch was a reckless act of provocation and assured allies in Asia that the US was ready to work to achieve a peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Mattis denounced North Korea's attempted missile launch as he began a Middle East tour, telling reporters traveling with him to Saudi Arabia, "the leader of North Korea again recklessly tried to provoke something by launching a missile," he said. The term "reckless" is one the North Koreans have used to describe ongoing large-scale US and South Korean military exercises, which the North calls a dress rehearsal for an invasion.

A PRINCELY AFFAIR



(Centre right) Britain's Prince Harry helps staff as he officially opens the London Marathon Expo at ExCel center in London on Wednesday

Nikki Haley: Human rights violations triggered Syrian conflict

UNITED NATION: US Ambassador Nikki Haley said on Tuesday that human rights violations have triggered conflict in Syria, stifled dissent in Burundi and led to repression in Myanmar, and the next international crisis could come from North Korea, Iran or Cuba where human rights are widely disregarded.

But Russia and China disputed her contention that human rights violations are a main driver of conflicts.

And Human Rights Watch questioned the Trump administration's decision to focus on human rights at the UN Security Council in light of its own actions. The United States holds the UN Security Council presidency this month and Haley was determined to hold a meeting to focus on the importance of human rights to international peace and security.

It took place Tuesday after the US addressed a key objection from Russia, China

and other council members, and was the first meeting solely on human rights. The United States initially wanted the debate under a new agenda item for the council entitled "Human Rights and International Peace and Security", which would mean that item could be raised again and again in the council.

But many council members didn't want the UN's most powerful body, which is charged with ensuring international peace and security, to also focus on human rights. Russia's deputy UN Ambassador Evgeny Zagaynov said the Security Council has no mandate to consider human rights which are discussed elsewhere at the UN. He objected to the US contention that rights violations are "a main precondition for armed conflict" and to its assertion that protecting human rights is "a key instrument" to prevent conflict.

Syria resumes reciprocal evacuations after deadly bombing

BEIRUT: Syria's military media says the evacuation and transfer of thousands of Syrians from four besieged areas has resumed. The reciprocal evacuations from two pro-government villages and two opposition-held towns was disrupted by a bombing on Saturday that killed more than 120 pro-government evacuees, mostly children. The Central Military Media says 3,000 residents of the pro-government villages, Foua and Kfarya, left on Wednesday in 45 buses bound for government-controlled Aleppo.

Another 11 buses carrying opposition fighters left Madaya and Zabadani, near Damascus, heading toward the northern rebel-held Idlib province. The opposition-run Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported the transfer, which it says includes 800 armed men from both sides.

The population exchange has been criticized by rights groups, which say it rewards siege tactics.

United Nations discovers 17 mass graves in central Congo

UNITED NATION: UN investigators have discovered 17 mass grave sites in central Democratic Republic of Congo, bringing the total to 40 documented in an area where the army has clashed with a local militia, the United Nations said on Wednesday. The sites were reportedly dug by Congolese soldiers after fighting with the Kamuina Nsapu militia in Kasai Central province in late March, a UN statement said. "At least 74 people, including 30 children, were reported to have been killed by soldiers as a result of these clashes," the statement said. A government spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The government has previously denied that soldiers have used disproportionate force against militia members and said the militia had dug the graves. The Kamuina Nsapu uprising has become the most serious threat to President Joseph Kabila.

Aus, NZ step up nationalist rhetoric with visa curbs on skilled workers

SYDNEY: Australia and New Zealand have tightened visa conditions for skilled migrants in a bid to woo nationalist-leaning voters, echoing the United States' "America First" policy, but critics have decried the move as mostly political posturing. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Tuesday abolished a temporary work visa popular with foreigners, replacing it with a new programme. New Zealand also tightened access to skilled work visas, taking a "Kiwis-first approach."

The changes are likely to hurt small businesses and Australian tech start-ups, industry officials said, but both countries will continue to see a surge in foreigners. Recent population growth in Australia has been driven by student visas, which offer a path for people to study, work and eventually become permanent residents. In the six months to December, the country granted 156,453 student visas. This compares with just

12,866 of the so-called 457 skilled work visas approved in the year to September 2016.

More than 95,000 foreigners are now employed under the 457 visa, making up a mere 0.8 percent of Australia's labour force. "This is just a change of name, nothing else," said Shamim Ahmed, a Sydney-based migration agent at AIC Education Services. "They cannot really abolish this visa, because it is demanded by employers." The 457 visa has been axed with immediate effect, and replaced by two new visas with a shorter skills shortage list and a tougher English language requirement, Turnbull announced on Tuesday. Additional details are still awaited. Turnbull, who broke the news on social media site Facebook, expects fewer entrants to Australia under the new scheme, he said in a radio interview on Wednesday. "There will be a short-term skills visa for two years and it can only be renewed once."

Pakistan Army chief issues execution order of 30 militants

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Wednesday signed execution orders of 30 hardcore terrorists who were awarded death sentence by military courts of the country, the military said. "These terrorists were involved in committing heinous offences relating to terrorism," an army statement said. They were behind the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, kidnapping and slaughtering soldiers of security officials, attack on an airport in Swat Valley, killing innocent civilians, attacking armed forces' law enforcement agencies, the statement said. It is the first time the army chief has approved death penalty of 30 convicts on a single day. The army said the process of execution has been expedited during the ongoing anti-terror major operation codenamed "Radd-ul-Fasaa" or "reject discord" in English.

'Weakening Syria's govt could help IS'

ISTANBUL: The Islamic State group could inadvertently benefit from a situation in which Syrian government forces are considerably weakened on the ground, a London-based military analysis group has said.

The report, published by IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, follows the United States bombing of a Syrian army base after a chemical weapons attack on April 4 killed nearly 90 people.

The US has accused the Syrian government of being behind the attack charges that Syria denies. In Syria, the Islamic State group is battling both government forces and forces allied with the US-led coalition. If Syrian government forces are weakened, IS fighters could more easily move into heavily populated cities and towns, said Colum Strack, senior Middle East analyst at IHS Markit. "The Syrian

government is essentially the anvil to the US-led coalition's hammer," Strack said. Weakened Syrian government forces could give the militants additional footholds at a time when their grip on territory elsewhere in Syria and Iraq is being rolled back, Strack explained.

In Iraq, IS has lost more than half the territory the militants once controlled there and is now fighting to defend a cluster of western Mosul neighbourhoods that mark the last significant urban area the group holds in that country.

Across both Iraq and Syria, IS has lost nearly half the territory it held at the height of its power in 2014. Since then, a combination of more intense US-led coalition involvement in the fight against IS and Syrian government advances in Aleppo and Palmyra have pushed IS out of more than 40,000sqkm of territory.

UNITED AIRLINES CEO says no one will be fired for dragging incident

NEW YORK: The CEO of United Airlines says no one will be fired over the dragging of a man off a plane including himself. CEO Oscar Munoz said on Tuesday that he takes full responsibility "for making this right," and he promised more details later this month after United finishes a review of its policies on overbooked flights. Company executives said it's too soon to know if the incident is hurting ticket sales.

United has been pummeled on social media #BoycottUnited is a popular hashtag and late-night television. Through yesterday, its shares have fallen 4.4 per cent since Flight 3411, wiping out nearly USD 1 billion in market value, although some other airline stocks also declined in the same period.

After the market closed Monday, United reported a \$96 million first-quarter profit, down 69 per cent from a year earlier largely because of higher costs for fuel, labor and maintenance. The revenue picture was looking better evidence was growing that after two years of falling average fares, United will be able to push prices higher this year.

On a conference call to discuss those results, Munoz started by apologizing again for the April 9 scene on a United Express plane at Chicago's O'Hare airport. David Dao, a 69-year-old Kentucky physician, was bloodied and dragged off the plane by Chicago airport officers who had been summoned by United employees when Dao wouldn't give up his seat. The three officers have all been suspended. Munoz and other executives vowed to treat customers with dignity, and said that what happened to Dao will never happen again. Munoz's early statements on the incident were widely criticized. He initially supported employees and blamed Dao.

Study: Rising sea levels could push some US migration to inland cities from coast

SEATTLE: Rising sea levels caused by climate change may drive US coastal residents to areas far from the seaboard, not just to adjacent inland regions, according to a study published online in the journal Nature Climate Change.

Even landlocked states such as Arizona and Wyoming could see significant increases in population because of coastal migration by 2100, and may be unprepared to handle



the surge, said the analysis from a University of Georgia researcher. "We typically think about sea-level rise as

being a coastal challenge or a coastal issue," Mathew Hauer, author of the study and head of the Applied Demography

program at the University of Georgia, said in an interview on Tuesday. "But if people have to move, they go somewhere." The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted in January a 1-to-8-foot (0.3-2.5 metre) increase in sea levels by the year 2100. Previous research by Hauer and others has put the number of Americans displaced as high as 13.1 million.

WORLD BRIEFS

UK POLICE NAME SUSPECT IN EAST LONDON NIGHTCLUB ACID ATTACK

LONDON: Police investigating an acid attack at a London nightclub that left 20 people injured are searching for the boyfriend of a reality TV performer who has urged him to turn himself in. London police have named Arthur Collins as a suspect wanted for questioning in the case, which left two people seriously injured and needing hospital treatment in special burn units. The 25-year-old Collins is the boyfriend of reality TV performer Ferne McCann.

RIGHTS GROUPS CONDEMN ATTACK ON SIKH CAB DRIVER IN NYC

NEW YORK: Civil rights groups are strongly condemning a 'racially motivated' attack on a Sikh taxi driver here, calling it an assault "on all New Yorkers". Harkirat Singh (25), an immigrant from Punjab who moved to the US three years ago, was assaulted and his turban knocked off by unruly passengers in the early hours of Sunday. The New York Police Department is investigating the incident.

TALIBAN 'GOVERNOR', 21 OTHER MILITANTS KILLED IN AFGHAN RAID

KABUL: At least 22 militants, including Taliban's "Governor" for Baghlan, were killed when Afghan security forces carried out an operation in this northern province, the Defence Ministry said on Wednesday. "On specific intelligence inputs, the army launched an operation in Dand-e-Ghuri district of Baghlan province on Tuesday night.

THREE KILLED IN CALIFORNIA SHOOTING SPREE

WASHINGTON: Three persons were killed when a man went on a shooting spree in the US's California state, a media report has said. The incident occurred on Tuesday at 10.45 a.m. in downtown Fresno when the man while shouting "Allahu Akbar" shot a person in a PG&E utility truck, then a second person on Fulton Street and a third one in the parking lot of Catholic Charities, Fox News reported. Police said the man, identified as Kori Ali Muhammad, 39.

TURKEY'S FM SAYS OBSERVER REPORTS ON VOTE 'EXTREMELY PARTIAL'

ANKARA: Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Wednesday that a critical report by European observers on the referendum to expand President Tayyip Erdogan's powers contained several mistakes which he believed were deliberate. Observers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe said Sunday's referendum had been an uneven contest. "The OSCE's report has no reliability as their observations lack objectivity and are extremely partial," Cavusoglu told a news conference in Ankara.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. PC

Whereas complaint has been made before me that Jagbir Singh S/o Om Parkash R/o: RZ-58, Rajiv Vihar, Najafgarh, Delhi has committed (or suspected to have committed) offence case FIR No. 258/16, U/s 33/58 Delhi Ex. Act has been registered at P.S. Moti Nagar, Delhi punishable and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person Jagbir Singh cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person namely Jagbir Singh absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Jagbir Singh of case FIR No. 258/16, U/s 33/58 Delhi Ex. Act at P.S. Moti Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before 30.05.2017.

By Order

Sh. Gajender Singh Nagar
Metropolitan Magistrate (West)-04,
Room No. 361A, 3rd Floor,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/6671/WD/17

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male, Name: Unknown, S/O: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 50 years, Complexion: Shallow, Height: 5'5", ID Mark: A Tattoo mark in hindi on right hand arms "Amar Singh Mokham", wearing Grey Colour Pant, was found dead

near BSA Hospital, Delhi at 04:15 PM. In this regard a DD No. 39-B, dated 04.04.2017 has been lodged at P.S. North Rohini, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO

P.S. North Rohini, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27048210, 27048211

DPI/430/RD/17

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one unknown person, Age: About 60 yrs., Height: 5'6", Wheatish Complexion, Oval Face & Thin Build. Wearing Blue check shirt & dark blue pant was admitted in LNJP Hospital Delhi in unconscious state during treatment he expired.

In this regard a D.D. No. 30-A dated: 06.04.2017 has been lodged at P.S. Kamla Market, Delhi.

The dead body has been preserved at Maulana Azad Medical College Mortuary for 72 Hrs.

Any person having any information or clue about this deceased may kindly inform the following.

S.H.O.

P.S., Kamla Market, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23233743, 23230623

DP/4599/CD/17

Trump inks H-1B exec order; Indians to be hit

WASHINGTON: Acting on his 'Buy American, Hire American' pledge, US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order for tightening the rules of the H-1B visa programme, the most sought-after by Indian IT firms and professionals, to stop "visa abuses".

Trump signed the order that calls for tightening the rules of the programme at the Kenosha, Wisconsin, headquarters of tool maker Snap-on Inc yesterday.

"Right now, widespread abuse in our immigration system is allowing American workers of all backgrounds to be replaced by workers brought in from other countries to fill the same job for, sometimes, less pay. This will stop," Trump told an enthusiastic audience in Wisconsin before signing the order.

He said the order sets in motion the first steps to initiate "long-overdue" reforms to end "visa abuses".

"Right now, H-1B visas are awarded in a totally random lottery, and that's wrong. Instead, they should be given to the most skilled and highest-paid applicants, and they should never, ever be used to replace Americans," the US



President asserted.

"No one can compete with American workers when they're given a fair and level playing field, which has not happened for decades," he said.

Trump said his administration is going to enforce 'Hire American' rules that are designed to protect jobs and wages of workers in the United States. "We believe jobs must be offered to American workers first. Does that make sense?" he said.

The executive order also declares that American projects

should be made with American goods.

"No longer are we going to allow foreign countries to cheat our producers and our workers out of federal contracts.

Everyone in my administration will be expected to enforce every last 'Buy American' provision on behalf of the American worker, and we are going to investigate every single trade deal that undermines these provisions," he said.

According to the executive order signed by Trump, the Secretary of State, the Attor-

ney General, the Secretary of Labour, and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall suggest reforms to help ensure that H-1B visas are awarded to the most-skilled or highest-paid petition beneficiaries.

In a statement, the White House said H-1B visas are supposed to bring the highest skilled and paid labour to the United States. But according to studies, 80 per cent of the approved applications were for the two lowest wage levels allowed. "Currently, companies routinely abuse the H-1B visa programme by replacing American workers with lower paid foreign workers," it said.

Reforming the H-1B visa system was one of the major election promises of Trump. As per several US reports, a majority of the H-1B visas every year are grabbed by Indian IT professionals.

India accounts for the highest pool of qualified IT professionals, whose services go a long way in making American companies globally competitive.

As mandated by the Congress, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) every year issues 65,000 H-1B visas and another 20,000 to

those applicants having masters and higher degrees from a US educational institution.

This month USCIS received 199,000 H-1B visa petitions and as a result the federal agency had to resort to a computerised draw of lots to decide the fate of successful applicant.

Meanwhile, some US lawmakers said the executive order signed by Trump calling for a review of H-1B visas was too little and too late.

"We already know H-1B visa abuse hurts American workers.

Simply reviewing the programme is too little, too late," Senator Dick Durbin said.

US lawmakers have already tabled more than half a dozen legislations in the Congress with specific proposals to reform and improve the H-1B visas systems. Many of those proposals, as per industry body Nasscom, are discriminatory and are targeted towards Indian IT companies.

The US tech industry and corporate sector, however, has welcomed the "much-needed" review of the H-1B visa programme and expressed confidence that it would help them bring in the best and the brightest from across the world. P11

H-1B visas applications from Indians for 2018 dip by 37,000

WASHINGTON: The US has received 37,000 less petitions for the H-1B visas for the 2018 fiscal year, the country's immigration agency has said amidst a revamp of the visa programme popular among Indian IT firms and professionals.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the federal agency which receives and determines the successful applications for H-1B visas, said yesterday that it received 199,000 H-1B applications for the 2018 fiscal year.

As per the USCIS figures, it received 37,000 less H-1B petitions for the fiscal year 2018 beginning October 1 this year than the 236,000 it received in 2017.

These applications were received in the first five days before USCIS stopped receiving the H-1B petitions.

The successful applicants have been decided on the basis of a computerised draw of lots.

USCIS, as per Congressional mandate can issue a maximum of 65,000 H-1B visas every year. In addition, it can issue another 20,000 to those who have completed their higher education at a US university.

In 2017, USCIS had received 233,000 applications. In 2015 it had received 172,500 H-1B applications and 124,000 in 2014.

The USCIS gave no reason for the drop in



H-1B visas this year as compared to the previous two years, but experts attributed this to the current rhetoric against it.

"This years applications are 'surprisingly low', William Stock, president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association told 'San Francisco Chronicle'. Stock said a reason behind the drop could be that companies that hire engineers to handle other businesses' programming needs may have filed fewer applications.

India's Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro accounted for the majority of H-1B applications filed in California last year, the daily reported. P11

Jet Airways giving 'step-motherly' treatment to Indians: Pilots' body

MUMBAI: Jet Airways is treating Indian pilots in a "step-motherly" manner compared to expats, pilots' body NAG said today even as the airline asserted that it has a strict and common code for employees.

Seeking swift action against alleged racist approach of expat pilots at the airline, the National Aviators Guild (NAG) called for disallowing such pilots in the cockpit.

The group's statement follows its direction on April 15 asking its members not to fly with the expats in the cockpit after one of the foreign pilots allegedly assaulted a trainer in Bengaluru recently. The carrier has around 60 expat commanders, who mainly operate its Boeing 737 and ATR fleet.

In a strongly-worded statement, NAG said disparaging, inappropriate and racist comments allegedly made by certain expat pilots cannot be taken lightly.

"This is in addition to the verbal and physical abuse of a senior trainer by an expat pilot employed by the airline," NAG claimed.

"The management has for a very long time treated the Indian employees, including the pilots, in a step-motherly



manner and has disregarded the legitimate expectations of its employees to be treated fairly, reasonably and in a just manner," it noted.

A Jet Airways spokesperson said as part of the airline's open door policy, it encourages all employee groups to engage in consultative processes and arrive at amicable solutions.

"As an Indian airline operating internationally, all employees, regardless of nationality, are governed by a strict and common code of conduct," the spokesperson said in a statement.

He noted that there are robust HR processes to ensure that instances of contradictory nature are duly investigated and appropriate actions taken as per company policy.

"Jet Airways is an equal

opportunities employer and endeavours to employ the best human capital irrespective of race, gender, caste, creed or religion," he added.

The guild claims representation of nearly 1,000 pilots of the total around 1,500 pilots in Jet Airways. The Naresh Goyal-promoted airline had witnessed a 5-day long strike by NAG in September 2009 over the issue of forming the union.

NAG also said the airline's management needs to respond swiftly and ought to issue a diktat to said expat pilots to apologise or else leave forthwith.

Stressing on the need for collective action, the guild said the airlines reputation cannot be "tarnished by racist and hateful comments made by certain misguided foreign nationals." P11

States can borrow directly from foreign agencies for infra projects: Centre

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Wednesday permitted state government entities to borrow directly from bilateral overseas lending agencies like JICA to fund infrastructure projects.

The decision will directly benefit large infrastructure projects like the Mumbai trans-harbour link (MTHL), Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told reporters here after the Union Cabinet took decision in this regard. An official release said the government has approved the policy guidelines to allow financially sound state government entities to borrow directly from bilateral ODA (Official Development Assistance) partners for implementation of vital infrastructure projects.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), a state government entity, has also been allowed to borrow directly from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for implementation of MTHL project. The estimated project cost for MTHL is Rs 17,854 crore, out of which JICA loan portion is expected to be Rs 15,109 crore.

Jaitley said the decision will help create infrastructure as state government entities can now get funds for big projects.

While state governments will furnish guarantees for loans, the Centre will provide counter-guarantees. External assistance today plays a supportive role in financing major infrastructure projects, social sector projects and in building up institutional capacity.

Jaitley said the decision will help states manage their Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) targets. Presently, external development assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources is received by the Government of India for projects/programmes in the central sector; for projects executed by central PSUs; and on behalf of the state governments for state sector projects/programmes. The existing guidelines do not allow direct borrowings by the state government entities from external agencies.

Several state agencies are implementing major infrastructure projects. These projects, even if viable and sound, have huge funding requirements. P11

ONGC topples SBI to reclaim its status as most valued PSU

NEW DELHI: Energy behemoth ONGC today surged past State Bank of India to reclaim the status of the most-valued PSU by market valuation.

A day after State Bank topped the energy firm, the market capitalisation (m-cap) of ONGC stood at Rs 2,30,805.73 crore at the end of trade today. This was Rs 323.59 crore more than SBI's m-cap of Rs 2,30,482.14 crore. ONGC had been the country's most valued firm across private and public sectors for some time a few years ago, when it first topped RIL from the top of the charts and then also TCS from the pole position. Shares of both the companies traded weak in today's session but the fall was sharper in SBI's case. P11

Yogi for 'Make in UP' on lines of 'Make in India' campaign

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked the officials to start schemes for the success of 'Make in UP' on the lines of Centre's 'Make in India' programme.

Taking strong exception to certain finance companies duping investors, the Chief Minister at a presentation of the state institutional finance department here late last night directed that a plan be prepared to act stringently against defaulter companies. Asking officials to identify such companies which run away with investors' money, he said stringent laws should be used against them.

Rooting for extending banking services to maximum number of people, he said a drive should be launched for



opening new accounts.

For the benefit of state's 12 lakh pensioners, the chief minister said digital life certificates should be linked to Aadhar and government departments must ensure that pension amounts are disbursed to people's bank accounts through a digital transfer by the first day of each month. P11

GoFro offers facility to compare holiday packages

MUMBAI: After air fares and hotels, tourists can now compare holiday packages on a single platform with travel online marketplace GoFro partnering with 12 major industry players to offer the facility.

The move will create a platform for large tour operators

to gain access to more travellers and mid-sized players to move beyond a particular regional player and reach out to new markets, GoFro said in a release here on Wednesday.

GoFro is expecting the number of bookings to grow by 10 times in the next one

year and also sees an increase in the number of suppliers selling packages on the platform, it said. The company has partnered with more than 12 travel companies like Thomas Cook, Yatra, MakeMyTrip, Paras Holidays, Contiki, Beyond Travel, Flamingo Transworld

and Guidelines Travels, among others, where users can compare holiday packages across all travel partners.

"It is another big step by GoFro to become India's first and largest travel marketplace. Now the power lies in the hands of the consumer,

they can simply visit GoFro and compare packages offered by all the travel agents," GoFro Founder Amitabh Misra said.

The company started its journey in June 2016 and has since then partnered with more than 200 tour operators and travel agents. P11

Facebook for 'everyone' and not just high end: Zuckerberg

NEW YORK: Facebook does innovation to serve "everyone" in the community and not just the "high end", its CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said in an apparent swipe at Snapchat boss' reported "poor countries" remark that triggered a controversy in India.

"I think one thing that people probably don't think about as much as we do is innovation to serve everyone in the community, not just the high end, right?", Zuckerberg told Tech Crunch on the sidelines of the annual Facebook Developer Conference (F8) at the McEnery Convention Center in San Jose, California yesterday.

When asked about the perception of Facebook being less innovative, Zuckerberg said, "I guess I'm not that worried about that. I mean, I feel like we do different kinds of work in different areas. I mean, I think certainly, no one who looks at the solar-powered planes that we're building or the satellites that that stuff isn't interesting."

Zuckerberg, 32, said we focus on a lot of things like Facebook Lite. It's up to 200 million people in like a year...I



tend to worry more and think more about the substance of what our community actually wants, Tech Crunch reported. Snapchat is strongly denying allegations by a former employee Anthony Pompliano, who alleged in a lawsuit that Spiegel had once shot down his suggestion to pursue growth in certain international markets.

Pompliano alleged that Spiegel said Snapchat is "only for rich people" and that he didn't want to "expand into

poor countries like India and Spain.

Snapchat had refuted the reported claims of a former employee who alleged that its CEO Evan Spiegel made negative comments about the Indian market, saying the multimedia mobile app is for everyone and the company is "grateful" to its Indian users.

Spiegel's remarks caused an uproar in India where users are quickly uninstalling the Snapchat app. P11

Paytm in talks to raise over \$1 billion funding from Japan's SoftBank

NEW DELHI: Fintech company Paytm is believed to be in discussions with Japanese conglomerate SoftBank to raise over \$1 billion. The deal, if successful, will value the Alibaba-backed Paytm at over \$7 billion from the current \$5 billion, multiple sources said.

When contacted, Paytm and SoftBank declined to comment. Interestingly, SoftBank was an early investor in Alibaba. The talks come at a time when SoftBank is working on a sale plan of e-commerce firm Snapdeal and is likely to make an announcement in the next few weeks.

SoftBank is the largest shareholder in Snapdeal, which is locked in an intense battle with Amazon India and Flipkart. One of the sources said Paytm may buy Snapdeal-owned payments firm Freecharge as part of the trans-

action with SoftBank.

The funding will also help Paytm accelerate expansion ahead of the launch of its payments bank service. The Alibaba-backed company already runs mobile wallet and e-commerce services.

Paytm has seen manifold growth in transactions on its platform after the government scrapped high denomination notes in November last year.

SoftBank, which has committed an investment of over \$10 billion in the Indian market, is also engaged in sale discussion for Snapdeal to rival Flipkart. Paytm, which counts China's Alibaba as a prominent shareholder, was valued at about \$5 billion last year when it had raised \$60 million from Mediatek. Also, Reliance Capital recently sold its 1 per cent stake to Alibaba for an estimated Rs 275 crore. P11

India Inc seals deals worth \$17.9 bn in January-March

NEW DELHI: India M&A activity saw a robust start in the first quarter of this year with the value of deals doubling to \$17.9 billion, says a report.

In the corresponding three months a year ago, the deals were valued at \$9.2 billion.

According to global deal tracking firm Mergermarket, notwithstanding the significant rise in the value of deals, the number of transactions declined to 76 in January-March this year from 110 in the year-ago quarter.

Moreover, India's market share grew significantly in the Asia-Pacific (excluding Japan) region comprising 13.2 per cent of the total regional deal value, the highest proportion across all quarters since 2013, Mergermarket India M&A trend report Q1 2017 said.

The telecom sector attracted deals worth \$13.6 billion from three deals in the January-March period, as compared to only \$60 million from two deals a year ago.

The top deal this quarter

was Vodafone Group's merger of Vodafone India with Idea Cellular, which contributed \$12.7 billion to sector and accounted for 70.6% of total value. Another big deal in the sector was Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co's \$948 million investment in Bharti Infratel for a 10.3% stake

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited's \$995 million for 80 per cent stake of KG-OSN-2001/03 from Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Limited.

Although inbound M&A has shrunk to a three-year low, Industrials & Chemicals, fuelled by the government's 'Make in India' ambition, stood out and continued to attract interest from overseas investors.

Out of the 14 deals worth \$597 million announced during the first quarter of this year, 10 were made by foreign investors. P11

Draft National Steel Policy to be ready soon, says Birender Singh

MPOST BUREAU

MUMBAI: Chaudhary Birender Singh, Union Minister for Steel on Wednesday inaugurated the two-day India Steel-2017 exhibition and conference here. In his inaugural address, he complimented the industry representatives for posting good growth figures in 2016-17. "I want as much growth and one per cent more," he exhorted. Production increased by 9 per cent last year, so it should go up by 10 per cent this year. He expressed confidence although the past three years were challenging for the steel industry, the government had been intervening strategically at important times and thus today India is a net exporter, and among the few countries that have a positive demand for steel.

"The government has provided the steel industry with a level playing field, and the industry has responded by converting challenges to opportunities."

Chaudhary Birender Singh highlighted five focus areas where he felt further effort was needed: (i) production and productivity increase; (ii) R&D; (iii) 'India-made' steel; (iv) demand boost for steel; and (v) excellence in quality and efficiency.

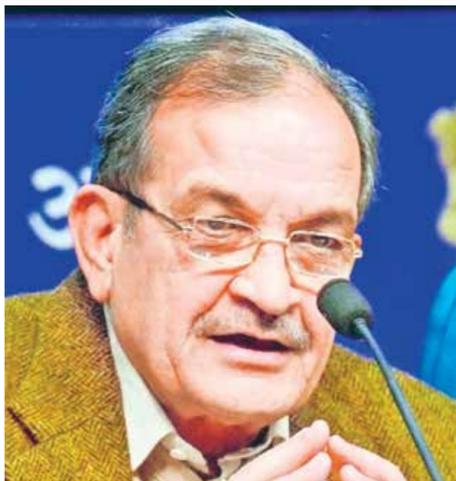
He asserted that demand will increase because India is strategically placed with

a demand for infrastructure development in this part of the world. "The next destination for steel consumption will be the African continent," he disclosed. Hence for the next 50 years, lack of consumption will not hamper production. The government will soon be releasing a National Steel Policy draft, which will give concrete shape to its vision and plans for the steel industry.

He declared that he wanted to bring a 100 per cent quality regime into the steel sector. "Quality regime is one of the factors which can increase our exports to great heights." The quality regime will be driven by the availability of raw materials, demand generation and R&D.

He revealed that his ministry was working with other departments to make alternative raw materials available so that the industry need not be unduly dependent on coking coal. He also mentioned that he is considering a proposal to make it mandatory to use India-made steel in key projects.

He also called for increased R&D. "We have been limiting ourselves to incremental improvements," he said calling for work on new technologies to overcome bottlenecks. He expressed disappointment that although India is the third largest producer of steel, we still import value-added and specialised steels that are not



made here. He also felt that in this era, R&D should also include marketing. "We have gained speed and momentum on the runway in the last two to three years. Now is the time for take-off and touch commanding heights of success," he concluded.

The minister released a FICCI-KPMG report on the steel industry. Earlier, Dr A Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI, welcomed the delegates and CEOs to the inaugural session.

Dr Aruna Sharma, Secretary Ministry of Steel, delivered the keynote address.

Praising the industry representatives for their effort, she reminded them that they still had a production target of 300 tonnes. She said that a major challenge is to identify which materials steel can replace, citing drinking water pipes, building material, and structures for wood and timber. Speaking of the advantages of using steel over other materials, she said, "There are reports that highlight the hazards of using alternative materials in the drinking water industry."

The Steel Ministry is trying to work on diminishing the dependence on iron ore and

India's steel import decline by 36% to 7.4 MT in 2016-17

NEW DELHI: India's import of total finished steel fell 36 per cent to 7.4 million tonnes (MT) and exports jumped 102 per cent to 8.2 MT in 2016-17, according to official data. In terms of production too the country did well, according to Joint Plant Committee's annual report on the sector for 2016-17. Export of total finished steel rose 102.1 per cent in April-March 2016-17 to 8.244 MT as against 4 MT in same period of last year and dependence on import eased to 7.4 MT as compared to 11.7 MT in the preceding fiscal, it said. "During April-March 2016-17, crude steel production was 97.385 MT, a growth of 8.5 per cent, over the same period of last year," the report said.

PTI

Power sector sees coal supply from CIL rising to 420 mt in FY17



NEW DELHI: The supply of coal by state-owned CIL to power sector increased by 1.3 per cent to 420.2 million tonnes (MT) in 2016-17. The increase in supply comes at a time when demand of coal by the power sector has picked up since December as the economy was doing well.

"The demand of coal by the power sector has picked up since December. I feel that generally economy is doing well so our demand is therefore increasing," Kumar said.

A series of measures have been taken by CIL to make more coal available for power sector such as offer coal under special forward e-auction scheme exclusively for the sector, the government had said.

Besides, measures like reduced reserve price and earnest money deposit to make e-auctions attractive, no performance incentives on higher grades of coal have also been taken up, it said.

Coal India is eyeing one billion tonnes of production target by 2020.

PTI

HPCL's Barmer refinery project viable: Chairman

JAIPUR: The Barmer refinery project of HPCL is viable despite reduction in viability gap funding, its chairman M K Surana has said.

On whether the previous MoU done by HPCL was not viable, Surana said, "Viability gap funding for the refinery project has reduced in the revised MoU, but the project is still viable for HPCL."

He said that parameters change with time. It is our responsibility that whatever decision we take is techno-commercially viable and at the same time, it benefits people and the government. "HPCL is a big company and we have tried exploring all technical and commercial opportunities. At the same time, we have also tried passing on the benefits to the state government and people, Surana said following signing of revised MoU for Barmer refinery.

Talking about the project, he said the refinery will incorporate best of technologies used in the world so that environmental impact resulting from the refinery can be minimised.

"We will have a system to ensure that pollutants remain in optimum level and effluent water can be reused. Pet Coke, a by-product, will be used for power generation, which will

“We will have a system to ensure that pollutants remain in optimum level and effluent water can be reused. Pet Coke, a by-product, will be used for power generation, which will also meet the power requirement of the refinery”

also meet the power requirement of the refinery," Surana said.

Further, he said that refinery will produce petro-chemical derivatives and will provide raw material to petro-chemical industries.

He said the work for the refinery project will commence following necessary approvals required from various government authorities.

"The government has assured that a single window clearance will be set for necessary approvals for the refinery project. We are hopeful for the early approval," he added.

Taparia Tools holds retailers' conclave in Bengaluru



MPOST BUREAU

BENGALURU: Taparia Tools Ltd organised a Retailers Get Together Meet in Bengaluru, where they had on display various product ranges. Taparia Tools had started manufacturing Hand Tools in India since 1969.

Sales Director DP Taparia was present at the event and he said that Taparia Tools have been in the market for last 40 years and there are authorised dealers of Taparia Hand Tools in Bengaluru.

The company has quality products that are well accepted in the market. Its newly-launched products like Plastic Tool Box, Steel Files, Non-sparking Tools, Diamond Cutting Blade, Cut Off Wheel, etc., were displayed in the Retailers' Get Together Meet.

Opec 'optimistic' that oil output cuts will help prices recover

ABU DHABI: Oil-exporting cartel OPEC is optimistic that production cuts agreed with non-members to prop up prices will lead to a recovery in the market, its chief said today.

"We are optimistic that the policy measures we have taken already place us on the path of recovery," OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo said at an energy forum in Abu Dhabi.

OPEC members agreed in November to cut production by 1.2 million barrels per day for six months beginning from the start of the year. Some non-cartel producers, led by Russia, joined in in December committing to cut output by 558 million bpd.

The OPEC chief did not take a position on whether oil ministers from participating countries would extend the cuts when they meet in Vienna next



month. "These 24 countries, I believe, will take a decision that will be in the best interest of not only producers but also consumers and the global industry in general," he said. OPEC and non-OPEC producers said after talks in Kuwait last month that they were looking into extending the output cuts, as compliance with the agreement has increased. Barkindo said the joint action has put OPEC and other producers in the "driving seat" to dictate events instead of

"reacting to market developments." The cuts were agreed to help restore market stability "by addressing one variable, which is stock," he said.

"As a result of the rising stock over the past years, the equation has gone out of balance." All producers taking part in the cuts are committed to restoring stability, he said.

Oil prices have dropped by around half since 2014 and currently hover just above 50 per barrel.

PTI

Tata, Godrej, Adani show interest in buying Sahara properties

NEW DELHI: A large number of corporates, including Tatas, Godrej, Adani and Patanjali, have shown interest in buying embattled Sahara group's 30 properties estimated to be worth about Rs 7,400 crore.

The properties, mostly land parcels being auctioned by real estate consultant Knight Frank India, have also generated interest from several real estate developers including Omaxe and Eldeco, as also from HNIs and at least one public sector firm Indian Oil, sources familiar with the process said.

Besides, Chennai-based Apollo Hospital has shown interest in acquiring Sahara Hospital in Lucknow.

Sources, however, said that the sale process and the valuation could get impacted due to a hurry in getting the deals closed within a short time because of an urgency

on part of Sahara to get the money and deposit the same with the regulator Sebi as per Supreme Court directions.

All prospective buyers are asking for 2-3 months for due diligence, which is considered to be normal period of time in the high-value real estate transactions, sources added.

When contacted, a Sahara group spokesperson declined to disclose the names of prospective buyers, saying "deals are in process and will materialise soon". He also said the details have been submitted to the Supreme Court.

Godrej Properties' Executive Chairman Pirojsha Godrej said, "We are looking at part of one of the Pune land parcels for which Knight Frank is running the bidding process. It is still at a preliminary stage."

Omaxe's CMD Rohtas Goel also con-



firmed that his company was interested in some properties.

"As a prudent business organisation, we always keep exploring growth opportunities," he said.

Eldeco's Managing Director Pankaj Bajaj said they are interested in some properties but would not be like to share the exact details at this stage.

An Apollo Hospitals spokesperson said, "The Apollo has submitted an expression of interest for Sahara Hospital and (we) are conducting our evaluation and due diligence process."

Tata Housing declined to comment, while there were no replies to specific queries made to Adani Group and Patanjali.

"The advertisement got an overwhelming response. Over 250 expressions of interest (EOIs) have been received. EOIs have been received for all sites with majority of sites having multiple EOIs," Knight Frank India said in response to queries from PTI.

"Process is an intense process that

constitutes due diligence, site inspections, financial bids (pricing to be on as-is-where-is-whatever-it-is basis) and shall culminate on finalisation of successful bidder.

"Due diligence and site inspections are either completed or underway in most cases. We expect to receive the final bids shortly," it added. Sources said there were a large number of individuals as also some educational institutions who have submitted expressions of interest for the properties. The shortlisted entities are now being asked to submit their financial bids.

The group is expecting to get the first instalment from the sale of these properties by June 17 and get all the money, estimated at around Rs 7,400 crore, in three months.

Earlier this week, the Supreme Court also directed sale of Sahara group's Aamby

Valley township in Lonavala, which the group estimates to be worth over Rs 1 lakh crore and fears that a hurried sale will favour only those wanting to "grab Aamby Valley cheaper".

The Sahara spokesperson said the group had committed to deposit the directed amount of Rs 10,500 crore by July-August 2017, including Rs 7,400 crore from sale of the 30 properties being auctioned and payments from other deals, but the court declined and asked for the Aamby Valley auction which will take much longer.

"We committed around Rs 1,500 crore from overseas hotels, expected to reach India within 45 days. Also we informed about Vasai land where we are going to get around Rs 800 crore (and) also around Rs 800 crore from Ghaziabad," he added.

PTI

CORPORATE KALEIDOSCOPE



The 126th Birth anniversary of Bharat Ratan Baba Saheb Dr BR Ambedkar was celebrated at NHPC. Present on the occasion were K M Singh, CMD, Ratish Kumar, Director (Projects), Balraj Joshi, Director (Technical), N K Jain, Director (Personnel) and M K Mittal, Director (Finance)



IndianOil's Northern Region kicked off Safety week celebrations by observing National Fire Service Day to create awareness on fire prevention, fire protection and renew employees' commitment towards safety. All employees of IndianOil Northern Regional Office took the safety pledge with determination to follow safety norms and keep "safety" at top



Shyam Sundar Co Jewellers unveiled an exclusive line of designer gold jewellery collection named Bandish aur Raagdari owing its roots to the signature style of the Indian Gharanas. The newly curated collection was launched in presence of the Brand Ambassador, Indian Classical Vocalist, Smt Kaushiki Chakraborty along with city models. Rupak Saha & Arpita Saha of Shyam Sundar Co Jewellers were present to address the media



Dr. Rajiv Kumar Gupta (IAS), Managing Director, GNFC, is awarded the prestigious Golden Peacock Innovation Award in Product/Services category for initiative of Cashless Townships at the 27th World Congress at Dubai Global Convention. The Award was presented by His Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Cabinet Member & Minister of Culture & Knowledge Development, UAE



KASHYAP, HARSHEEL REACH PRE-QUARTER-FINALS AT CHINA MASTERS

CHANGZHOU: Commonwealth Games champion P Kashyap and Harsheel Dani advanced to the pre-quarter-finals of men's singles competition at the USD 150,000 China Masters Grand Prix Gold. Back to playing competitive badminton after recovering from a shoulder injury Kashyap took 46 minutes to dispose of Thailand's Suppanyu Avihingsanon 21-16 21-17.

EX-NFL STAR AARON HERNANDEZ COMMITS SUICIDE IN PRISON

WASHINGTON: Former American football star Aaron Hernandez on Wednesday was found dead in prison where he was serving a life sentence for murder, after hanging himself with a bedsheet, prison officials said. Hernandez, 27, was discovered hanging in his cell by corrections officers in Shirley, Massachusetts at approximately 3.05 am.

ROHAN BOPANNA-PABLO CUEVAS ADVANCE AT MONTE CARLO MASTERS

ROQUEBRUNE-CAP-MARTIN: Rohan Bopanna and his Uruguayan partner Pablo Cuevas beat Marcin Matkowski of Poland and Austrian Alexander Peya to enter the second round of the men's doubles event at the Monte Carlo Masters tennis tournament. Bopanna and Cuevas overcame a strong challenge to win the first round clash 6-3, 6-7, 10-2 in one hour and 27 minutes.



Dhawan, Williamson star as Sunrisers race to 191/4

HYDERABAD: Brilliant batting from Shikhar Dhawan (70) and Kane Williamson (89) helped Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) post a challenging 191/4 against Delhi Daredevils (DD) in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium here on Wednesday. After losing skipper David Warner in the second over, Dhawan and Williamson thrashed Delhi bowlers all around the park as they together slammed 11 boundaries and five sixes to put Hyderabad in a comfortable position. Hyderabad started off on a steady note but in the second over, Warner was dismissed by pacer Chris Morris. Morris's back of a length delivery outside the off-stump took the leading edge and Amit Mishra ran from fine leg to



Shikhar Dhawan of Sunrisers Hyderabad plays a shot during the IPL cricket match against Delhi Daredevils in Hyderabad on Wednesday. PIC/PTI

take a superb catch. With Williamson joined Dhawan and both forged a 136-run partnership for the second wicket in 14.2 overs before the former was sent packing in the 17th over by Morris. The Kiwi skip-

per, who blasted six boundaries and five sixes in his 51-ball knock, tried to flick a full length delivery but got a top-edge to the deep mid-wicket and Shreyas Iyer then completed a diving catch to dismiss Williamson. With three overs remaining and new batsman Yuvraj Singh (3) at the crease, Dhawan, who was playing as support for Williamson, shifted gears and started attacking Delhi bowlers. After slamming a couple of boundaries, Dhawan was also dismissed. He was sent back to the pavilion in the 19th over. **Brief scores: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Delhi Daredevils SRH:** 191/4 (Shikhar Dhawan 70, Kane Williamson 89). **DD:** Morris (4/26). AGENCIES

IPL TURNS 10: MATCH PREVIEW

MI look to continue winning streak against KXIP



Rohit Sharma, who made a strong comeback in the previous match against Gujarat Lions with an unbeaten 40 will look to build on it

INDORE: On a roll with four consecutive victories, two-time champions Mumbai Indians would look to continue the winning streak when they take on Kings XI Punjab in an Indian Premier League match, here on Thursday. Having won four out of the five matches they played so far, Mumbai Indians are placed second with eight points and would certainly start as favourites against Kings XI Punjab, who have managed to win just two of their five games. Even though Mumbai's top order is yet to click, the middle and lower order have more than made up for the poor starts. Skipper Rohit Sharma, who did not have an ideal start to the tournament, made a strong comeback in the previous match against Gujarat Lions with an unbeaten 40 off 29 deliveries, while Kieron Pollard continued with his fine run, scoring a quickfire 23-ball 39. Young Nitish Rana has been a consistent contributor for Mumbai this season. He chipped in with a brilliant half-century in the last match to enable Mumbai topped Gujarat Lions by six wickets. In fact, one of the biggest positives for Mumbai has been the form of the Pandya brothers -- Hardik and Krunal. The duo have come up with significant all-round performances. Come Thursday, Mumbai would look to their batsmen to shine again and dominate the opponents. Harbhajan Singh has been fantastic in the powerplay overs, while Lasith Malinga and Mitchell McClenaghan have also been among wickets. McClenaghan returned with impressive figures of two for 24 to help the team restrict Gujarat to 176 for four in their last game. Kings XI Punjab, on the other hand, will have their task cut out against a strong Mumbai outfit. Despite starting their campaign with back-to-back victories, Kings XI slipped in the next three games and would now be desperate to get back to winning ways. Kings XI have some dangerous batsmen, especially the three 'Ms' -- skipper Glenn Maxwell, David Miller and Eoin Morgan -- besides Hashim Amla who can pile up runs but none of them clicked in the last three outings. The lone battle was fought by Manan Vohra in the last match against Sunrisers Hyderabad, as he scored a fabulous 50-ball 90 but Kings XI still lost by five runs while chasing a modest 160-run target due to lack of support from the other end. AGENCIES

National Youth Athletics Championship begins on Apr 23

HYDERABAD: The 14th National Youth (U-18) Athletics Championships will be held here from April 23 and see participation of 583 athletes from 26 states and Union Territories. The athletes (boys and girls) will take part in 20 disciplines each during the three-day event which will be held at the GMC Balayogi Athletics stadium, Sports Authority of Telangana Chairman A Venkateshwar Reddy said. The National Youth Athletics Championships assumes importance as the Indian teams to participate in the Asian Youth Championships in May in Bangkok and the World Youth Championships in Nairobi in July will be selected on the basis of their performances in this event, he said. Haryana's shot putter Dipender Dabas, who will be the top contender to win a gold in the Asian Youth Meet in Bangkok next month, besides defending champions of National Youth Athletics Championships 2016 Gurjeet Singh (in boy's high jump) from Haryana, Nivya Antony (girl's pole vault) from Kerala and M Karuniya (girl's discus throw) from Tamil Nadu are among the athletes taking part, Telangana Athletics Association General Secretary K Ranga Rao said. "On the request of Athletics Federation of India, the Director Anti-Doping Agency will be deputing his squad for this event to collect urine samples of the participants on all the three days to avoid misuse of banned substances," Rao said. AGENCIES

I am a special talent, avows Yusuf Pathan

KOLKATA: Yusuf Pathan might not have ever looked upto Jose Mourinho for inspiration but his latest self-assessment is akin to the current Manchester United coach's famous statement 'I am the special one'. So does he harbour hopes of an India comeback with so many ahead of him for those couple of slots in the middle-order? "It does not matter to me who's ahead of me (in representing India). I think no one can compete with me. I consider myself as a special talent," Pathan said in an interview on Wednesday. Having scored 39-ball-59 against Delhi Daredevils, the India discard proved why he is so highly rated in the Kolkata Knight Riders ranks despite his game-changing knocks being few and far in between. "I have to back my talent. It does not take time for



things to change. If I continue to perform well, at some point I will get an opportunity if not today then tomorrow," Pathan seemed positive that he may once again don the India blues. "I don't want to look at others. My job is to play good cricket and the start has been good this time. I should be satisfied with my cricket and be prepared whenever I get a chance," he said. Pathan made it clear that he

will never shy away from playing his natural game like he did under pressure against DD at the Kotla. "There was a lot of pressure I just wanted to play my natural game. You will always get out at some point, be it in the first ball or in the 40th ball. But it's about playing my shots and making the balls count," he said about his knock. Pathan has had his share of disappointment with the team especially during their maiden title-winning campaign in 2012 when he managed just 194 in 17 matches without a single half-century but the Shah Rukh Khan co-owned franchise has backed him throughout these years. In fact, his 112 matches since 2011 is one more than skipper Gautam Gambhir's 111 games for the popular Kolkata franchise. "The only message from Shah Rukh Khan continue to entertain the way you have been," Pathan said. Pathan refused to agree his style has changed but says he's keen to finish off games now. "Having played for so long, you are aware of your team's strength. If you are set, it's all about finishing the game. It's about setting a precedent for the youngsters in the team as well. They should also get an opportunity to learn. It's about winning comfortably." Pathan believes that as long as he is at the crease, KKR can win matches. "I think as long as I am at the crease, the team will win comfortably. In the past, I have seen the team has gone on to lose the match after I got out. All these things, I have brought some changes in my game. It's about playing shots." At this stage of his career, Pathan only wants to enjoy his cricket. AGENCIES

FIFA 'evaluating' AIFF request to stage India matches in Delhi

NEW DELHI: World football governing body FIFA said it was "evaluating" India's request to stage the group matches of Under-17 World Cup involving the national team in the national capital, but asserted that it will have the final say on the matter. On the advice of the Sports Ministry, the All India Football Federation has requested FIFA to allot India's group matches to Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here even though the world body had last month announced that the matches of Group A would be played at Mumbai's D Y Patil Stadium. Under the usual practice, the host country of a FIFA tournament is placed in Group A. The Under-17 World Cup will be held in six cities -- Kolkata, Margao, Navi Mumbai, Kochi, Guwahati and New Delhi -- from October 6-28. AGENCIES

RCB coach Vettori applauds Gayle, Chahal

RAJKOT: Royal Challengers Bangalore coach Daniel Vettori heaped praise on Chris Gayle for his 38 ball 77, saying that the batsmen like swash-buckling West Indies opener do not need guidance from any coach or captain with regard to their batting. Gayle smashed a blistering half-century before Yuzvendra Chahal returned with a three-wicket haul as Royal Challengers Bangalore defeated Gujarat Lions by 21 runs here on Tuesday night. "Good thing about international cricketers is that they probably talk to themselves more than any captain or coach talking to them about their performances," said Vettori at the



post match press conference. "They take pride in their performances, they really want to contribute to the team and Chris is a really prideful man, he wants to do well for RCB, do well for any team he plays for. Chris is the strongest and powerful player on these kind of wickets and he can take any bowler down." The former New Zealand skipper said Gayle made the most of the opportunity he got because of AB de Villiers' injury. "Today (Tuesday) was his opportunity. AB's injury allowed him to come out and play. We wanted him to play with freedom and we had given him the confidence," Vettori said. The 38-year-old coach also applauded leg-spinner Chahal's three for 31. "I have been lucky enough to have worked with Chahal for the past four years and also played against him when he was in Mumbai. The way he bowled in the Champions League final was the reason why we wanted to get him into RCB," said Vettori. AGENCIES

Maharaj makes debut in Proteas Champions Trophy squad

JOHANNESBURG: Indian-origin left-arm spinner, Keshav Maharaj has been included in the 15-man Proteas squad for the ICC Champions Trophy, Cricket South Africa (CSA) announced on Wednesday. The squad will play three ODIs against England starting with the first match at Headingley in Leeds on May 24th, before their first group match of the ICC Champions Trophy against Sri Lanka at the Oval on June 3. The 26-year-old Maharaj has had an impressive debut season for the Test squad, and comes into the squad to bolster the spin options alongside Imran Tahir. Morne Morkel makes a return to the limited-overs format after nearly 10 months, adding experience to the pace bowling group featuring Kagiso Rabada, Wayne Parnell, Chris Morris, Dwayne Pretorius and Andile Phehlukwayo. CSA convener of selectors, Linda Zondi, says the selectors have picked a strong squad which covers all of the combinations and conditions on offer for the eighth edition of the eight-team event. "We have been working with this group of players for the last two seasons where our key emphasis has been consistency in selection," Zondi commented. "That has shown in how this group has performed over the last while, which has resulted in winning three consecutive ODI series. "We feel we have a squad that covers every scenario that we could possibly be faced with on the tour. Most importantly, every player knows and understands their role and value within the squad." AGENCIES

Basil Thampi will soon represent India, says WI all-rounder Dwayne Bravo

KOLKATA: West Indies' World T20-winning all-rounder Dwayne Bravo is mighty impressed with uncapped Kerala speedster Basil Thampi, saying he could soon represent India. Both Bravo and Thampi are turning out for Gujarat Lions in the ongoing Indian Premier League. "Basil Thampi is a very, very talented youngster. I would say he will get the opportunity to play for Team India in a year or so. He has the talent, obviously, but he also has a lot of heart, pace and the skill. He's always willing to learn," Bravo said on Wednesday. During Gujarat Lions' match against Mumbai Indians, the tall pacer impressed everyone by consistently bowling yorkers. On Tuesday, when Royal Challengers Bangalore took the Gujarat Lions attack to



the cleaners, Thampi returned economical figures of 1/31 and bowled the maximum (11) dot balls. Thampi's maiden IPL wicket came in the form of Chris Gayle, after the opener had smashed a 38-ball 77. The bowler set it up with a yorker and trapped him next ball with another full-length delivery. An excited Bravo, who is

Thampi has the skill and is really good. I really wish him all the best from the bottom of my heart." Bravo is ever ready to offer tips to the 23-year-old. "I follow him very closely, I try to give him a lot of confidence and experience, explain to him, break down the game to him. He's still in a learning phase. "He has the raw natural talent and ability. It's a matter of playing more games, give him more experience and exposure." Talking about himself, Bravo has said he's "a game or two away" from returning to action. Bravo had taken 17 wickets from 15 matches last season and his absence is hurting the team, which is struggling at the bottom of the table with just a win from five matches. AGENCIES

A year after being sacked, Haroon Rasheed is back in PCB

KARACHI: Exactly a year after forcing him to step down as chief selector, the Pakistan Cricket Board has brought back former Test batsman, Haroon Rasheed in a more powerful position in the PCB. The PCB has announced the appointment of Haroon as Director Cricket Operations and will be reporting directly to the Chief Operating Officer, Subhan Ahmad. The board said in a statement that Haroon has been picked for the post after the PCB interviewed a total of three candidates including former Test spinner, Iqbal Qasim and Haroon met all the required credentials for the job. Ironically soon after Pakistan were eliminated early in the World T20 last April in India, a fact-finding committee formed by the PCB recommended the sacking of the entire selection committee which was headed by Haroon Rasheed. Even otherwise Haroon, who has also remained chief coach and manager of the Pakistan senior and junior teams besides serving as Director game development in the board, has been either removed or forced to step down in different capacities.

"It is clear that the decision to bring back Haroon has the full backing of Najam Sethi who is tipped to take over as Chairman of the board from Shaharyar Khan in a few week time, a reliable source in the board said. He said the only reason Haroon's appointment as Director Cricket Operations was delayed since last year was due to the resistance put up by Shaharyar who didn't want him back in any position. But soon after the PCB confirmed Haroon's appointment this week, Shaharyar also changed his tune and insisted Haroon's poor show as chief selector didn't have any bearing to his new assignment. "That was a different job and we went for changes after the World Cup based on recommendations of the fact-finding committee but this job is different and Haroon has the experience and credentials to do it successfully," Khan said. It is no secret that with Shaharyar on his way out after completing three years in the board, Sethi, who heads the executive committee, is now increasingly calling the shots on cricket affairs. AGENCIES

Second string Mohun Bagan lose 0-1 to 10-man Maziya SRC in AFC Cup

KOLKATA: Mohun Bagan were defeated 1-0 by Maziya S&RC at the Rabindra Sarobar Stadium in Kolkata in their AFC Cup Group Stage encounter. This defeat condemns the Mariners to the third spot in the group behind Bengaluru FC and the night's victors.

The Maldivians won thanks to Mohamed Umair's goal in the 34th minute as the midfielder scored his second goal in the group stage.

The Kolkata giants, who only had Balwant Singh and Jeje Lalpekhlua from the regular first team, went in with fringe players to rest their key men ahead of Saturday's match against Aizawl FC - the potential I-League title decider.

Andrei-Alexandru Cordos was retracted from the lineup even before Maziya took onto the field.

Gasim Samaam was put at left back in his place as Imaaz Ahmed was out injured.

Balwant Singh had the best of chance to break the deadlock in the 14th minute as he dipped in a ball from 23 yards out as Pavel Matiash got some fingers to it before the ball kissed the crossbar.

In the 20th minute, Aleksandar Rakic took a swipe from inside the box as three defenders closed in on him but the ball flew over.

Four minutes past the half-hour mark, the Mariners defense was caught napping. Ali Samooh glided in with the ball to be blocked by Souvik Chakraborti and the loose ball fell in Mohamed Umair's feet. Kinshuk Debnath was beaten for

pace and the Umaid found the back of the net to his farpost, bringing up his second goal in the tournament, after scoring in Dhaka last month.

The setback did not deter the young Mohun Bagan outfit to push for an equaliser and that was evident in the plethora of chances which fell to their strikers. Rakic would have deemed himself unlucky as he found himself in one v one situations twice in the second half but failed to convert.

Milos Kovacevic's two yellow card within four minutes saw the Green Boys go a man down, but having the numerical advantage for the last five minutes saw them held on.

Katsumi Yusa was introduced earlier and his barrage of crosses



saw him let down by Balwant and Prabir Das. Mohun Bagan was riding a wave of momentum after beating Abahani Limited Dhaka on April 4. They had finally opened their points tally for

the 2017 AFC Cup group stage as they staged a 3-1 come-from-behind win against Abahani.

Having gone down in the 21st minute to Jonathan Brown's opener, the Mariners scored twice within minutes before and after the interval (Jeje Lalpekhlua 46th, Balwant Singh 48th) to take the lead. With just minutes left, goalscorer Balwant turned provider as Sony Norde too got on the scoresheet (87th). Kinshuk Debnath had returned from injury and the Indian strike duo of Balwant Singh and Jeje Lalpekhlua started together as Darryl Duffy was rested. Drago Mamic, facing Bagan after almost six years decided to forego his five-man defence as he played Tutul Hosain Badsha in a holding role as Nigerian Emeka

Onuoha Darlington started upfront. In that match, the Mariners were on the backfoot from the word go as Abahani had six corners in the first eleven minutes. However, all of them failed to see the back of the net thanks to the early resistance shown by the hosts. Holding midfielder Rayhan Hasan was awarded the first booking of the night for a foul on Katsumi Yusa. However, the Japanese winger failed to make much of the ensuing free-kick in the fifteenth minute. Former Wales U21 forward Jonathan David Brown broke the deadlock in the 21st minute. Raju Gaikwad failed to control Mohammed Ziban's darting run from the right as he cut back and passed it square inside the box. AGENCIES

Harsh 'Real'ity: Ronaldo hattrick sinks valiant Bayern

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo scored a controversial hat-trick to become the first man to reach 100 Champions League goals as Real Madrid overcame 10-man Bayern Munich 4-2 after extra time in a thrilling quarter-final second leg.

The holders surged through 6-3 on aggregate at an exhilarated Santiago Bernabeu to take their place in Friday's semi-final draw for a record seventh consecutive year.

But Real were pushed all the way by Bayern, who battled back from a 2-1 first-leg deficit to send the tie into extra time thanks to Robert Lewandowski's penalty and an own goal from Sergio Ramos.

However, after Arturo Vidal was sent off, Ronaldo hit the century mark in Europe's top club competition on 104 minutes and completed his hat-trick five minutes later.

Bayern were left incensed, though, as Ronaldo's second and third goals were clearly offside.

"To score six goals against a team like Bayern Munich isn't easy so we deserved to go through," the Portuguese striker told Spanish TV station Antena 3.

"Real Madrid is Real Madrid, we are used to suffering and we are happy to be in the semis once again."



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo scores past Bayern's Douglas Costa (right) during the Champions League quarter-final second leg match between Real Madrid and Bayern Munich

Marco Asensio gave a night of high-class action the finale it deserved with a sensational solo goal to rub salt in Bayern wounds.

"The (red) card for Arturo wasn't a card and then the two goals from Cristiano are offside so clearly we are not happy," said Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti.

"In a quarter-final you have to put a better referee, or it is the moment to introduce video refereeing, which is what UEFA are trying because there are too

many errors." The German champions had been beaten on their previous four trips to Spain without even scoring a goal.

However, knowing they needed at least two to progress, Ancelotti's men started on the front foot and were left to rue a huge opportunity just eight minutes in.

Marcelo made a miraculous block to deny Thiago Alcantara before former Real winger Arjen Robben scuffed into the side-netting on his trusted left

foot. Much like the first leg, Madrid weathered the early storm and had plenty of chances to go in front before half time.

Jerome Boateng bailed out a rare mistake from goalkeeper Manuel Neuer as he cleared off the line from Ramos after Neuer fumbled a simple cross.

The half-time whistle brought some respite to proceedings on the field, although the Bayern fans were involved in a minor clash with police at

the break. The disturbances quickly died down and Bayern soon gave the travelling 4,000 from Germany something to cheer when play resumed.

Another goal-line clearance by Marcelo from Robben's dinked effort temporarily saved Madrid. But the hosts didn't escape moments later when referee Viktor Kassai pointed to the spot as Robben went down under a challenge from Casemiro.

Lewandowski stayed cool under the pressure and converted from the spot for his 39th goal of the season.

Ronaldo looked to have eased Madrid's nerves when he steered Casemiro's cross into the far corner 14 minutes from time. However, Real's celebrations were very short-lived as just a minute later the ball ricocheted around their box and Ramos turned into his own net.

The balance of a topsy-turvy tie turned Madrid's way again with five minutes remaining as just as in the first leg, Bayern were reduced to 10 men when Vidal saw a second yellow card for chopping down Asensio.

The extra man proved decisive as Madrid settled the tie with a three-goal burst either side of half time. AGENCIES

Vardy goal in vain as Atletico end Leicester fairytale

LEICESTER: Jamie Vardy scored in vain as Leicester City's Champions League fairytale came to a valiant end following a 1-1 quarter-final draw at home to Atletico Madrid.

Seeking to overturn a 1-0 first-leg deficit, Leicester fell further behind to Saul Niguez's first-half header, before Vardy's 61st-minute strike gave them hope.

But despite heavy Leicester pressure and furious noise inside the King Power Stadium, Atletico last night completed a 2-1 aggregate win to reach the semi-finals for the third time in four seasons.

"We had them rattled with the effort and commitment we showed. It's no discredit to lose to a team of that calibre," Leicester manager Craig Shakespeare told BT Sport. "The whole club, from the supporters to the players to the owners can be immensely proud, but I've just said to the players that they should want more of this and they've agreed that that's what they want."

Leicester had hoped to become the competition's first debutant semi-finalists since Villarreal in 2006, but they were unable to engineer a repeat of their last-16 triumph against Sevilla. Their exit brings to an end a golden adventure sparked by last season's stunning Premier League title win.

Having successfully staved off the threat of relegation under new manager Shakespeare, the rest of their season now holds nothing more than a return to pre-title normality. It is the third time Atletico have eliminated Leicester from continental competition, after previous triumphs in the 1961-



62 European Cup Winners' Cup and the 1997-98 UEFA Cup. Beaten by city foes Real Madrid in the 2014 and 2016 finals, Diego Simeone's side can continue to dream that this will be the year they finally end their wait for European football's biggest prize.

"I'm full of emotion and pride at the performance of my team," said Simeone.

"I also have to say, what a great performance from our opponents. It was almost a pleasure to compete against them." Leicester's desire to make the most of the occasion was clear from the start, pyrotechnics greeting the players as they came out while fans twirled blue, white and gold foil flags distributed by the club.

But whereas Leicester had quickly taken charge of their second-leg match against Sevilla in the previous round, Atletico made it clear they would not be pushed around.

They defended with their customary tenacity, while two

dangerous crosses from Yannick Carrasco -- preferred up front to the fit-again Kevin Gameiro -- demonstrated their threat on the counter. It was just as Leicester were threatening to make inroads, Shinji Okazaki stabbing wide at the near post from Vardy's cross, that the visitors tightened their grip on the tie.

Filipe Luis was given space to shape a cross into the box from the left and the unmarked Saul expertly guided a header past Kasper Schmeichel's outstretched right hand.

Riyad Mahrez volleyed straight at Jan Oblak at the other end after Marc Albrighton's cross was headed away, but it was the voices of the away fans that rang loudest as the half-time whistle sounded.

The second half brought with it drastic changes for the hosts, with Ben Chilwell and Leonardo Ulloa replacing Yohan Benalouane and Okazaki as Shakespeare switched to a bold 3-4-3 system. AGENCIES

Injured Neuer out for eight weeks

MADRID: Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer will miss up to eight weeks of football due to injury, the German club's CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has said.

Neuer fractured his left foot during his side's 2-4 Champions League defeat against Real Madrid. Bayern were knocked out of the competition at the quarter-final stage with a 3-6 aggregate loss.

The Bayern goalkeeper sustained the injury during Cristiano Ronaldo's third goal during extra-time of the Champions League clash.

"Neuer will miss eight weeks," Rummenigge told German publication Sport Bild, which reported that Neuer was seen leaving the stadium on crutches.

The match saw a lot of controversy with questions over the second and third goals scored by Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo. Bayern's Arturo Vidal was also shown a red card in the second half for what appeared to be clean tackle on Marco Asensio.

"He sustained the injury during the third goal, which was offside. I am incredibly angry. We were robbed," Neuer



said. Later, Bayern announced on their website that Neuer had indeed fractured his foot and that the Germany international would be further assessed when the team returns to Munich.

"Manuel Neuer suffered a fracture to his left foot according to an initial diagnosis," the statement on the Bayern website said.

"Neuer will undergo a thorough examination on arrival in Munich prior to a decision on the appropriate treatment." AGENCIES

East Bengal coach Mridul Banerjee injured on first day in training

KOLKATA: East Bengal's newly-appointed coach Mridul Banerjee got injured during his very first training session with the club, a "ruptured" Achilles tendon ruling him out for four weeks and adding to its woes. Out of I-League title race, East Bengal appointed the Santosh Trophy-winning coach on an interim basis, his tenure fixed till the Federation Cup. With less than a month to go for the Federation Cup, the 56-year-old suffered the injury on his left foot. "I've ruptured my Achilles tendon and will be out of action for at least four weeks. I wanted to give it all for East Bengal in the remainder season but such a big opportunity is wasted in such a cruel manner," Banerjee said after he was discharged from the hospital. The former Mohammedan Sporting AFC-A License holder coach tumbled on the field in an awkward manner after his foot landed on an uneven surface. AGENCIES

Anand finishes third in Korchnoi Zurich Chess Challenge

CHENNAI: Former world chess champion Viswanathan Anand of India finished third overall, with a score of 13.5 points from a possible 21 in the Korchnoi Zurich Chess Challenge. American Hikaru Nakamura, with 15 points, emerged the overall winner, claiming 4.5 points in the blitz section.

He won the Blitz tournament, and was half a point ahead of Anand. Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi took the second place (overall) with a tally of 14 points. Anand scored 4.5 points in the blitz event after having managed nine in the classical rounds. The Indian, with an ELO rating of 2786, beat Vladimir Kramnik of Russia and Yannick Pelletier (Switzerland) but lost to Boris Gelfand and Nepomniachtchi.

He held the ultimate championship Nakamura to a draw. In the classical part, Anand managed to beat Pelletier, Gelfand,

Svidler and Grigoriy Oparin (Russia) but lost to Kramnik, Nepomniachtchi and drew with Nakamura.

The eight players played seven rounds with a time control of 45 minutes and 30 seconds per move and a blitz event with a time control of 10 minutes and five seconds per move.

The tournament was held in memory of chess legend Viktor Korchnoi, who passed away on June 6, 2015. AGENCIES

Siddhant gets ticketed for French Open wild card event

NEW DELHI: Siddhant J Banthia and Malika Marathe emerged victorious in the third edition of Rendez-Vous to earn opportunity to compete for a wild card entry into the junior French Open.

16-year-old Banthia outclassed Abhimanyu Vannemreddy 6-1 6-0 in the boys final while 13-year-old Malika cruised past Yubrani Banerjee 6-1, 6-3 in the girls final.

They will compete against players from Japan, South Korea, China, Brazil and USA for the wild card entry. AGENCIES

millenniumpost CLASSIFIEDS

LOST & FOUND

It is notified for the information that my original Provisional Certificate of 10th class Roll No.6168329 issued by CBSE passing year 2007 has been actually lost. Name of candidate Aanuj Saxena S/o Anil Saxena R/o D-304, New Jyoti Appt. Sec 4, Dwarka, New Delhi. If anybody find pl contact 9711311915.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that My client Mrs. Uma Vemanna W/o SH. R.Vemanna age 52 years R/o C-11, Sector-56, Noida-201301, has debarred and disowned her husband Mr. R. Vemanna from her all movable and immovable properties and have served all relations due to her/his misconduct and misbehavior, if anybody dealing with him/her. My client and their other family members shall not be responsible in any manner whatsoever for her/his any act in future.

Sd/- Vishnu Kant Pandey Advocate
D/2782/2012, M-9953738532

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD

No. S/Sale/611/e-auction programme/17-18 E-AUCTION NOTICE NO. 2 Dated: 17.04.2017

E-auction programme of Scrap Depot/JHS and General Stores Depot/Kanpur for May-2017. All scrap material of Scrap Depot/JHS and Allahabad, Jhansi and Agra Divisions will be auctioned by Dy. CMM/SD/JHS. Auction of following railway scrap (excluding P.Way & Rail scrap) of Kanpur Area like ETD/CNB, TMS/CNB etc. will be conducted by Dy. CMM/GSD/CNB. Scrap Items : P Way Scrap, Scrap Rail, Cast Iron Scrap, Condemned rolling Stock, Non ferrous and Non metallic Scrap, Turning & Boring, Condemned Oil/Paints Drums, Condemned Machinery & plants, Condemned Vehicles, Condemned office equipments, Foundry Slag, Released overhead MS/GI tanks, Released ferrous scrap of train lighting fans, Released MS/GI pipe line, foundry skull, Workshop MS scrap and other MS scrap.

Auction Programme details for May-2017

S.N.	Date of Auction	Depot/Division	e-Auction conducted by
1.	05.05.2017 (Friday)	GSD/NCR/Jhansi	Dy. CMM/SD/NCR/Jhansi. (www.ireps.gov.in)
2.	15.05.2017 (Monday)		(through website)
3.	22.05.2017 (Monday)		
4.	29.05.2017 (Monday)	GSD/NCR/Kanpur	Dy. CMM/GSD/Kanpur (www.ireps.gov.in through website)
5.	09.05.2017 (Tuesday)		
6.	24.05.2017 (Wednesday)		

Special Conditions : 1. All auctions will be operated e-auction mode and conducted through www.ireps.gov.in website. In the event of auction not being completed on the same day, Auction may be continued on the next days also (Applicable only for Dy. CMM/SD/JHS). 2. The unsold lots of e-auction will also be included in next e-auction of respective depot. 3. The intending purchaser may inspect the lot of scrap material before the auctions during working hours. 4. To purchase material above Rs. 5 Lacs, the purchaser must be registered with Sale Tax department. 5. For further details on auctions (like catalogues, last sold rates in auctions & other details), Please visit North Central Railway's website "www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in." 6. For further detail regarding e-auction Please visit Railway's website "www.ireps.gov.in."

331117 (R)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPNCR

5 Russian athletes admit taking banned doping substances

MOSCOW: Russian runner Antonina Krivoschapka as well as four more national track and field athletes have admitted to consuming performance-enhancing drugs, the All-Russia Athletics Federation (ARAF) announced on Wednesday.

Over two months ago, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that doping re-tests of Krivoschapka from the 2012 London Olympics tested positive for a banned substance and ruled to strip her as well three of her teammates of the Olympic silver, which they

won in the 4x400 meters relay, reports Tax news agency.

Besides Krivoschapka, who is serving a two-year suspension term starting from September 7, 2016, four more Russian track and field athletes publicly confessed on Wednesday of doping abuse. They are Yevgeniya Kolodko (stripped of 2012 silver in short put and suspended for period of July 2, 2016 - July 1, 2018), hammer thrower Anna Bulgakova (suspended March 2019, 2017 - March 28, 2019), discus thrower Vera Ganeeva (suspended July 2, 2016 - July 1, 2018) and pole

vaulter Dmitry Starodubtsev (suspended July 2, 2016 - July 1, 2018).

After samples from the 2012 Olympic Games were retested, the Russian national team has been stripped of seven medals (four in track and field events).

Apart from the women's 4x100 meters relay medalists, left without medals were also Yulia Zaripova (steeplechase gold), Yevgeniya Kolodko (silver in shot put) and Tatyana Lysenko (gold in hammer throw).

The IOC Executive Board convened a special session

last year on May 17 discussing efforts of stepping up the fight against the drugs cheats and furnish measures to protect clean athletes ahead of the Olympics in Rio. As part of its anti-doping efforts, IOC ordered reanalysis of doping samples of athletes from 2008 Olympics in Beijing and 2012 Olympics in London.

Following two rounds of retesting, 98 Olympians were reported to test positive for banned substances - 60 from the 2008 Games and 38 from the 2012 Games. Among them were over 23

medallists from both Olympics. On the whole, a total of 1,243 doping samples from the 2008 and 2012 Games were subjected for retesting.

In particular, the IOC ruled after the series of doping retests to annul a total of 19 medals from Russian athletes, who took part in the 2008 and 2012 Summer Olympic Games. Athletes, who won medals in relays or other team competitions, were also obliged to give up their medals in case a doping sample retest of their teammates tested positive for banned substances. AGENCIES

BSES
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR SHORT TERM PURCHASE OF POWER FOR THE PERIOD 1st May 2017 TO 14th August 2017

Tender No. Head (PMG) / BRPL/E Tender / 2017/18/3121, Dated 18.04.2017

In accordance with the revised guidelines for short term procurement of power notified by the Ministry of Power dated 30.03.2016 and directions issued by Hon'ble DEEC, BRPL has floated power procurement tender for upto 200 MW along with the General Terms and Conditions for purchase of power and same is available on DEEP e-Bidding portal on websites www.msctcecommerce.com, www.powermin.in, www.pfcindia.com

Bidders are requested to kindly visit above website and submit the competitive purchase offers on www.msctcecommerce.com

Last date of bid submission is 26-4-17 up to 17:00 hrs and Opening of non-financial technical bids 27.04.17 at 11:00 hrs

Address:- Head PMG, Power Management Group, BSES Rajdhani power Ltd., BSES Bhawan, 2nd Floor, B-Block, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019 (Tel: 39999037, Fax: 011-39999454)

Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019
Corporate Identification No.: U74690DL2001PL111127
Tel.: +91 11 39999037 Fax: +91 11 3999 9454
Email: bses.ncr2012@bsees.com

Will revisit my own struggles while playing Nargis: Manisha



an event. She was speaking at the launch of a social campaign - 'My Hair for Cancer' - an initiative by Nargis Dutt Foundation and hair care brand Richfeel. Sanjay's sister, former MP Priya Dutt was also present at the event. "It is a great opportunity and honour to be playing Nargis Dutt *ji* on-screen. She is a legendary figure. I hope I do justice to the chance that is given to me."

"We did couple if look test and I think we have got closer to the look both in short or long hair. I am excited and kicked about it," the 46-year-old actor added. Directed by Rajkumar Hirani the biopic stars Ranbir Kapoor in the lead role.

Apart from the Dutt biopic, Manisha is also working on some other projects and will soon make the official announcement.

"There are other films that I am doing and as and when we go ahead the producers will announce it. Also, as far as health is concerned I would want to do a chat show about it. I am glued to understand health and human body. If that comes my way I will do it!" Manisha was diagnosed

MUMBAI: Cancer survivor Bollywood actor Manisha Koirala said she would be revisiting a lot of moments of her own life while playing the role of Sanjay Dutt's mother Nargis in a forthcoming biopic. Nargis was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died in the year 1981.

"Whenever I see a cancer patient today it is like reliving the moment. I am affected in many ways. When I will be performing that (Nargis Dutt's role)...I am yet to start shoot, of course I will be revisiting that," Manisha told reporters here at



'Whenever I see a cancer patient today it is like reliving the moment when I was fighting with ovarian cancer'

with ovarian cancer in 2012. After fighting the dreaded disease and winning the battle, she is now actively involved in spreading cancer awareness. She said the period when she was diagnosed with cancer was the turning point of her life.

"After that lot of things changed. I understood the importance of health and life and I connected with my soul. I think a person does become weak mentally and emotionally with any disease. But even in that time

one should be strong. I believe in the divine...we all have the strength and courage within us we just have to look for it." Manisha revealed that she was inspired by people who were cancer survivors like model-actor Lisa Ray. PTI

'Used to sing in trains and collect money'

MUMBAI: Bollywood actor-singer Ayushmann Khurrana says he used to perform in express trains from Delhi to Mumbai and collect money during his college days. The actor was present here with

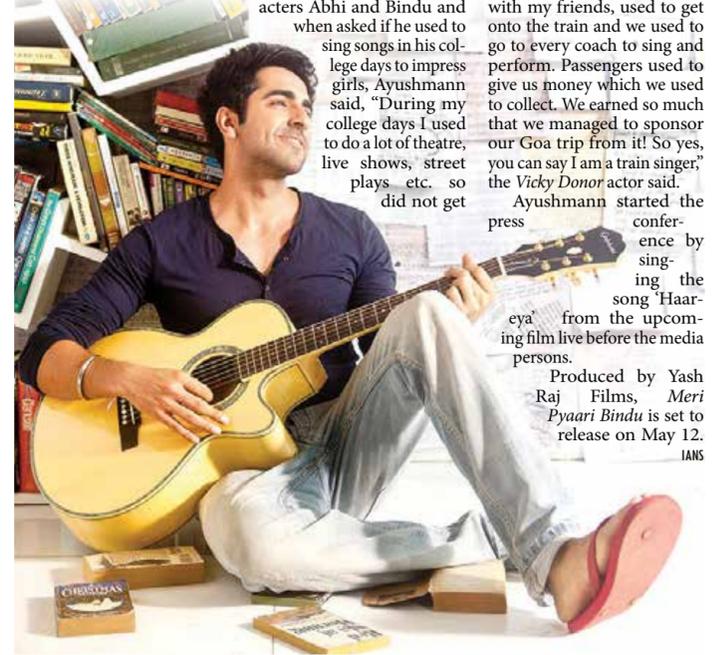
his co-star Parineeti Chopra for the launch of the song 'Ye Jawaani Teri' from their forthcoming film *Meri Pyaari Bindu*.

The song depicts the college days of the central characters Abhi and Bindu and when asked if he used to sing songs in his college days to impress girls, Ayushmann said, "During my college days I used to do a lot of theatre, live shows, street plays etc. so did not get

much time to run after girls." "In fact, I want to share how we used to perform in trains. During my college days, there was a train named 'Pashchim Express' that used to go from Delhi to Mumbai. So I, along with my friends, used to get onto the train and we used to go to every coach to sing and perform. Passengers used to give us money which we used to collect. We earned so much that we managed to sponsor our Goa trip from it! So yes, you can say I am a train singer," the *Vicky Donor* actor said.

Ayushmann started the press conference by singing the song 'Haar-eyya' from the upcoming film live before the media persons.

Produced by Yash Raj Films, *Meri Pyaari Bindu* is set to release on May 12. IANS



When Priyanka Chopra became Parineeti's MUSIC TEACHER

MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Parineeti Chopra reveals in her teenage days her sister Priyanka Chopra used to teach her English songs. "We did not play *Antakshari* as she (Priyanka) went to the US for studies.

"...When she came back from the US at the age of 16 she was totally American as she had an accent and she used to teach us English songs. She was cool and amazing. She was the first person to message me after the

song," Parineeti told reporters here at an event.

Parineeti is the latest celebrity making her singing debut in Bollywood with 'Maana Ke Hum Yaar Nah' from her upcoming film *Meri Pyaari Bindu*. The actor said her father is her inspiration.

"My dad is my idol and inspiration when it comes to singing. He still sits with a harmonium and does 'riyaz', he sings everywhere he can. "He cried when he heard me and my brother sing. I have released my song for him. I feel he wanted to see my musical dream come true. I dedicate all my songs to him. I want to be better and better singer just for him," she adds.

Singing may be her first love, but the actor, said acting will always be her main focus.

"My intense passion is to be the best actor I can be. I want to sing as much as I can as that's my first love, I want to dance my best and want to do best and do biggest variety of films and that's my only endeavour." PTI



Chunky has been a fan of villains since childhood

MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Chunky Pandey, who has done a negative role in the recently released *Begum Jaan*, says that he was a fan of villains since childhood.

"I have been a fan of villains since my childhood. Finally when I got the role of a villain, I got scary reactions from two women. They were sitting beside me during the screening and left the hall halfway when they realised I was beside them," said Chunky Pandey at a post-release interview of *Begum Jaan*.

After trying his hand at comedy and negative genre, Chunky now wants to make his audience cry. "I have done comedy and now I did a negative role. So for future I guess I wanna do an emotional character and make my audience cry," said the *Housefull* actor.

Asked which genre was more tougher to perform



Chunky said, "Being a villain was an easy thing to do. Comedy completely depends on the script and the type of dialogues we get. Comedy is dependent on time and so I will say comedy is tougher than being a villain."

Sharing some funny moments from the set, Chunky said, "My first interaction with Vidya Balan was inside her vanity van and I was dressed up in my character. As I stepped into her van, she looked at me and screamed. That was like a compliment for me."

When asked if he took any inspiration from any past villains of the industry for this role, he said, "I would like to become 'Dilavari' from 'Muqadar Ka Sikander' played by Amjad Khan. That is the kind of negativity a villain should have." *Begum Jaan*, starring Vidya Balan hit the big screen on April 14. IANS

Daisy Ridley still getting used to 'Star Wars' fame



LOS ANGELES: Actor Daisy Ridley says she is still trying to get used to the international fame she received after doing *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. The 25-year-old actor, who essays the role of Rey in the franchise and is gearing up for the release of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, says she still finds the whole attention weird, reported *E!* online.

"It kind of hits me in bursts. After 'The Force Awakens' came out, I was like, 'Oh, my God! I can't leave my house.'" Ridley says. While she was able to ride the subway and "walk through Oxford Circus" undetected, "occasionally" she would get recognised. She adds, "It's very weird to get my head around." PTI

Rihanna was born to act, says Cara Delevingne



LONDON: Model-actor Cara Delevingne believes R&B star Rihanna was born to be an actor. The 24-year-old model has praised the 29-year-old musician for her acting ability and says she finds her "mesmerising on set", reported *Femalefirst*.

"Rihanna is as mesmerising on set as she is on stage. She was born to act. There's a

rare group of people that just have it, and she has it. What she does is astonishing," Delevingne says. The model, however, says she struggles to watch herself in the movies.

"Seeing myself in a movie is still something I find hard to accept. It doesn't sit very easy with me. I can't connect with my own body, watching myself." PTI

Shannon comes out as bisexual



LOS ANGELES: Actor Shannon Purser, who has been featured on 'Stranger Things' and 'Riverdale', has come out as bisexual. She posted an emotional message on *Twitter* on Tuesday after backlash for a now-deleted tweet directed at fans of the Archie reboot 'Riverdale', 'shipping' the show's female characters Betty Cooper and Veronica Lodge. The two locked lips in a previous episode, reports *people.com*.

"I don't normally do this, but I figure now is as good a time as any to get personal. I've only just recently come out as bisexual to my family and friends," Purser, 19, wrote in her post. "It's something I am still processing and trying to understand and I don't like talking about it too much. I'm very very new to the LGBT community," she continued.

"I have never ever wanted to alienate anyone and my tweet was thoughtless," the star penned. She said she wasn't referring to all the "beronica shippers, just the ones who had particularly cruel to me personally. Either way, it wasn't a wise or kind thing to say and I'm disappointed in myself."

"I apologise to those who were hurt," she concluded. Purser previously admitted to her *Twitter* followers that she had anxiety about her sexuality. "I know what it's like to have anxiety about it," she tweeted on April 11. "Especially trying to come to terms with it and my faith. It can be really scary... But it's gonna be okay. You're going to be okay. No, you're going to be great." IANS



Relationships are hard: Harry

LOS ANGELES: Former One Direction star Harry Styles has opened up about his romance and split with Pop sensation Taylor Swift and the singer believes being in limelight makes it hard to maintain a relationship. The musicians dated from October 2012 to January 2013 and Styles says it was a learning experience for him, reported *RollingStone*.

"...Relationships are hard, at any age. And adding in that you don't really understand exactly how it works when you're 18, trying to navigate all that stuff didn't make it easier. I mean, you're a little bit awkward to begin with.

You're on a date with someone you really like. It should be that simple, right? It was a learning experience for sure," Styles says. After Swift released her first pop album, 1989, in



October 2014, many people assumed she had written "Out of the Woods" and "Style" about Styles. The 23-year-old "Sign of the Times" singer says he does not fault Swift for using her experiences as musical material.

"I mean, I don't know if they're about me or not... But the issue is, she's so good, they're bloody everywhere," he says, adding, "I write from my experiences; everyone does that." PTI