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NO HALF TRUTHS

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ASSEMBLY PASSES BISWA BANGLA BISWABIDYALAY BILL **PG4**



TEJASWI, SUSHIL MODI INDULGE IN WAR OF WORDS IN BIHAR ASSEMBLY **PG6**



B'DESH APPROVES CONTROVERSIAL ROHINGYA ISLAND **PG10**



'WANT TO PRESENT A NEW ASPECT WITH EACH FILM' **PG16**

No loan waiver for capitalists: Jaitley

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The government has not waived any loans of big NPA defaulters, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Tuesday dismissing rumour that loans of capitalists are being written off by banks.

In a blog, Jaitley said that over the last few days, a rumour is being propagated regarding waiver of loans of capitalists by banks.

Observing that the time has come for the nation to be apprised of facts in this regard, he said one should ask at whose behest the loans, which have turned NPAs were disbursed between 2008 and 2014 by public sector banks.

"The public needs to ask the rumour mongers at whose behest or under whose pressure were such loans disbursed. They should also be asked that when these debtors delayed in repayment of their loans and interest thereon to Public Sector Banks, what decision was taken by the then Government," the finance minister said.

Jaitley said that rather than taking a firm decision against debtors the then government relaxed the loan classification norms to keep defaulters as non-NPA account holders.

The asset quality review (AQR) carried out for clean and fully provisioned balance-sheets in 2015 high revealed NPA, the finance minister said. As a result, he said, loans of about Rs 4,54,466 crore, which was fit to be NPA and were under the carpet, were recognised after intensive scrutiny under AQR. "Government has not waived any loans of big NPA defaulters ...," he said, adding under the new Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, cases have been instituted in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for timebound recovery from 12 largest defaulters.

These 12 defaulters account for non-performing assets totalling Rs 1.75 lakh crore.

Cases for the recovery of NPA dues from the assets of these big defaulters are under way at various stages. Jaitley further said with the object of increase credit off-take and creation of jobs; the government has taken "the big decision" of capitalising state-owned banks.

Women must lead world business growth

IVANKA TRUMP

In today's paper

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No IFFI screening for 'S Durga', CBFC orders reexamination

MPOST BUREAU

PANAJI: The censor board has ordered a re-examination of the controversial film "S Durga", derailing its court-ordered screening at IFFI that ends today, with director Sanal Kumar Sasidharan crying foul saying the government wanted this to happen and it is a contempt of court.

A screening of the censored version of the film was held for the jury Monday evening at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) here and in a letter dated today, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) wrote to the producers asking them to resubmit the movie, which was earlier given a U/A certificate.



The bone of contention seems to be the hashtag that follows the letter "S" in the revised title of the movie, which was earlier named "Sexy Durga".

"It appears that you have prima facie, deliberately violated the Rule 33 of the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 1983 and hence invocation of Section 5E(1) (i) of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 may be considered. "In this connection, I am

directed to inform you that the above film will be re-examined under the provision of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 and Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 1983, with the date and venue being notified to you soon," said the letter, which was addressed to Shaji Mathew, the producer of the film.

The letter stated that the board had "received complaints from the IFFI jury at Goa over the title of the film".

According to the letter, the director had shown "S### Durga" on the title card which the board says "has different implications and are effectively undermining and attempting to defeat the very basis of the title registration and changes effected thereby".

I-T notices to 1.16 lakh for cash deposit of over ₹25 lakh



MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Income Tax Department has slapped notices on 1.16 lakh individuals and firms who made cash deposits of more than Rs 25 lakh in bank accounts post note ban but failed to file returns by the due date, CBDT Chairman Sushil Chandra said.

Besides, large cash deposit by people who have filed I-T returns are also under scrutiny, he said.

The tax department has combed as many as 18 lakh people who had deposited junked 500 and 1000 rupee currency notes of over Rs 2.5 lakh each post demonetisation.

Out of them, individuals and companies who have still not filed their I-T returns were segregated into two categories - those depositing more than Rs 25 lakh in bank accounts and those putting in Rs 10-25 lakh each.

"There are 1.16 lakh people who have deposited more than Rs 25 lakh in cash after demonetisation in old currency notes but still not filed their

returns," he said. "So we have asked them to file their IT returns within 30 days," he said.

Chandra said 2.4 lakh people had made cash deposits of Rs 10-25 lakh who have not filed returns so far. "They will also get notices in the second phase," if they did not file the returns, he said.

The notice is under section 142(1) of I-T Act. The official further said the number of people prosecuted for violating the I-T law has more than doubled to 609 in April-September this year from 288 in the same period last fiscal.

The total complaints filed are 1,046 as against 652 in the last year.

Also, convictions had gone up to 43 from 13 last year, Chandra said. "So courts have given judgement convicting people. So those 43 people will face sentences given by courts".

According to the official data, 17.73 lakh taxmen have identified suspicious cases involving Rs 3.68 lakh crore in 23.22 lakh bank accounts post demonetisation.

MAMATA THANKS PRESIDENT FOR VISIT

Bengal must lead the effort for better India by 2022: Kovind

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Recalling the state's contribution to the freedom struggle, President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday said that Bengal was in its forefront. With the country scheduled to celebrate 75 years of freedom in 2022, Bengal should lead in the effort for a "better India".

Referring to the Centre's Act East Policy, the president said that Bengal is crucial to the programme which is beneficial for the eastern and north-eastern states as well as the neighbouring countries.

"The ambitious Act East Policy embarked upon by the government of India involves building connectivity projects and taking economic initiatives. These would be of mutual benefits to the eastern and north eastern states as well as to neighbouring countries. The people of Bengal are crucial to this programme," he said.

The President on Tuesday addressed the civic reception organised by the Bengal government in his honour at Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata. He was felicitated by Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Speaker of the state Assembly Biman Bandyopadhyay and Mayor Sovan Chatterjee.

Distinguished personalities from the fields of industry, academics, culture and sports were present at the reception.

President Ram Nath Kovind was



CM Mamata Banerjee with President Ram Nath Kovind at Netaji Indoor Stadium PIC/MPOST

pleasantly surprised on Tuesday when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee gifted him one of her paintings here, which the president said would always remain "close to my heart".

The president also said the painting would undoubtedly make its way

to the Rashtrapati Bhawan gallery in New Delhi.

The state was an industrial and manufacturing centre in the country. Its economy must "sing again" in this age of digital and robotic technologies. "Its green fields and hard-working farm-

ers must be equipped with the latest agricultural knowledge to allow them to realise their potential," the president said.

Cautioning against the forces of radicalism and extremism, Kovind said West Bengal, being a border state, must guard against them.

Kovind said that Bengal has been central to the country's national identity. "Our national anthem Jana Gana Mana was written on the soil of Bengal by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore ... Bengal has a great history, but it is for each one of us to ensure that Bengal also has a great future."

Describing Kolkata as a "city with a heart" he said that he was deeply touched with the honour given to him in the city of "mishti, adda and football" where he would like to come back again.

Welcoming the President in his first visit to the state, Banerjee said: "We are deeply honoured for your presence here. I had invited you to come to Bengal... within a few weeks you have chosen to visit our state, and we are privileged."

She said: "The President's post is a constitutional one and it is the highest post in the country. He is our friend, philosopher and guide...when I worked as a Lok Sabha member, he was in Rajya Sabha...he would give us suggestions as and when needed." Stressing on the need for communal amity, she further stated that all communities live together in the country in perfect harmony.

'PREROGATIVE OF THE CBFC TO REVIEW THE FILM'

No Padmavati ban, says SC, admonishes Chief Ministers

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: For the third time this month, the Supreme Court turned down a request to ban "Padmavati" and said, in a rebuke to Chief Ministers and others who have spoken out against the film, "those holding public offices should not comment on such issues."

The judges reiterated that it is the prerogative of the national censor board to review the film and make a decision on whether it is suitable for screening.

"When the matter is pending the consideration of the CBFC (Central Board of Film Certification), how can persons holding public offices comment on whether CBFC should issue a certificate or not? That will prejudice the decision of the



CBFC," the judges said.

"Padmavati" has been opposed by several top politicians who say that the film cannot be allowed to "distort history" and offend the sentiments of Hindu groups.

"Padmavati" has been opposed by several top politicians who say that the film cannot be allowed to "distort history".

The Chief Ministers of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have said they will not allow the movie to release even

if the censor board clears it.

Top union ministers have said Bhansali should consult with opponents of the film and historians to arrive at a version that is acceptable to them all.

Filmmakers and artists have said that is a blatant violation of freedom of expression.

The Karni Sena, a fringe group, has led the protests against the film.

The 190-crore movie is directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali who has denied reports that the movie suggests a romance between Rajput warrior queen Padmini and Alauddin Khilji, the Delhi sultan who was obsessed with her beauty. According to legend, the queen set herself on fire after her husband was killed in battle to ensure that Khilji would not capture her.

Indrani makes U-turn, says not accusing Peter

MPOST BUREAU

MUMBAI: In a U-turn, Sheena Bora murder case, prime accused Indrani Mukerjea on Tuesday told a special CBI court here that she wasn't levelling any allegations against her husband and co-

accused Peter Mukerjea, days after she said he might have played a role in her daughter's disappearance. "We are not making any accusations against Peter. Some words are inadvertently written as there is emotional stress," her lawyer Sudeep Pasbala told CBI judge J C Jagdale. A few days ago, Indrani

Mukerjea had demanded call data records of her husband, alleging that he may have played a role in the disappearance of Sheena, her daughter from an earlier relationship, and now framed her.

"The contents of the application are speaking another language..." the judge said.

TRAI AGAINST DISCRIMINATION OF CONTENT

Telecom regulator bats for net neutrality

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Telecom regulator Trai on Tuesday proposed restrictions on service providers from entering into agreements which lead to discriminatory treatment of content on the Internet.

Issuing the recommendations on Net neutrality, Trai has also suggested a multi-stakeholder body comprising telecom and Internet service providers, content providers, civil society organisation and consumer representatives for monitoring and investigation of violations.

"Service providers should be restricted from entering into any arrangement, agreement or contract by whatever name called... that has the effect of discriminatory treatment based on content..." it said.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has also favoured



tweaking of licencing norms of players to ensure that "explicit restrictions" on discrimination in Internet access based on content.

"The discriminatory treatment in the context of treatment of content would include any form of discrimination, restriction or interference in the treatment of content including

practices like blocking, degrading, slowing down or granting preferential speeds or treatment to any content," Trai said.

Its consultation paper on the subject floated in January this year had majorly focused on network speed so that telecom operators do not use it for any preferences or prevent access

to any website or service like voice calls which requires decent net speed.

Supporters of Net neutrality back the principle that the entire Internet traffic should be available to everyone on equal terms without any discrimination based on business considerations of service providers.

In February 2016, Trai addressed a part of Net neutrality which was under its jurisdiction. It barred platforms like Facebook's Internet.Org and Airtel Zero which allowed free access to select websites to check 'gate-keeping' in cyberspace.

Trai's recommendations come at a time when there is a debate raging globally over net neutrality.

The US regulator, Federal Communications Commission, has said recently that it plans to roll back the "net neutrality" rules the were adopted in America in 2015 and voting on the issue is scheduled in December. P12

Women's health WORSENERD SINCE 1990

According to a recent study, gender disparities in the society, increased risk of burnouts and men's violence against women is causing significant harm to the well-being of young females



Women's health has significantly worsened while that of men has improved since 1990, say scientists who suggests that gender disparities in the society is causing significant harm to the wellbeing of young females.

Researchers at Umea University and Region Norrbotten in Sweden have studied health trends among women and men aged 25 -34 from 1990-2014.

In 1990, 8.5 per cent of women self-rated their health as being worse than peers in their own age group. In 2014, this trend increased to 20 per cent of women.

In contrast, a bigger part of the men self-rated their health as better at the end of the study period compared to the start.

"In recent years, public debate has raised the issue of increased illness and sick leaves among women. Our study now shows, for the first time, that there are corresponding health trends also among young women," said Annika Forssten, co-author of the study published in the journal PLOS One.

The researchers behind the study have, through a long-term, population-based survey, analysed answers from 1,811 people in the MONICA study in Northern Sweden. As a part of a standard health check, study participants answered a questionnaire which included questions about self-rated health.

The results also showed that an



increased proportion of study participants indicated obesity, anxiety and dissatisfaction with their personal economy,

among both women and men. Simultaneously, the proportion of women and men with high levels of phys-

ical activity increased over the period. "A generally worsened self-rated health among young people most likely

suggests increased risk of illness both in the short and long term," said Goran Waller, researcher at the Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine.

"The results show that gender equality efforts, and especially the promotion of equal rights to health for men and women, need significant revisions," Waller said.

According to the study authors, possible causes for this negative health trend among young women may be increased risk of burnouts, lack of equality in one's private life, and men's violence against women. Tougher working conditions in female-dominated professions such as healthcare may also contribute to women's ill health.

Conflicting but coinciding norm systems in society - equality and traditional gender roles - where women must fulfil expectation related to both also harm women's health, researchers said.

Women also face general societal expectations such as pressures to be both successful, socially active and physically attractive.

On the other hand, in the labour market, men are still valued more highly than women despite having a lower level of education, researchers said, which may be a possible reason for the positive development among men.

A more equal responsibility for children and the household is also beneficial for men's health, researchers said.

DAY IN DAY OUT

What's on Around Town

HOLI AND CARNIVAL

Colour, music and dance shape the landscape of two celebrations separated by more than twelve thousand kilometres: Holi and Carnival. It is the time of tradition and transformation, transfiguration and transcendence, in India and in Brazil. On November 28, 'The Aesthetic Joy: Holi and Carnival' - an exhibition by Brazilian photographer Ailton Silva and the Indian photographer Natasha Hemrajani - will be inaugurated by Tovar da Silva Nunes, Ambassador of Brazil.

WHEN: November 29 - December 5

WHERE: Art Gallery, IIC Annexe

TIMINGS: 11 am - 7 pm

TRANSITION ZONE

With Changhoon Lee, Wonho Lee, Yoonjean Lee, Minchul Song and Eunsook participating, exhibition 'Transition zone' is a manifestation of change, phenomenon and metaphor. At the same time, it is a variety of options and boundaries, a space of buffering, and a process that has the same daily-ness as the density of the overcrowded city. Dimensional, multidimensional of points, lines, spaces, and time, which crosses visibility and non-visibility, but which is neither clear nor an uncommon issue.

WHEN: Ongoing

WHERE: Korean Cultural Centre India, Lajpat nagar

TIMING: 9 am - 6 pm

WINTER BRUNCH

Spend your winter afternoon enjoying an extensive selection of local and international cuisines such as Asian, Italian, Mediterranean along with live counters and unlimited beverages. Not to miss is the dessert counter offering a fine selection of assorted pastries, cakes, brownies, Indian sweets and much more. Don't forget to take your friends and family along.

WHEN: Every Sunday

WHERE: Blooms Restaurant, Eros hotel

TIMINGS: 12 pm to 4 pm

Two-day festival to embrace Korean culture and heritage



OUR CORRESPONDENT

A TWO DAY KOREA FESTIVAL showcasing country's rich art, culture and heritage kicked off on November 27, amidst much fanfare and authentic Korean performances. An initiative by Korea Tourism and Organisation, the festival was inaugurated by Min Hong Min, Executive Vice President, Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO), at Ambience Mall, Gurugram, along with Suman Billa, Joint Secretary Ministry Of Tourism.

The inauguration also witnessed the presence of other eminent representatives from regional Tourism Boards of South Korea and related organizations such as Gyeonggi Tourism Organization, Gimhae City, Busan Metropolitan City, Busan Tourism Organization, Jeollabuk Do, Gwangju Metropolitan City, Gwangju Convention and Visitors Bureau, Incheon International Airport Corporation and Visit Korea Committee.

The festival also marked the signing of MOU between leading Korean companies such as LG, Hyundai, Sam-



Executive Vice President Min Hong Min signing MoU with LG, Hyundai and Samsung

sung, and KTO. The aim is to promote tourism through organizing MICE groups to Korea for their employees and dealers.

An endeavour to give a boost to the existing MICE tourism business to Korea, the association would bring public-private bodies together to achieve larger growth in the tourism arena.

The festival also displayed food counters (managed by Korea Agro-Fisheries and Food Trade Cooperation) to give

a taste of the local Korean flavours to serve Indian taste buds besides featuring experiential attractions like face mask painting, Hangeul calligraphy and video gallery exhibiting Korean history and cultural assets.

Furthermore, the K-Beauty zone by famous Korean beauty brand Innisfree offered free makeup sessions and samples to the visitors at the festival. A special Virtual Reality zone and Photo-Op Booth had been created for the visitors to get themselves clicked wearing

Korean Traditional Hanbok dress with a customized background. Speaking at the inauguration, Executive Vice President Min Hong Min said "We have organized the festival for Indians to feel and experience Korean traditional and modern culture represented by Korean Wave. I hope this two days' event will help Indian people understand and feel Korean ethnicity. Besides, we have brought the leading airlines and travel bodies at the festival to promote Korea tour products and promotions so that our visitors can make the best of everything."

Jong Sool Kwon, Director Korea Tourism Organisation India (KTO) said "Korea Tourism Organization is entering a new dimension of tourism promotion in India with the festival. Travelling to Korea is getting more favourable for Indians with increased flight connectivity and competitive costs."

"With an increased number of Indian travelers to Korea, we would get more adaptable to their traveling requirements. get more adaptable to their travelling requirements."

Korean Traditional Hanbok dress with a customized background.

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ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATION emphasizes the 'power of dreams'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JP INTERNATIONAL School, located at Sector Omega 1, Greater Noida, passionately celebrated Mélange, 2017, its 12th annual day, around the theme of "The power of dreams". Students from nursery to senior secondary wing showcased hope, aspirations, dreams, through various dances and cultural programmes and enthralled the audience.

Held on November 25, the event witnessed Dr. Amiya Chandra, Additional Director Foreign Trade as the Chief Guest and Major General V. Namgyel, Ambassador of Bhutan as Guest of Honor. The other distinguished guests who were present were Pradeep Agarwal, industrialist, philanthropist, promoter of Sparsh group and founder of JP International school, Roshan Agarwal, Chairman of JP International School, Ranveer Singh, Regional officer, CBSE, Dehradun and Lt. General (Retd.) J. Sikand, member of the think-tank of JPIS among others.

The School Principal, Heema Sharma, Amit Saxena welcomed the guests besides presenting the annual report and achievements of the school. Also, they launched "JP Times" a quarterly digital newsletter to share the progress and achievements of school to its stakeholders. The staff members, who had spent more than 10 years with JP International School, were honoured as well.

Dr. Amiya Chandra, who inaugurated the celebrations, said, "I am extremely privileged to have the opportunity to witness the amazing and passionate performances. I was wondering that how talented these young boys and girls are and



how fortunate they are to study in a top-ranked school with world-class facilities". Dr. Chandra also praised theme of the event and asked students to dream more and be the catalyst to change the society.

After the lamp lighting the event began with mesmerizing performances like "Jashn -E- Bachpan", "tiny rock stars" by the little wonders of nursery. Students also presented their social concerns and charmed the audience with Dastak-An Appeal (Beti Bachao) which left everyone with teary eyes and a promise to contribute wholeheartedly to the cause. The school band performances were the highlight of the evening.

Benefits of essential oils for hair, body

Ditch synthetic chemicals-induced skin-care products and opt for safe, clean and natural products like essential oils which are full of antioxidants and vitamins vital for skin and hair. Invest in lavender oil for moisturising and ylang ylang to treat a dry scalp, suggest experts.

Here are few benefits of different essential oils:

► **LAVENDER ESSENTIAL OIL:** Known for its cooling and calming effect, it is suitable for all skin types and its anti-inflammatory properties fight acne causing bacteria and inflammations. It moisturises, relieves itching, irritation, lightens scars, marks and soothes insect bites. It also relaxes muscles and boosts blood circulation. Lavender essential oil also strengthens hair roots by improving blood circulation and helps get rid of dry scalp and split ends.

► **YLANG YLANG ESSENTIAL OIL:** Suitable for all skin types and is great for treating oily or acne-prone skin while stimulating cell growth in order to fight the effects of ageing. It majorly helps in regeneration of skin cells, smoothening of fine lines and also improving skin elasticity.

It works well in rejuvenating dry scalp, controlling hair fall, strengthening hair roots, balancing sebum secretion and boosting hair growth for a healthier scalp and hair.

► **TEA TREE ESSENTIAL OIL:** This oil has



antifungal and antibacterial properties which are the foremost benefits of using it. It helps ward off acne-causing bacteria and lightens blemishes, pimples and makes the skin soft, supple and glowing. Tea tree as an ingredient also helps in cleansing clogged hair follicles and in giving deep nourish-

ment to both the scalp and strands.

► **ROSEMARY ESSENTIAL OIL:** Astringent properties of rosemary essential oil cleanse, hydrate and rejuvenate your skin by making it firm and gorgeous. It helps with reducing wrinkles and under-eye bags; conditions damaged skin, lightens

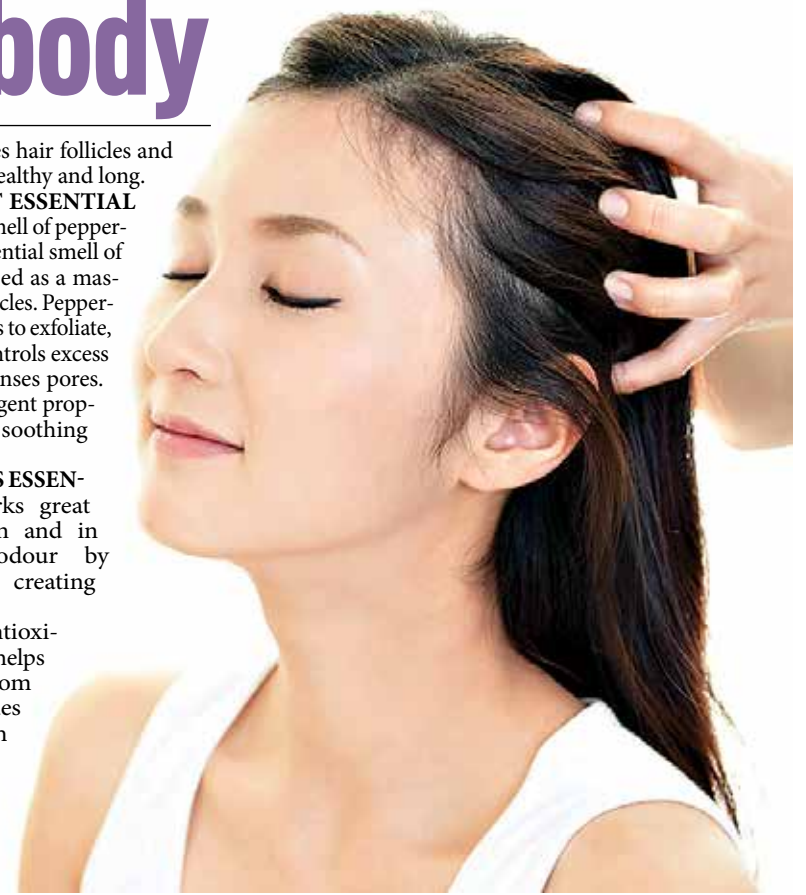
scars. It also stimulates hair follicles and makes them strong, healthy and long.

► **PEPPERMINT ESSENTIAL OIL:** The refreshing smell of peppermint has the quintessential smell of freshness to it. It is used as a massage oil for aching muscles. Peppermint essential oil works to exfoliate, brighten dull skin, controls excess oil secretion, and cleanses pores. It helps with its astringent properties and has a very soothing and refreshing aroma.

► **LEMONGRASS ESSENTIAL OIL:** It works great for toning the skin and in removing body odour by fighting the odour creating bacteria.

It is rich in antioxidant properties and helps clear all toxins from the body. It provides deep hydration with greasiness, helps with acne inflammation and other skin irritations while relaxing mind and body.

IANS



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Upadhyay's death: 7 arrested, search intensifies for Independent Councillor

The police could identify their location in Benaras as one of the accused contacted his family members using a different mobile phone number

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Police have intensified their search for the Independent Councillor of Bhadreswar municipality, Raju Sahu, after the arrest of seven persons from Benaras in connection with the murder of the municipality's chairman Manoj Upadhyay.

Upadhyay was shot dead from point blank range when he was returning home late at night on November 21. The day Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had taken up the case, officers of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Chandannagar Commissionerate got the success of arresting the accused. Police arrested Raju Chowdhury, Ratan Chowdhury, Krishna Chowdhury, Akash

Chowdhury, Rajesh Chowdhury, Santosh Prasad and Debu Pakre from Benaras. Total eight persons have been arrested so far.

Earlier, the police had arrested Munna Rai in this connection. According to a senior police officer, it was the death of money that led to their arrest after escaping for seven days.

The police could identify their location in Benaras as one of the accused contacted his family members using a different mobile phone number.

They conducted a raid along with the local police at a lodge where they had been staying for the past few days and arrested all seven of them. Investigation revealed



that they had fled from the areas soon after the incident took place. First, they went to Bihar where they spent two days before moving to Uttar Pradesh.

The accused will be brought to the city in transit

remand. A police officer said that they will be interrogated to ascertain the exact motive behind the crime.

It may be mentioned that police have come to know about the accused after questioning Chintu De on whose

Police arrested Raju Chowdhury, Ratan Chowdhury, Krishna Chowdhury, Akash Chowdhury, Rajesh Chowdhury, Santosh Prasad and Debu Pakre from Benaras. Total eight persons have been arrested so far

motorbike the victim was riding pillion and had witnessed the incident.

Police feel that the seven arrested are well aware about the absconding independent councillor.

They suspect that a few others are also involved in the crime and the arrested ones can provide information on them as well.

It may be mentioned that senior Trinamool Congress leaders including MP

Abhishek Banerjee had assured that immediate steps would be taken to arrest the accused.

Locals, too, held candle light protests against the murder and demanded the arrest of the accused.

They appreciated the police for arresting seven persons from Benaras in this connection.

Now, they demand the arrest of Raju Sahu as early as possible.

President to visit Jorasanko today



President Ram Nath Kovind and Mamata Banerjee at an event in Kolkata on Tuesday. PIC/MPOST

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: President Ram Nath Kovind will be visiting the ancestral home of Rabin-drath Tagore at Jorasanko in Central Kolkata on Wednesday morning.

While addressing the civic reception organised by the Bengal government, he said in Bengali: "Gurudev ke pronam korte jabo. Tomorrow morning I plan to visit Jorasanko, Gurudev's ancestral home, to pay my heartfelt tributes."

He said: "This is my first visit to Bengal as President of India and I am absolutely glad to be here — in this glorious state and this lovely city... I am not a stranger to Bengal. I have been visiting the state and have been coming to Kolkata for decades now. I would say I have long been an admirer of Bengal, its culture and its heritage." He stated that Gurudev Rabin-drath Tagore, Mahari-

shi Bankim and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose were instrumental in defining India's nationalism. "During the course of my visit here, I plan to visit Netaji Bhawan where there is a memorial and research centre dedicated to the life and work of Netaji."

While speaking about Netaji, he said: "A few days ago I had the honour of visiting the Indian National Army Memorial in Moirang in Manipur. This is where freedom fighters of the INA, inspired by Netaji, raised the national flag for the first time on Indian soil."

During his tour to the state, the President will also visit the headquarters of Ramakrishna Math and Mission at Belur to pay his respect to Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda. Kovind will also be visiting Jagadish Chandra Bose Institute that is "celebrating its centenary and renewing the learning of the scientist-scholar".

CPI(M) MLA praises Sadhan Pandey for prompt action

KOLKATA: The state government has been lauded by a CPI(M) MLA for the prompt action being taken by its Self Help Group and Self Employment department to address the issue raised by him.

In the Question and Answer Session in the state Assembly on Tuesday, the department's minister Sadhan Pandey was appreciated by Sujit Chakraborty, MLA from Barjora Assembly constituency.

Chakraborty told the Assembly that he would like to thank Pandey as he had received a communiqué from the concerned BDO informing him about a meeting of Project Implementation Committee in his area for Swami Vivekananda Swanirbhar Karmasansthan Prakaipa. It was on November 21 when the MLA informed him that he had not been receiving info about such meetings for the past one year. On the same day, around 4.25 pm he received a communiqué about the next meeting, asking him to attend the same. MPOST

Air India starts direct flight from Kol-Varanasi

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A direct flight has been initiated by Air India connecting Kolkata with Varanasi on Tuesday.

AI422, operated by a 122-seater Airbus 319 aircraft, will leave Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International airport at 2.30 pm and reach Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi at 3.30 pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays respectively. The return flight, AI 421, would leave Varanasi at 12.10 pm and arrive in Kolkata at 1.20 pm.

Varanasi, on the banks of the Ganges in Uttar Pradesh, is a religious hub with considerable flow of tourists to the holy shrines thronging the city and the Buddhist centre at nearby Sarnath. It is one of the richest repositories of Buddhist antiquities from the times of Emperor Ashoka. Varanasi is an important centre for handicraft — famous for its muslin and silk fabrics, carpets, perfumes and sculpture. Varanasi is a centre of cultural activities and education, with one of the most reputed centres of academics — the Benaras Hindu University — and other reputed institutes adorning the city. Air India also connects Varanasi with Delhi, Mumbai, Agra, Khajuraho and Colombo.

Air India has been spreading its wings to expand its domestic network in sync with its Connect India mission. The airline has also been bringing more international destinations in the air-map with non-stop direct connectivity with its Dreamliner B787 aircraft.

The flight between Kolkata and Varanasi fulfils a long-standing demand for a direct air-link by Air India.

FOR CASUAL/CONTRACTUAL STAFF

Govt to give Rs 2 lakh to next-of-kin incase of death before 60 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Mamata Banerjee government has decided to give Rs 2 lakh to next-of-kin of a casual or contractual employee of the state government in case of his or her death before attaining the age of 60.

It may be mentioned that earlier "the casual or daily rates of contractual workers were entitled to an amount of Rs 2 lakh as one-time benefit on account of cessation of engagement on attaining the age of 60 years."

The state government had been carefully considering to give the benefit to family of such workers who die before attaining the age of 60 years.

Finally, the state government has taken the decision and the casual workers' family will now be getting the benefit if the person dies before attaining 69 years. It may

be mentioned that the state government has taken many other steps for the benefit of the casual workers in the past six years.

Meanwhile, the Bengal government has also decided to give 15 days' special Casual Leave to all employees including those of the GTA and government-aided institutions who had attended office during the bandh in the Hills that continued for more than three months.

The Chief Minister had earlier made the announcement and recently the order has been passed regarding the same.

The teaching and non-teaching employees of the government aided schools and colleges in the Hills who will attend duty and take classes during winter vacation will also get their withheld salaries for the period when the indefinite strike was on.

ABT man Umar Farrukh arrested from Indo-Nepal border

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Special Task Force (STF) of the Kolkata Police arrested another active member of the Operation Group of Al-Qaeda's Indian sub-continent network Ansar Bangla Team (ABT), Umar Farrukh, alias Mahi, alias Aftab, from Indo-Nepal border on Tuesday evening.

Acting on a tip off, a team comprising STF officers conducted a raid in a village in the bordering area and arrested Mahi.

Sources said that Mahi, who is involved in killing of bloggers, had a plan to escape to Nepal to avoid arrest.

He chalked out a plan to escape through Nepal knowing that vigil along the Indo-Bangladesh border has been intensified and there were high chances of getting arrested if he would have tried to flee to Bangladesh.



The police came to know about Mahi, who is a Bangladeshi national, from Sahadat who had helped him enter India by crossing Indo-Bangladesh border.

Investigation revealed that he, along with a few other ABT activists, had entered the country through the bordering Gachha village at Basirhat in North 24-Parganas. They had also stayed in a village for a few days before spreading out to different parts of the country. It may be mentioned that the police had arrested Samsad Mia (26), alias Tanvir and Riyaz (25), alias Riyazul Islam from Kolkata Station

on November 22. Monotosh De, an arms dealer, was also arrested on the same day. Later police arrested Sahadat from Sealdah Station and came to know that he had helped some of the ABT activists to cross the border. From him, the cops came to know about two other activists — Shopon Biswas, alias Tamim and Nayan Gazi (28), alias Zafar.

Sahadat had helped Tamim and Zafar to get shelter in a hotel near Howrah Station where they stayed during the first week of October.

Police went through the CCTV footages of the hotel and other documents which revealed that Mahi had also been staying at the same hotel.

Police had initiated an intensive search for Tamim, Zafar and Mahi. A police officer said Mahi could be aware about the whereabouts of the two others which would help in the arrest of the other two.

State govt to use data analytics to strengthen 'Safe Drive Save Life'

SOUMITRA NANDI

KOLKATA: The state government is planning to use data analytics in an effective manner to strengthen "Safe Drive Save Life" campaign initiative that was launched by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in July 2016.

"It will be really fruitful if we can use data analysis to save lives on city roads. Predicting accidents is not an impossible proposition with data analytics," additional Chief Secretary Information Technology Department Debashis Sen said on the sidelines of an international workshop on Big Data for Better Governance organised jointly by IIT Kharagpur and British Deputy High Commission in Kolkata on Tuesday. Sen said the government

has already done GIS mapping and have marked accident prone areas in New Town.

"We have already taken some measures to curb accidents at such spots but we believe that by analytics we can make real time interventions," he maintained.

The government and the traffic wing of Bidhannagar City Police together have put up additional traffic signals, increased police presence, enhanced the lighting arrangement for better visibility during nights and done road markings. It may be mentioned that roads in New Town do not have speed breakers. In some cases, the government is changing road geometry to curb accidents. Recently, a brainstorming



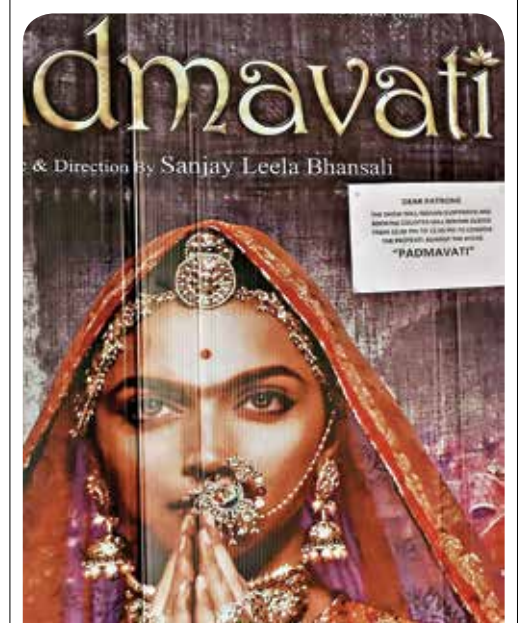
session was held with an IBM team to pinpoint the use of cutting edge technology to help a man on the street where it was discussed that by using analytics on CCTV, accidents/collisions can be avoided.

Bhargab Moitra, professor at the Civil Engineering

department at IIT Kharagpur said they are already working on a model project to predict accidents on city roads to bring down the number of accidents. "We have gathered a comprehensive data of the conflict points for vehicles and also identified the accident prone areas in the city. We are collating these data to identify the reasons for such situations and accordingly offer a solution to the Kolkata Police. KP have provided with video evidences and we have studied on our own at some other places," said Sudeshna Mitra of the Civil Engineering department at IIT Kharagpur, who is working on the component of predicting accidents.

Mitra added that they have found in some areas pedestrians have to wait at traffic signals for a long time while crossing the road and as a result they often lose patience and cross the road in a hurry. Also, people hardly use Zebra crossing because of its location. "These factors are being taken into account," she added.

IN PROTEST



A notice regarding the suspension of work for 15 minutes by the employees of a cinema hall is pasted on the poster of the movie 'Padmavati' at a cineplex in Kolkata on Tuesday. The work was suspended to condemn the various protests and campaign against the movie in some parts of the country. Actor Indrani Halder, who was shooting for a tv serial, said: "We stopped work at 12 noon and every person of our unit came out to the compound" PTL

42nd Int'l Kolkata Book Fair gets new venue: Salt Lake's Central Park

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: With renovation work going on at Milan Mela Complex, the 42nd International Kolkata Book Fair (IKBF) 2018 will be held at the Central Park in Salt Lake from January 31 to February 11.

The Publishers and Booksellers Guild (PBG) which organises the International Kolkata Book Fair announced the change of venue during a press conference at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is expected to inaugurate the Book Fair on January 30 but it will be thrown open for the public from January 31. Tridib Chatterjee, general secretary of the Publishers and Booksellers Guild said they are indebted to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for helping them find an alternative place for organising the world's largest attended book fair. The book fair will open from



12 pm and continue till 8 pm. Publishers from various parts of the country and abroad will put up their stalls. However, the number of stalls will be little less compared to the previous year, organisers said. According to them, there were around 750 stalls in the fair last year.

Chatterjee also added that the Milan Mela complex is going to be renovated thoroughly and it would come up as a new international fair complex as conceptualised by the Chief Minister. She also suggested that the next

edition of Kolkata Book Fair can be organised at Salt Lake Central Park. Chatterjee also expressed his gratitude to the state Urban Development minister Firhad Hakim and the Bidhannagar Mayor for extending all sorts of co-operation to put in place adequate infrastructure at the venue.

Speaking at the press conference, Chatterjee said the Central Park might be slightly smaller compared to the Milan Mela ground but there is adequate infrastructure available to organise the event. He also men-

tioned that within the third week of December the entire area will get a facelift.

The focal theme of the forthcoming International Kolkata Book Fair will be France which is considered to be Europe's cultural centre. This will be France's third appearance as the theme of IKBF.

This year, on the occasion of the 70th year of Indo-France diplomatic relationship, the cultural wing of the French Embassy is organising the "Bonjour India Festival" in the selected cities of the country. The festival will start in Jaipur but the closing ceremony will be held at the 42nd IKBF. On this occasion, Damien SYED Consul General of France in Kolkata said: "We are delighted that France is the focus country at the Kolkata International Book Fair this year, and we are proud to offer the Experience, Bonjour India's immersive showcase of the Indo-French relationship, at the heart of this participation."

Narada sting case: Mayor's wife visits ED office

KOLKATA: Ratna Chatterjee, wife of Mayor Sovan Chatterjee, went to the office of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with Narada sting operation on Tuesday. Chatterjee, who was at the ED's office for around six hours, said she has answered all the questions of the investigating officers. She added that she would continue to co-operate with the investigating agency to help in the probe and will visit again if the investigating officers wanted to know anything more. It may be mentioned that Chatterjee had always been co-operating with the central investigating agency. OUR CORRESPONDENT

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Mentally unstable woman goes missing from NRS Hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: An 82-year-old mentally-challenged woman who was admitted to the NRS Medical College and Hospital a few days ago was found missing on Tuesday.

The incident has raised questions on security aspect of the hospital. It was learnt that the victim, Subala Mondal (82), is a resident of New Town.

Police found her roaming aimlessly on the streets of New Town on Sunday night. She was initially unable to recall her address and was also ill when the cops rescued her.

When her family members came to the hospital to see the victim they found that her bed was empty

They immediately rushed her to Bidhannagar Hospital and later shifted her to NRS Medical College and Hospital for better treatment on Monday.

The nursing staff of the ward she was admitted to found that the woman was missing on Tuesday morning. After coming to know about her address, the police went to her house and informed the matter to her family members. When her family members came to the hospital to see the victim they found that her bed was empty. They waited at the ward for quite some time with a hope that the elderly woman might return. But it did not happen. They later informed the matter to the hospital authorities who in turn asked the staff members to carry out an intensive search at various wards of the hospital. But their effort turned futile. Her family members also lodged a complaint at the local police station.

Gopal Mondal, son of the victim, who visited the hospital raised questions as to how could a mentally-challenged patient go missing from the ward unnoticed. He also asked what the security staff were doing during that time when she disappeared.

On the basis of specific complaint, the police have started a probe.

The hospital authorities also assured that they would look into the matter and take action against those who are found guilty.

Banyapran Sathi launched to support wildlife conservation

SOUMITRA NANDI

KOLKATA: In a unique bid to garner public support for wildlife conservation, the state Forest department has launched Banyapran Sathi project that offers wildlife enthusiasts to venture into the core areas of the forests, especially in North Bengal and the Sunderbans and have a real-life experience on how to deal with the animals.

The initiative was kicked off in North Bengal on Sunday in which 13 persons will be allowed to spend nights in as many as six core areas in the forests of Jaldapara and Gorumara and Buxa in North Bengal.

"They will stay along with the forest guards in camps and will have their own experience on how the latter keeps a guard in the forest. They have been provided a day-long training on how they would behave if they come close to an elephant or a leopard or a deer during their adventure," state Forest minister Binay Krishna Barman said.

The team is accompanied by



two of our officials who are experts in handling wild animals.

The programme was announced some months back at the website of the Forest department and till date the department has received as many as 128 applications on the basis of which 47 people have already been selected. They will be taken in small groups of 10-15 in six earmarked core areas of North

Bengal forest and the same number of such areas in the Sunderbans — the home for Royal Bengal Tigers.

"Wildlife conservation cannot be done in isolation. We need to involve nature enthusiasts to understand nature, protect and conserve and create awareness. They will share their experiences in public domain through writings and posts and people will have an idea on the

importance of wildlife conservation," Barman added.

The programme is open only to residents of Bengal over the age of 18 and they will have to bear the expenses for participation. Selected candidates will have to pay a fee of Rs 15,000 for two years and undergo orientation training and medical examination.

The next itinerary will be on December 4 in which enthusiasts will venture into the Sunderbans on a four or five day trip. "As many as nine people have already paid for the trip including two women and we are hopeful that there will be two or three more," a senior official of the Forest department said.

Participants in this unique adventure will not be allowed to carry video cameras. However, mobile cameras will be allowed.

A Forest department official said it is hard work and one has to adapt to extreme and unpredictable weather, live with bare necessities, get used to rationed meals at stipulated times along with other challenges.

State Assembly passes Biswa Bangla Biswabidyalay Bill

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Biswa Bangla Biswabidyalay Bill 2017 was passed at the state Assembly on Tuesday.

While placing the Bill at the state Assembly, state Education minister Partha Chatterjee said: "The government has been considering to establish a general state-aided university in Bolpur in Birbhum district in the memory of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, with the view to explore and enrich the study of Rabindra literature and also to bring academic excellence in the field of literature studies."

According to the Bill placed by Chatterjee, the university will have all branches of studies including Indology, Indian Philosophy, Indian Languages, Indian Literature, Comparative Literature, Rabindra Literature, Humanities, Science and Cognitive Science, in a systematic manner so that the benefits of general education reach everywhere.

The university will be government-aided affiliated university with a unitary character. "Our primary objective is to create a Centre of Excellence in the field of literature, cultural and social studies in undergraduate and post graduate level having employability potential," the minister said.



Partha Chatterjee

Responding to the protests by the Opposition Left Front and Congress members while tabling the Bill, Chatterjee said it was surprising to see them objecting to the use of the word Biswa Bangla. He reiterated that the name has got nothing to do with the 'Biswa Bangla' logo. "Now, they are opposing the words Biswa Bangla, later they might oppose the usage of Biswa or Bangla," he said.

The minister mentioned that the state is now having 20 state-run and nine private universities.

The LF and Congress members wanted the Bill to be referred to the selected committee which was declined by Speaker Biman Banerjee.

On mere suspicion of being a thief, mob lynches 40-yr-old to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A 40-year-old man was lynched to death by a mob on mere suspicion of being a thief.

The incident triggered tension among the locals at Kuruk Danga area of Ilambazar in Birbhum. The victim has been identified as Seikh Enamul (40) who was a resident of Jagdalpur village under Ilambazar police station.

The villagers alleged that Enamul had committed a theft

a few months ago. On Monday night, he gathered at Kuruk Danga area with an intention of stealing. He was roaming in the area when some of the locals caught him. Before listening to what he wanted to say, an irate mob pounced on him.

The local people, however, alleged that he had assembled there to steal.

The victim was seriously injured in the incident. After being informed, the police reached the spot and rescued the victim.

He was immediately rushed to a private hospital in Bolpur where he succumbed to his injuries later on.

Police said that the victim died of excessive bleeding. Cops have started a detailed probe into the incident.

A senior police officer of the district said that steps might be taken against those who will be found to have spearheaded the incident.

The family members of the victim alleged that this could be a preplanned murder.

Soumitra Chatterjee to get French honour during Kolkata Book Fair

KOLKATA: Legendary actor Soumitra Chatterjee would be handed over France's highest civilian award Legion of Honour during the 42nd edition of the International Kolkata Book Fair in January next year. France, which would also be the focal theme of this edition of the world's most attended book fair, is planning to present the award to the octogenarian actor on the inaugural day of the event in the presence of its Minister of Culture Françoise Nyssen, a senior French official said on Tuesday. "Soumitra Chatterjee is not just an actor, he is a legend. The award was announced in June. But we waited for the perfect occasion to hand him the award. The book fair seems to be a perfect backdrop as our Minister of Culture would also be present in the city at that time," Damien Syed, Consul General of France in Kolkata, said.

AGENCIES

Kolkata port aims to reduce turnaround time for ships

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT) is making efforts to reduce the turnaround time of ships to three-and-a-half days to make it lucrative for traders, an official said on Tuesday.

"Currently, the turnaround time is about four days, which is not healthy for trade as it adds to the cost. Our effort is to reduce this time by increasing operational efficiency. We look to bring the turnaround time down to three-and-a-half days to begin with," KoPT Chairman Vinit Kumar said on the sidelines of an interactive session organised by the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce here.

He said reducing the turnaround time would make the port more lucrative.

KoPT has also decided to outsource two of its jetties at Outram Ghat and Prince Ghat to boost the movement of inland transport. The jetties will be developed by a third party and renovated to give it



KoPT Chairman Vinit Kumar (left)

a smart look so that they can be used for tourism purpose.

"We will adopt PPP model in this venture and the company will be selected through proper tendering process," KoPT chairman Vinit Kumar said.

In a bid to generate more revenue from

the huge pieces of land it owns in Kolkata, Haldia, Budge Budge and Howrah, KoPT will soon put 20 plots on long-term lease for commercial establishments, hospitality sector etc. For these 20 parcels the size of land is around 50 to 60 acre. In the next phase 70 odd land parcels will be rented out and the KoPT hopes to earn a revenue of Rs 80 to 90 crore from these 90 parcels.

KoPT owns nearly 4,000 acres of land in Kolkata, including the port facilities at Netaji Subhas and Kidderpore docks.

In the middle of November, KoPT had organised a trade meet with its existing and interested lessees and licencees where there was participation from as many as 150 companies. KoPT is also planning to foray into real estate business by leasing out land. They had already done their homework on the land parcels that have good potential. "We are getting Rs 250 crore per annum by leasing out land for various purposes and we want to increase it," a senior Port official said.



Chinese artistes perform Lion Dance during inauguration of India's Confucius Classroom at the school of Chinese Language in Kolkata's China Town on Tuesday

PTI

Kolkata Police to scan CCTV footages

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Kolkata Police would go through the footages of the surveillance cameras of a private hospital on EM Bypass in connection with the recent kidney racket incident.

A communiqué has been sent to the hospital seeking CCTV footages which will help the cops in their investigation if the accused, who have already been arrested, were actually visiting the hospital.

In the interrogation, the accused told the investigators that they used to visit the hospital to sell kidney. It may be mentioned here that the police on Monday arrested four persons for their alleged involvement in operating a kidney racket from the city. In the face of interrogation, the accused told the

Cops also came to know that the market price of a kidney is around Rs 10L but the accused got Rs 4L

police that Teherun along with the couple were going to a private hospital to sell kidneys and they were supposed to get Rs 3-4 lakh for one kidney.

The cops also came to know that the market price of a kidney is around Rs 10 lakh but the accused used to get Rs 4 lakh. Police suspect that Asfaq, who is a broker, used to get the remaining amount. The cops will examine the CCTV footages to ascertain if Asfaq used to visit the hospital in actual.

Dengue-affected Snehasish Ganguly's platelet count falls

'The platelet count of Snehasish has reduced to 20,000 on Tuesday. We are monitoring his health condition'

KOLKATA: The health condition of dengue-affected Snehasish Ganguly, the elder brother of former Indian cricket team captain and Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) president Sourav Ganguly, remained "a matter of concern" on Tuesday after his platelet count plummeted to 20,000.

The normal platelet count for a healthy adult is 1.5-4.5 lakh per microlitre of blood.

Describing the former Bengal Ranji cricketer's health

condition as "stable", a senior official of a city hospital said: "His temperature was recorded at around 99 degrees (Fahrenheit) and he did not complain of any body ache. But his condition is a matter of concern for us."

Snehasish was admitted to a private hospital here on Wednesday after he tested positive for dengue.

"The platelet count of Snehasish Ganguly has reduced to 20,000 this evening. We are

monitoring his health condition and trying to give him the requisite medicine to arrest the fall of platelet count," the official said. Virologist Amitabh Nandy, who is treating Snehasish, said, "He has a mild fever. His liver has also been affected and he has developed ascites.

But all these are normal clinical conditions in dengue cases. There is nothing to worry about the patient."

The KMC had sent a notice to the Ganguly residence in Behala after spotting larvae of dengue mosquitoes during an inspection.

AGENCIES

26-year-old found hanging inside abandoned shop

KOLKATA: Mystery shrouds the death of a 26-year-old boy whose body was found hanging from the ceiling inside an abandoned shop.

The incident took place in Aldarput area under Junput Coastal police station in Contai. The victim identified as Priyaranjan Giri (26) was found hanging inside the shop. There were multiple injuries on his body.

The incident triggered tension in the locality after some people spotted the body inside the abandoned shop. They informed the matter to the local police station. Police reached the spot and recovered the body. The circumstantial evidences suggest that the victim was murdered. It also seems that a scuffle broke out between the victim and the assailants as there were nail marks on some parts of his body. Locals alleged that the miscreants might have killed the victim and then hanged his body so that it appears to be a case of suicide. They found the victim in the area at around 10 pm on Monday.

MPOST

Singapore Defence Minister flies in LCA at Kalaikunda

KOLKATA: Singapore Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen on Tuesday flew a sortie in the trainer version of the Light Combat Aircraft at the Indian Air Force base at Kalaikunda in West Bengal, and called it a "very good plane".

"Privileged to be flown on the Tejas, India's own designed and manufactured fighter aircraft. A very good plane," the Singapore minister said in a tweet.

Hen, on a day's visit to Kalaikunda, was received at the air base by Eastern Air Command chief, Air Marshal Anil Khosla. The Project Director for Flight Testing at the Aeronautical Develop-

ment Agency, Air Vice Marshal A P Singh was the pilot who flew the visiting dignitary in the LCA, a Defence Ministry spokesman said.

Hen also met and interacted with the Detachment Commander and other officers and men of the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), who are presently at Kalaikunda undergoing their routine annual training.

The Joint Military Training is scheduled to start in a few days at Kalaikunda wherein the RSAF pilots would fly their F-16s and their IAF counterparts, the Su-30. Speaking to the media,



Hen praised the professionalism of the IAF and expressed satisfaction with the military cooperation between the two countries.

Khosla said Joint Military Training provided a unique platform for mutual learning and exchange of ideas between two professional Air Forces.

AGENCIES

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

JAY SHAH CASE

Guj HC rejects The Wire's plea against lower court gag order

OUR CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat High Court on Tuesday rejected a petition by 'The Wire' challenging a gag order passed by a lower court in a civil defamation case filed by BJP chief Amit Shah's son Jay Shah over an article published by the news portal.

Justice Paresh Upadhyay asked the petitioners, including the author of the article Rohini Singh and founding editors of the news portal, to move the trial court to challenge the gag order.

The HC also directed the trial court to decide the matter within 30 days.

"These appeals arising from an ex-parte ad-interim impugned order of the trial court are not entertained. It would be open to the defendants to file their counter to the suit, or at least to the application for interim injunction before the trial court, if they so choose," the court said.

"The trial court is directed to finally decide the injunction within 30 days from today, after hearing both the sides," the high court said.

The HC also said that if any of the parties is aggrieved by the final order that may be passed by the trial court on the injunction application, it would be open to him to challenge it before an appropriate forum in accordance with law.

The petitioners had sought that the interim order of the trial court be quashed and set aside as it was passed without issuing notices to the defendants, and claimed the facts did not warrant an ex-parte order. They submitted that the trial court had not considered any of the "parameters like prima facie case, balance of convenience, irreparable loss" before passing the order and hence, it was unsustainable.

An Ahmedabad court had last month issued an ex-parte injunction against the news portal, prohibiting it from



publishing, broadcasting or printing "in any manner" programmes in any language on the basis of the article published by the website about Jay Shah "directly or indirectly" till the defamation suit has been disposed of. Jay Shah had submitted before the high court that the appeal against the ex-parte interim order was not maintainable and deserves to be dismissed.

He also said the applicant

has not given any justification for the plea.

The petition was filed challenging the injunction ordered by a civil court on October 12 on the story carried by The Wire titled 'The Golden Touch of Jay Amit Shah'.

The lower court had issued the order against the news portal in response to a civil defamation suit of Rs 100 crore filed by Jay Shah against the reporters, editors and the company

over the article which claimed that his firm's turnover rose 16,000 times in one year after the NDA came to power.

The company, according to the article, saw a huge rise in its turnover after the BJP came to power in 2014, and its revenue rose from Rs 50,000 to over Rs 80 crore in a year.

It triggered a political firestorm, with the Congress demanding an inquiry into the matter, while the BJP termed it as "slanderous".

Jay Shah also filed a criminal defamation suit against the author of the article Rohini Singh, founding editors of the news portal Siddharth Varadarajan, Siddharth Bhatia and M K Venu, managing editor Monobina Gupta, public editor Pamela Philipose and the Foundation for Independent Journalism.

In his suit, he termed the article as "scandalous, frivolous, misleading, derogatory, libellous and consisting of several defamatory statements."

EC says not enough VVPATs to hold simultaneous by-elections in WB

SIMONTINI BHATTACHARJEE

NEW DELHI: Shortage of VVPATs has forced the Election Commission not to hold simultaneous by-elections for two Assembly seats and one Lok Sabha seat in West Bengal, the autonomous constitutional authority clarified to Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Monday.

After a delegation of the ruling party in West Bengal met the EC, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien informed, "The Election Commission of India categorically informed us that the VVPATs are not available in sufficient number to hold simultaneous by-elections in Sabong and Noapara Assembly seats and Uluberia Lok Sabha seat."

Reportedly, only 2,500 VVPATs are needed to hold the elections simultaneously. Talking to media persons here on Tuesday, the TMC senior leader also added, "On the one hand, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is talking about simultaneous elections, and on the other hand Election Commission doesn't have sufficient infrastructure."

The vacancies were caused



due to the resignation of Manas Bhunia, MLA from Sabong, on July 24 this year and the death of Noapara MLA Madhusudan Ghosh on August 18. Sultan Ahmed, who represented Uluberia Lok Sabha seat died on September 4 this year.

The Election Commission has already announced the schedule for by-elections for two Assembly seats in Arunachal Pradesh, one in Uttar Pradesh and one in Tamil Nadu.

TMC had also alleged that the EC was being biased, but the Election Commission rubbished the charges and asserted that it is operating independently.

The TMC delegation also submitted a memorandum to EC - mentioning, "In the fitness of the situation, all these three casual vacancies are required to be filled in simultaneously to allow the electorate of those constituencies elect their representatives and the sooner it is done it would not only be better for them, but also conform to the practiced conventions."

The delegation further referred to the vacancy caused by the demise of E Ahmed, MP of Malappuram parliamentary constituency on February 1 2017, which was filled within 70 days through a by-election on April 20.

Ajay Kumar is new Defence Production secretary

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: In a major secretary-level bureaucratic reshuffle, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, which is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the appointment of Senior bureaucrat Ajay Kumar as secretary in Department of Defence Production. Kumar, a 1985-batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre, is at present additional secretary in Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. He has been appointed to the post with effect from December 1, an order issued by the personnel ministry said.

Raghvendra Singh has been appointed as new Secretary in the Ministry of Culture. Singh, a 1983-batch IAS officer of West Bengal cadre, was Director General, National Archives as Secretary.

According to the DoPT order, Pritam Singh, additional secretary in Corporate Affairs Ministry, will be Director General, National Archives.

Upendra Prasad Singh has been appointed as Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. He is at present Additional Secretary in the same ministry.

Senior bureaucrat Apurva Chandra will be Additional Secretary and Director General (acquisition) in Defence Ministry. Chandra is at present Additional Secretary in Department of Defence Production.

GC Murmu, Additional Secretary in Department of Financial Services, has been moved to the revenue department in the same capacity, the order said. He is a 1985-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre.

The ACC has approved extension in the tenure of RK Jain, as Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), for a period of one year up to November 30, 2018, the order said. MM Kutty, the 1985-batch IAS officer of UT cadre, has been moved to Finance Ministry as Additional Secretary. Kutty is at present Delhi's Chief Secretary.

Two more MPs desert Dhinakaran, join TN CM Palaniswami's camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI: In a further setback to sidelined AIADMK leader T T V Dhinakaran, two Lok Sabha MPs representing Vellore and Dindigul constituencies in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday joined the ruling camp.

The duo joined the mainstream ruling camp, a day after three Rajya Sabha MPs joined hands with Chief Minister K Palaniswami and his deputy O Panneerselvam faction.

Vellore MP, B Senguttuvan and Dindigul MP, M Udhayakumar called on Palaniswami at his residence here and expressed their support to the ruling camp, a party release said here. Senguttuvan cited the Election Commission order allotting the symbol to the ruling faction.

Speaking to reporters in Tiruchirappalli, he said he had asked them to stay put in the establishment camp.

"They (MPs) have gone there fearing that they may face disqualification (if they stayed



back in his faction)," Dhinakaran said.

The rival leader said he would meet his aunt V K Sasikala in Bengaluru prison tomorrow and announce the candidate for R K Nagar bypoll after the meeting.

Yesterday, the Rajya Sabha MPs had said here that they chose to align with the ruling camp as it had the official two-leaves symbol.

Boy commits suicide, family blames teacher

COIMBATORE: A 17-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide in his house near here, due to 'harassment' by his school teacher over poor academic performance, police said on Tuesday.

The family of the class 12 student has alleged harassment by his school teacher.

The victim was said to be upset after being allegedly abused by the teacher, over his poor academic performance and not trimming his hair, they said adding the boy hanged himself in his house near Karumathampatti last night, police said. A case under IPC section 306 (abetting suicide) was registered against the teacher and further investigations are on, they said, adding that education department officials are probing into the incident.

Four girl students of a government school in Vellore district had on November 24 committed suicide by jumping into a well after being allegedly chided by their teachers for not being attentive in class. **MP05T**

Govt, corporate sector to work in tandem for wastewater management

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: There is great potential for the corporate sector and the government to work together in wastewater management, senior officials said here.

Lamenting that wastewater management in India has been "very inefficient", secretaries of ministries of drinking water and sanitation and water resources emphasised on the role of industry in "institutionalizing" the use of recycled water as part of conservation efforts. They were speaking at the third edition of India Industry Water conclave organised by industry body FICCI.

"The prime minister has put water very squarely on the agenda. The role of the private sector is very important. There is a huge potential for us to work together in wastewater management, which is very inefficient in our coun-

try. There is a huge scope for wastewater to be treated and used for agriculture," Parmeshwaran Iyer, secretary in drinking water and sanitation ministry, said at the conclave.

The private sector can help by bringing in necessary expertise for recycling water, they said.

"In India, we can recycle 40 billion litres of wastewater we get every day. The private sector can bring in their expertise and work with the government on the project to recycle this wastewater," Amarjit Singh, secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, said.

Delving into the priorities of FICCI Water Mission, its chairman Naina Lal Kidwai said that FICCI will try to bring the industry linkage on the water in its dialogue with government and other stakeholders to create a growing understanding of the water risks to the industry and society.

Robbed man walks 90 km to return home

OUR CORRESPONDENT

TURA: A vegetable vendor, who was missing since Friday, has returned home covering 90 km on foot along railway track from New Bongaigaon station in Assam after allegedly being drugged and robbed.

Jebil Sangma kept on walking for three days, fed on leftovers from dustbins at various stations and lost consciousness after reaching his village.

"Jebil Sangma returned home yesterday night. He is very weak because of the tiring walk. He is in hospital," acting

SP of North Garo Hills district Jerry Marak said.

However, Jebil's friend, who had accompanied him to Assam from their Lower Beomdang village, is still traceless.

The acting SP said Kalmen's mobile phone was last traced at Guwahati and efforts are on to find him.

Jebil told his family that he had been offered a spiked soft drink by a rickshaw puller and he lost consciousness after having it at a market in Guwahati on Friday evening.

The rickshaw puller took

Jebil and Kalmen from Guwahati station to the market during the day but did not accept the fare then.

He had said he would return in the evening, help them sell off the remaining vegetables, take them back to the station and take the fare, Jebil's family members said.

When the rickshaw puller returned in the evening, there were some unsold vegetables and he called up a friend who was supposed to be a wholesaler.

However, the 'wholesaler' refused to buy the vegetables

but agreed to store them. During their way to the store, Jebil and his friend were offered the spiked soft drink, his family members said.

When he woke up at New Bongaigaon station, he found his money and mobile phone were missing and his friend Kalmen was nowhere to be seen.

Jebil had tried to take a bus home but failed since he did not have any money.

While he still managed to return home, Kalmen's whereabouts are not yet known and a police complaint was lodged.

Maha: New law for elevators, escalators, moving walkways

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: The Maharashtra cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal to scrap the existing Maharashtra Elevators Act, 1939 and bring a new law which will also regulate escalators and moving walkways.

The legislation, expected to be tabled in the winter session of the state legislature beginning from December 11, provides for making third-party

insurance mandatory, so that in the case of a mishap, injured persons can get compensation.

An official in the state Energy Department said the 1939 Act covered only elevators (lifts) and not escalators and moving walkways which are common at shopping malls, railway stations and many other public places now.

The proposed 'Maharashtra Elevators, Escalators and Moving Walkways Legislation,

2017' also provides for fixing the life of an elevator so as to curb accidents.

Moreover, the new law will be linked to the standards updated by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to ensure that technological standards are maintained in step with the times.

The new law will also determine the required strength and standards for elevators depending upon the footprint.

EC names 3 expenditure observers for RK Nagar by-poll

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI: The Election Commission on Tuesday named three officials as the expenditure observers for the December 21 by-election to the RK Nagar assembly constituency here, represented by late chief minister Jayalalithaa twice.

Kumar Pranav, Indian Revenue Service, Sheel Asheesh, Indian Railway Accounts Service, and TK Jagoria, Indian Defence Account Service, have been appointed as the observers, Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Rajesh Lakhoni, said.

"They have been asked to report (for duty here) on December 7, he said in a release.

The bypoll has been necessitated by the death of Jayalalithaa on December 5 last year.

The EC last week announced the schedule for the bypoll as per which voting will be held on December 21 and the counting on December 24.

DMK has already announced its candidate while the ruling AIADMK, headed by Chief Minister K Palaniswami and his deputy O Panneerselvam, is likely to name its nominee in a day or two.

Sidelined AIADMK leader TTV Dhinakaran has announced he would contest the bypoll. Meanwhile, the city police said security arrangements have been put in place in the constituency in connection with the bypoll.

The arrangements included 12 round-the-clock checkpoints with six of them being manned by the Swift Action Group (SAG) personnel, a police release said.

GES: IT employees in Hyderabad told to work from home

OUR CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD: Some of the IT firms located at Madhapur here have asked their employees to work from home on Tuesday and for the next two days keeping in view restrictions put in place for the global summit being attended by US President Donald Trump's daughter and advisor Ivanka Trump. The Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES), being attended by over 1,500 delegates, will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi this evening.

As part of security arrangements for the high-profile event, restrictions have been put in place with regard to movement of people and vehicular traffic in and around the venue, the Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC), at Madhapur, which is an IT hub.

"We were asked to work from home if we are unable to come to office today and tomorrow," an employee working for a multinational consult-

ing and auditing firm said.

The entire city is under a thick security blanket in view of the visit of Ivanka Trump and a number of VVIPs for the three-day summit, being held in India for the first time.

Trump along with a business delegation from her country landed at the Shamshabad airport in the wee hours on Tuesday.

A senior police official said as many as 10,000 security personnel have been deployed to keep vigil for the next three days. When contacted, Ranga Pothula, president of the Hyderabad Software Exporters Association (Hysea) said some of the companies in Madhapur have issued advisories to their employees allowing them to work from home.

"There are heavy VIP movements involving security issues. There are traffic restrictions around some of the places. So some of the firms have issued advisories to their employees asking them work from home if they feel that they cannot come to office," Pothula said.

Modi running away from discussion on failed promises, says Congress

OUR CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD: Denouncing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that the Congress was levelling baseless allegations against "the son of Gujarat", the opposition party on Tuesday said he was making emotional statements to run away from discussions on failed promises.

If he was strong, he should have called the winter session of Parliament and faced questions, senior Congress leader Anand Sharma said.

"Why cannot we challenge the prime minister in Gujarat, just because he is from Gujarat?" Sharma sought to know. "He (Modi) visits Uttar Pradesh and abuses (Samajwadi Party leader) Akhilesh Yadav, goes to Bihar and abuses (RJD chief) Lalu Yadav, insults Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi in Uttar Pradesh," he alleged while talking to reporters.

"We are not insulting you but should we also not ask any questions?" Sharma said.



Modi, during a rally in Gujarat on Monday attacked the Congress, saying the opposition party leaders were hurling baseless allegations at the "son of Gujarat".

Sharma claimed that Modi had "no tolerance and democratic mindset", which is why he said so.

"Your (Modi's) big promises have turned out to be a lie and you are running away from discussions and only making false emotional statements," the Congress leader charged.

He claimed that Modi "hates truth, he often lies. He is loud, but not strong. If he was strong, he should have called the winter session of Parliament and faced questions".

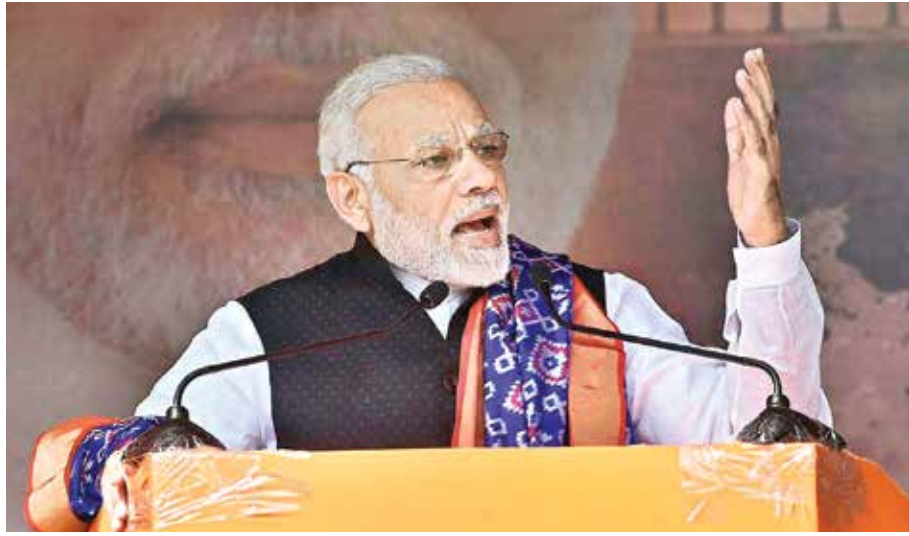
Sharma also said that on Tuesday he sent a book to the prime minister, titled 'Journey of the Nation', which details the 125 years of history of the Congress so that Modi could put history in perspective.

In response to Modi's allegations that the Congress insulted Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, he said the 'Iron Man' was among the country's great leaders and freedom fighters.

He was a Congress leader and the deputy prime minister. "Both Pandit (Jawaharlal) Nehru and Sardar admired each other," he said.

"When Modiji sets up the Statue of Unity, I would request him to put a copper plate with a letter from Sardar Patel, dated February 4, 1939, which he wrote to RSS chief M S Golwalkar on Mahatma Gandhi's murder," he said.

NDA gov't believes in competitive cooperative federalism, says PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses BJP workers on his arrival at the Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad on Tuesday

PM Modi inaugurates Hyderabad Metro Rail



Prime Minister Narendra Modi launching the Hyderabad Metro rail project in Hyderabad on Tuesday

OUR CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD: The NDA government promotes "competitive cooperative federalism" without discriminating between states on the basis of the party in power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday.

The Central government has always supported policies in national interest to let states develop and prosper, Modi said.

The prime minister was speaking at a reception organised in his honour by the Telangana unit of the BJP on his arrival at the Begumpet airport here for the inauguration of the first phase of Hyderabad metro rail project.

"Telangana is a newly-created state... I assure the people of Telangana that the BJP government in Delhi will never

show any discrimination on the basis of politics," Modi said. "Whichever party is in power in the state, we are a party committed to cooperative federalism. Our government is promoting competitive cooperative federalism," he added.

The Centre, he added, would work shoulder-to-shoulder in the state's march towards progress. The Centre would move ahead with the pledge that the fate of Telangana and the country would change only by adopting the path of progress, he said.

Modi, who struck a chord with the BJP activists and supporters by starting his speech in Telugu, said Hyderabad reminds him of Sardar Patel.

"It was the first deputy prime minister who led the merger of the erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad with the Indian Union," he recalled.

"I offer my salutations to Sardar Patel, who merged the princely state of Hyderabad into the Indian Union from this 'veer bhoomi'. My respects to those who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Telangana. Hyderabad is an amazing city," he said.

Modi affirmed that the BJP was committed to the development of Telangana.

BJP is what it is on Tuesday because of the hard work and sacrifices of generations of party workers and their families, he said.

"BJP activists in states like undivided Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu never left the path of hard work and made sacrifices for the party and the country, though the party never had the opportunity to serve people and develop the state by being in power," Modi said.

OUR CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated the Hyderabad Metro Rail and took a ride along with Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Nara

The first phase of the metro rail project covers a 30-km stretch between Miyapur and Nagole, having 24 stations.

The metro rail's commercial operations would start from Wednesday.

Besides the chief minister of Telangana, Modi was accompanied by Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana E S L Narasimhan, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri, Telangana's IT Minister K T Rama Rao and state BJP chief K Laxman in the much-awaited train's inaugural run.

The trains would run from 6 am to 10 pm initially and the timings would be rescheduled to 5.30 am to 11 pm, depending on the traffic and demand, Telangana's Information Technology Minister K T Rama Rao said last week.

He claimed that the Hyderabad metro rail is the most innovative and largest such project in the world in public private partnership (PPP).

The concessionaire, L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Ltd, has fixed a minimum fare of Rs 10 for a distance of up to two km and the maximum fare is Rs 60 for a distance of more than 26 km.

Each train would initially have three coaches and 330 people can travel in each coach. The number of coaches can be increased to six depending on the traffic, Rao said.

Cong, BJP protest in Odisha Assembly on farmers' issues

OUR CORRESPONDENT

BHUBANESWAR: The winter session of the Odisha Assembly began on a stormy note on Tuesday as members of the opposition Congress and BJP protested over farmers' issues, leading to adjournment of the proceeding till Wednesday.

As soon as the House made obituary references, Congress members rushed towards the Speaker's podium and shouted slogans demanding a statement from Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on crop loss and farmers' suicide in the state.

Wearing aprons bearing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's caricature and holding paddy straw, Congress MLAs demanded suspension of the question hour and a debate on crop loss and other farmers' issues through a motion.

BJP members too rushed to the well of the House and raised slogans against the state government for not being able to protect the interest of farmers who have been suffering due to drought, pest attack and unseasonal rain.

The BJP MLAs also held damaged paddy crops. Unable to run the House amid the protest, Speaker Pradip Amat adjourned the Assembly first for an hour, then for 30 minutes and later till Wednesday.

After the House was adjourned, the ruling BJD members staged dharna in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue on the Assembly premises demanding hike in the minimum support price of paddy.

"The prime minister did not give time to the House Committee formed for hike



in paddy MSP. The BJD members on Tuesday staged dharna near Gandhi statue protesting against the Centre's attitude towards Odia farmers," government chief whip Amar Prasad Satpathy said outside the House.

BJP MLA Pradip Purohit said the farmers have suffered a lot due to drought, crop loss and unexpected rain during the kharif season.

"We demand identification of affected sharecroppers like deceased Brunda Sahu and proper assessment of crop loss by the state government," Purohit said.

Leader of Opposition Nara-

singha Mishra of the Congress said a motion was moved by his party to suspend the Question Hour and hold discussion over the issues of farmers.

"Unfortunately, the Speaker did not permit me to say anything in the House and adjourned it. The Speaker should convene an all-party meeting and discuss possible ways to help farmers and stop farmer suicide," Mishra said.

Earlier, the House observed a one-minute silence as a mark of respect towards the departed members of the House, including former minister Muralidhar Guru and ex-MLA Samay Kisku.

8 kg of gold seized in TN coast; 1 held

RAMANATHAPURAM: Gold weighing about 8 kg and valued at Rs 2.5 crore, allegedly being smuggled from Sri Lanka, has been seized and one person arrested in this connection at coastal SP Pattinam in the district, officials said.

Directorate of the Revenue Intelligence officials said the gold was being smuggled from the island nation by sea

when they seized it at the coast on Monday. One person was arrested in connection with the seizure, they said without divulging further details.

This is the second major haul of smuggled gold in the district since last week. On November 20, gold biscuits weighing around 6.9 kgs were seized from a boat off Mandapam north sea coast. MPOST

JK CM speaks to Home Secy over assault of Kashmiris in Bihar



SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday spoke to Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba about social media reports on the alleged assault of Kashmiri prisoners in Delhi's Tihar jail and urged him to ensure their safety.

Mufti spoke to Gauba after photographs of injured Kashmiri undertrials surfaced on social media sites here, officials said. "A prison is considered to be the safest place but the alleged incidents that have come to light put a question mark on it," she said.

Tejaswi, Sushil Modi indulge in war of words in Bihar Assembly

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PATNA: Acrimonious exchanges were on Tuesday witnessed inside the Bihar Legislative Assembly between Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi and leader of the opposition Tejaswi Yadav over the issues of corruption under the present regime and benami property allegedly amassed by the latter.

As soon as Speaker Vijay Kumar Choudhary rejected a notice for adjournment motion on various scams served by opposition members, Yadav stood up and said "this is a very important matter. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who was earlier known for good governance, is now regarded as 'Bhishm Pitamah' of corruption".

"Not a day passes when people in Bihar do not open newspapers or switch on TV expecting news of a new scam", Yadav, younger son of RJD supreme Lalu Prasad, alleged.

Sushil Modi reacted angrily to this, saying Yadav "should tell the house about benami property worth about Rs 1,000 crore amassed by him into which CBI was inquiring. At the age of 28, he has become owner of so many properties".

Yadav retorted, "at times I am told that I am a child (a reference to a recent remark by the CM) and at the same time I am also accused of corrupt deals". "I was the Deputy CM for a considerable period of time. I want to know whether I was guilty of any corrupt deal during the period. On the other hand, the name of the CM has fig-



ured in a murder case and even a fine has been slapped on him by a court in that connection", Yadav alleged.

Sushil Modi sarcastically replied "had he explained his position earlier, he would have been sitting even now on the Deputy CM's chair".

The senior BJP leader was referring to collapse of Grand Alliance comprising JD(U), RJD and Congress over the issue of graft charge on Yadav. Earlier, proceedings of the House commenced in a surcharged atmosphere with some CPI(M) MLAs carrying placards and shouting slogans demanding a stop to violence against dalits. This evoked angry outbursts from the ruling side.

Later, RJD member Abdul Bari Siddiqui told the Chair "members of the ruling side are behaving in a manner in which the opposition has been known to behave". State Minister Nand Kishore Yadav reacted angrily saying the ruling side "will not allow the opposition to manipulate the proceedings in an arbitrary manner".

Indian universities must become centres of excellence, says V-P

OUR CORRESPONDENT

AMARAVATI: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday said that the universities in the country should become centres of excellence and produce multi-skilled students of tomorrow. He rued that none of the universities in the country are world-class in terms of excellence and said India has good varieties but it needs excellent ones.

"It is very painful to note that not one of our 760 universities is world-class with that excellence. There are good universities in the country but we need excellent universities," Naidu said here.

The vice-president was addressing a meeting after inaugurating the Andhra Pradesh campus of the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) at Inavolu village here.

"There is every need for institutes of higher learning to raise standards, improve pedagogy, enhance research activities and form greater linkages with the industry so that students are well-equipped to face the challenges of a globalised world.



"Digital technologies are playing a lead role in the world now and universities must produce multi-skilled students of tomorrow," he added.

Naidu appealed to the universities, both public and private, to focus on enhancing skills, knowledge and raising the standards and then compete at the world-level.

"With proper infrastructure, facilities and opportunities, our universities can excel," he said.

The vice president expressed hope that once the Indian economy strengthens, the government will spend more funds on education and higher learning.

"The Centre and the states are not able to rise to the expectations of spending 6 per cent of the Gross domestic product (GDP) on education because of competing requests and aspirations from every section of the society.

"There is so much pressure for housing, roads, trains, airports, ports, metros...prime minister is doing his best," he said.

"India is going for a great transformation and we must all look for the future. I am sure once the economy strengthens, definitely the governments will be able to spend more on education and higher education also," Naidu said.

NATION BRIEFS

ATM WITH RS 12 LAKH STOLEN NEAR POLICE STATION IN MADHYA PRADESH

KANNOD: Unidentified persons stole an ATM located only a few meters away from a police station at Kannod in Madhya Pradesh in the wee hours of morning on Tuesday. They apparently tried to break open the SBI ATM at Bahirawad Naka, and failing to open it, removed and took away the entire machine with Rs 12 lakh inside, said Kannod police station in-charge Rajendra Chaturvedi. The security guard deployed at the ATM booth was away, he said. "The guard was away, having tea. He informed police about the incident on Tuesday morning. The incident probably took place between 3 am and 4 am," the police officer said. According to the bank officials, the ATM had Rs 12 lakh in cash inside. Probe is on, said Chaturvedi.

PRESIDENT TO ARRIVE IN MIZORAM TODAY ON A TWO-DAY VISIT

AIZAWL: President Ram Nath Kovind will arrive here on Wednesday on a two-day visit to Mizoram. The president would address the Mizoram Legislative Assembly on Thursday, officials said on Tuesday. State Protocol department officials said that Kovind would arrive at the Lengpui Airport near here on Wednesday by helicopter and would stay at the Raj Bhavan. He would inaugurate the Housing for the Poor Project at a function in the Raj Bhavan, the officials said. Additional secretary of the state Assembly S R Zokhuma said the president would address the session of the state legislature at 11 am on Thursday. "Though Speaker Hipei adjourned the winter session of the legislature on November 16 sine die, the state Governor Lt General (Retd) Nirbhay Sharma was yet to prorogue the session," he said, adding that the speaker's notification issued on Monday for continuation of the session was enough.

RAJ GOVT MAKES NATIONAL ANTHEM MANDATORY IN STATE-RUN HOSTELS

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan government has made singing of national anthem mandatory in all government and government-aided hostels in the state. Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Arun Chaturvedi said the move would instill a "sense of nationalism" among students. "Students will sing 'Jana Gana Mana' in the morning meeting at 7 am. Hostel wardens will have to be present during such sessions," he said. The order came into force on November 26, celebrated as the Constitution day. There are close to 40,000 students in nearly 800 state-run hostels in Rajasthan. The Jaipur Municipal Corporation had last month started the daily practice of playing the national anthem at the start of the day and the national song in the evening.

LEOPARD KILLS NINE-YEAR-OLD GIRL

BAHRAICH: A nine-year-old girl was killed by a leopard in the Makhanpur village under Sujapur police station area adjoining the Katarniyaghat forest here, police said on Tuesday. The child had gone to attend nature's call along with her mother last night in the Sujauli police station area when the leopard attacked her, they said. Villagers rushed on hearing the cries of the mother forcing the leopard to flee but the girl had died by then, police said. The locals raised slogans against the forest department and also protested in front of the police team which rushed to the village.

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NIT No.: BNRO/e-Tender/2017-18/F-801/11 Date: 21.11.2017
The Regional Manager, Bidhannagar Region, WBSECL, AA-26, Salt Lake, Sector-I, Kolkata-700064 invites e-Tender only from the eligible, bonafide, experienced & resourceful contractors of Govt., Semi-Govt., Govt. undertaking Organisations, Govt. Enterprises etc. for 'Construction of a Control Room Building, boundary wall, equipment foundations, internal road, cable trenches and allied works of proposed 33/11 KV Sub-Station in the premise of Siddha Happy Vila under IPDS under BND-II'. Tender ID: 2017_WBSED_138468_1. Estimated Amount: Rs. 68,09,919/-; Bid Submission Closing Date: 11.12.2017 up to 14.00 hrs.. For other details, please visit www.wbsecl.in and www.wbtenders.gov.in or Office notice board. ICA/T 5792(3)/2017

KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e-TENDER

ABRIDGED NIT
The Director General (PMU), KMC invites quotation online internet two bid system for the following work:
NIT No. KMC / PMU / XIII / 117 / 002 / 17-18 Dated : 24.11.2017
Name of Work : Protection of delapidated embankment on the western part portion of water body at Jyotish Roy Road in Ward No. 117, Br-XIII; Estimated cost : ₹ 7,01,884.00; Earnest Money: ₹ 14,500.00; Period of Completion : 20 Days; Last date & time of submission of bid : 18.12.2017 - 1.00 P.M. The bid forms and other details shall be available on and from 28.11.2017 (4.00 P.M.) from the website: <https://etender.wb.nic.in>

NIT No. KMC / DG (IT) / 22 / 2017-2018 / R
Tender Invited & to be Received by: Information Technology Department.
Name of Work & Location : Supply and Installation of 15 Nos. Desktop PCs, 15 Nos. UPS, 5 Nos. LaserJetPrinters and 8 Nos. Plotters in KMC. Information Technology Department, The Kolkata Municipal Corporation 48, Market Street (5th Floor), Kolkata-700 087; Nodal Officer : Director General (IT); Available in website from: 28.11.2017 from 12.00 Noon; Estimated Amount: Not Known; Bid Submission closing date (On Line) : 09.12.2017 at 05.00 P.M. For detailed information please visit KMC website <https://www.kmcgov.in> & <https://www.wbtenders.gov.in>

The Director General (C), KMC invites tender online percentage rate two bid system for the following works:
(1) NIT No. KMC / DG (C) / Br-XI / 112 / 055 / 17-18/R (Re-etcher)
Name of Work : Renovation of road at Bank Garden Providing hot mix with kerb & channel in Ward No. 112; Estimated cost: ₹ 7,21,988.26; Earnest Money: ₹ 14,500.00; Period of Completion: 30 Days; Last date & time of submission of bid : 11.12.2017 - 11.00 A.M. The Tender will be opened on 13.12.2017 at 11.00 A.M. The bid forms and other details shall be available on and from 01.12.2017 (5.00 P.M.).

2) NIT No. KMC/DG (C)/Br-VIII / 084 / 7 / 2017-2018/R (Re-etcher)
Name of Work : Resurfacing of foot path by providing paver block at the remaining portion of Park Side Road in Ward No. 84; Estimated cost: ₹ 5,81,925.39; Earnest Money: ₹ 12,000.00; Period of Completion: 90 Days; Last date & time of submission of bid : 07.12.2017 - 11.00 A.M. The Tender will be opened on 09.12.2017 at 11.00 A.M. The bid forms and other details shall be available on and from 28.11.2017 (5.00 P.M.). The website: <https://etender.wb.nic.in> (for Sl. No. 1 & 2).
984/17-18

NADIA ZILLA PARISHAD
Krishnagar, Nadia.
E-Tenders have been invited by the under signed from the bonafied Contractors for the following works at different sites

NIT- 67/NZP of 17-18:
Supplying of veterinary Hospital instruments as per list. Total estimated cost is Rs. 15.51 Lakh. Last date of submission of e-tender is 08.12.2017. Please see website www.wbprd.gov.in or contact to this office.

Sd/-
District Engineer
Nadia Zilla Parishad

NOTICE
In continuation of this office No. 1238/BCV. Dated.08.09.2017 and No.1310/BCV Dated. 12.10.2017, it is hereby notified that the last date for submission of applications from the Retired Govt. Employee has been extended up to 05/12/2017 for the Post of Assistant Engineer on contractual basis under Tribal Development Department. Please contact with the office of the Project Officer-cum-District Welfare Officer, Backward Classes Welfare, Siliguri at Shivmandir, P.O. Kadamatala, Dist. Darjeeling or visit the District Website of Darjeeling for detail information. Last date for submission of application form is 05/12/2017. The application should be drop in the Drop Box at the office of the undersigned on or before 05/12/2017 during office hours.
Sd/-
Project Officer-cum-D.W.O.
Backward Classes Welfare
Siliguri.

Hadiya's father welcomes SC decision, says he can't have 'terrorist' in family

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The father of the Kerala woman, at the centre of the alleged love jihad case, on Tuesday welcomed the Supreme Court decision allowing her to continue her studies.

Asked about his stance on inter-religious marriages, Hadiya's father K M Ashokan said he believed in one religion and one god but could not have a terrorist in the family.

"Hadiya does not have any idea about Syria, where she wanted to go after converting to Islam," Ashokan said.

"I cannot have a terrorist in the family," he added.

The Supreme Court yesterday freed Hadiya, 25, alleged to be a victim of 'love jihad', from the custody of her parents and sent her to college to pursue her studies, even as she pleaded that she should be allowed to go with her husband Shafin Jahan.

"I was sad that she had to undergo all these unpleasant experiences because of which her studies were interrupted. But now I am happy as the court has allowed her to study further," Ashokan told reporters.

He denied allegations that she had been kept under house arrest and added, "She



Hadiya comes to Salem Homoeopathy College, after the supreme court order to continue her studies

was fully surrounded by police inside and outside the house."

Ashokan said he was not worried about her security in Salem, Tamil Nadu, as she was now under the protection and observation of the apex court.

"I accept the Supreme Court's decision. She is under the protection of the Supreme Court as it is monitoring the case and so I am not worried about her security," he said.

He also said he would go to Salem and meet her as and when necessary as the court had allowed him to do so.

"The court has not given anyone guardianship, including Shafin Jahan, of my child," Ashokan said, adding that only close relatives like him were

allowed by the court. Hadiya on Tuesday left for Salem under the protection of Kerala Police and is expected to reach there by evening.

The apex court, which yesterday interacted with Hadiya for nearly half-an-hour in the courtroom against the wishes of her father who had sought an in-camera interaction, had directed the Kerala police to provide her security and ensure that she travels at the earliest to Salem to pursue her homeopathy studies at the Sivaraj Medical College there.

Hadiya was in the custody of her parents for almost six months after the Kerala High Court had on May 29 annulled her 'nikah' with Shafin Jahan.

'Hadiya will continue studies under previous Hindu name'

COIMBATORE/SALEM: A Kerala woman, who is at the centre of an alleged love-jihad case, will pursue her homeopathy studies under her previous Hindu name, the Salem medical college principal said on Tuesday, a day after the Supreme Court freed her from the custody of her parents.

Hadiya, 25, flew to Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu from Delhi and headed to Salem by road this evening to resume her studies as directed by the apex court. A Hindu by birth and named as Akhila Ashokan, she had converted to Islam several months before her marriage.

Hadiya, who was accompanied by the Kerala police, is due to undergo a 11-month internship in homeopathy at the Sivaraj Medical College in Salem, about 170 km from Coimbatore. She was not permitted to speak to the media at the airport in Coimbatore.

A Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra had given its direction yesterday after interacting with Hadiya even as she pleaded that she should be allowed to go

with her husband Shafin Jahan.

Salem medical College Principal G Kannan said Hadiya will be treated as one of the inmates of the hostel and that no special treatment will be accorded to her.

Hadiya will be registered under her Hindu name Akhila Ashokan in the college, he told reporters in Salem.

Hadiya was in the custody of her parents for almost six months after the Kerala High Court had on May 29 annulled her 'nikah' with Shafin Jahan.

The apex court has appointed the dean of the college as Hadiya's guardian and granted him liberty to approach it in case of any problem.

The bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, had directed the college and the university to re-admit Hadiya and grant her hostel facilities. Deputy Commissioner of Police Subbulakshmi, who held a meeting with college authorities in Salem, told reporters that adequate protection will be given to the woman.

Want to meet my husband, says Hadiya

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SALEM: Freed by the Supreme Court from the custody of parents and directed to pursue her studies, Hadiya, who is at the centre of a love-jihad case, on Tuesday said she desired to meet her husband Shafin Jahan. She arrived here in a police vehicle from Coimbatore, about 170 km from here, amid tight security.

"I have sought permission from the college authorities to meet my husband. I hope they will allow," she told reporters at the college where she will undergo a 11-month internship. During the proceedings yesterday, the apex court refused to allow Hadiya's plea to go with her husband.

Earlier, she arrived here in a police vehicle from Coimbatore, about 170 km from here, amid tight security.

Hadiya, wearing a yellow scarf, was whisked away to the Managing Director's office at the college soon after arrival.

Futile to file grievance with govt against court order: Law Min

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: It is "futile" to file a grievance with the government against a court order as it can only be challenged before an appropriate court, the law ministry has told citizens.

It has also told the people that the government cannot ask a court to expedite proceedings of any particular case. No administrative action can be taken on a grievance for which the court has already been approached, the department of justice in the law ministry has said.

"...No action can be taken by the government where the petitioner is aggrieved of the fact that there has been inordinate delay in disposal of the case," according to the 'general guidance' issued by the department of justice for 'aggrieved grievance holders'.

The document states that a grievance regarding a complaint against a judge can be taken up for inquiry by the concerned high court or the Supreme Court as per the in-house procedure adopted by them.

"There is no role of government in disposal of such grievances," the guideline states. The document comes

against the backdrop of the office of the law minister and the ministry itself receiving thousands of complaints over the past several years relating to the delay in justice and grievances against a court order.

The guideline states that a judicial order can be challenged only before an appropriate court as per prescribed legal procedure.

"Therefore, it is a futile exercise to file a grievance against a judicial order/judgment," it states.

It points out that the judiciary is an independent organ of the state under the Constitution and the government does not interfere in the functioning of the judiciary.

As per the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court, grievances against judicial officers are required to be sent on sworn affidavit with verifiable facts to the Registrar General of the concerned high court, the guideline tells people.

"As judiciary is independent and government does not interfere in the functioning of the judiciary, no further follow-up or correspondence is made by the government after forwarding of grievance to the concerned high court or Supreme Court, as the case may be," the guideline says.

Those with criminal records don't have rights? HC to Maha govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: The Bombay High Court on Tuesday asked the Maharashtra government if it believed that people with criminal records had no right to a safe life. The government invited the high court's ire after it submitted that it had decided not to extend police protection to persons who had a criminal record, since any threat to their lives was a consequence of their own actions. They are into criminal activities and hence, they have a threat to their lives, public prosecutor Abhinandan Vagyani said.

"It is because of their own doing and hence, we have decided not to give them police protection," Vagyani said.

A bench of Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice M S Sonak, however, asked if this meant that the state believed those with criminal records had no right to a safe life.

"What nonsense is this? Are you saying that those who have a criminal record do not have any rights? Can anyone come and kill them just like that?" Chief Justice Chellur said.

The bench was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by a lawyer, seeking directions to the state police to recover dues from VIPs, including politicians, and film actors, who have been provided security cover, but have not paid the charges for the same.

As per the PIL, around 1,000 personnel from the state police are deployed for providing protection to private individuals.

The plea also claims that about 600 policemen in Mumbai are deployed for protection duty. On the last hearing in September this year, the bench had directed the state government to revisit its policy on providing police protection to private persons.

It had also said that such protection must be provided to private persons only in the rarest of rare cases.

In compliance with the order, Vagyani told the HC that the state authorities consulted the advocate general and the additional commissioner of police, Mumbai, and then came up with a proposal revising its policy on police protection.

He said the above suggestions were a part of this revised policy. The bench, however, dismissed the new proposal submitted by Vagyani, saying it was apparent that the authorities had not applied their mind to it. "You have simply changed a few lines in the old policy of the year 2000. It is vague and an absolute nonsense. If this has been done after consulting with senior police and legal officers, if this is the decision of our officers, then God save the public," Chief Justice Chellur said.

Parliamentary panel calls Bhansali, Praseon Joshi over Padmavati controversy

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: "Padmavati" director Sanjay Leela Bhansali and censor board chief Praseon Joshi have been asked by a parliamentary committee on IT to appear before it and present their views on the controversy surrounding the movie which has been accused of distorting history by fringe groups.

The 30-member panel has also asked producers of the movie and officials of the information and broadcasting ministry to appear before it and brief about the controversy relating to the Rs 150 crore film.

"The panel has asked Bhansali and Joshi to appear before it and present their views on the movie. They can



present their case before the panel. The members have also decided to call the producers of the movie," chairman of the panel Anurag Thakur said.

The committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday.

Interestingly, actors Paresh Rawal and Raj Babbar, who are members of Parliament, are also part of the panel which

will examine the issues relating to the movie.

Parliamentary sources said they have reached out to Bhansali, but he appeared to be "shying away" from appearing before the panel. The censor board is yet to clear the film.

The film, starring Deepika Padukone, Shahid Kapoor and Ranveer Singh, is based on

Rajput queen Padmini.

As allegations of distorting history in the film triggered protests in various states, the makers of the movie has deferred its release date.

The film was scheduled to release on December 1, this year.

The Karni Sena, a fringe group, as well as the BJP have been critical of the film and a number of BJP ruled states have already banned it.

The set of the movie was vandalised twice -- in Jaipur and Kolhapur -- and director Sanjay Leela Bhansali was roughed up by members of Karni Sena earlier this year.

Another parliamentary panel has also called the officials of the ministry and censor board over the controversy.

No tribunal needed to enforce FCRA on NGOs, Centre tells Delhi HC

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Tuesday told Delhi High Court that the government has a "robust and efficient" system to implement the foreign contributions regulations law as it has already imposed penalties, frozen accounts and referred to CBI and state police several NGOs for such violations.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice C Hari Shankar was also informed that there was no need for any tribunal or body for enforcement of Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain contended that setting up of tribunal would be a "wastage of precious resources in terms of money and man power, both

of judiciary as of executive".

The Centre was responding to a PIL by an NGO, Association of Democratic Reforms, seeking creation of an independent body to implement the FCRA on grounds that conflict of interest hampered implementation of its provisions by the government, as political parties which allegedly violate this law, were part of the ruling establishments sometime or the other.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the NGO, alleged that implementation of FCRA appeared to be strict on NGOs, but not on politicians.

He claimed that despite a high court judgement holding the BJP and Congress prima facie guilty of violating FCRA

provisions, the government had not taken any action.

The court questioned the maintainability of the PIL and sought to know from Bhushan whether it can issue any direction with regard to setting up of a tribunal. During the hearing, the ASG contended that "at present, our system of administering FCRA is robust, efficient, just and fair and there is no need for establishing separate body or tribunal for enforcing FCRA."

The Centre had contended that the NGO's petition appeared to have been preferred on behalf of various NGOs whose registration under FCRA have been cancelled for various irregularities and statutory non-compliances. MPOST

'400% increase in risk of brain cancer among teens using smart phones excessively'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ALIGARH: There is a 400 per cent increase in the risk of brain cancer among teenagers due to excessive use of smart phones, says Professor Girish Kumar of the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai.

Speaking at the Aligarh Muslim University here on "Radiation Hazards of Cell Phones", the scientist urged the smart phone users not to take

lightly the latest warnings pertaining to "hidden dangers" of technology, which stem from indiscriminate use of such devices.

He also categorically warned people from using smart phones for more than 30 minutes a day.

Prof Girish Kumar from the Electrical Engineering Department of IIT Mumbai had recently submitted a report to the central government on the

serious health hazards of excessive use of latest technology.

He pointed out that the release of free radicals into the human body due to excessive use of cell phones was also causing irreversible damage to male fertility.

The scientist stressed that children, in particular, were suffering grave threats to their health as "a child's skull is thinner and easily penetrated by radiation".

Cell phone radiations are also causing serious effects on animal and plant life, he said.

Talking about the adverse impact of indiscriminate use of latest technology on youngsters, Prof Kumar said there was a 400 per cent increase in the risk of brain cancer among teenagers due to excessive use of smart phones.

"Such radiation is causing irreversible damage to the human DNA, especially of

youngsters. It is also responsible for a steep increase in sleep disorders and neurodegenerative diseases, Alzheimer and Parkinson's disease," he said.

The IIT professor added that one cannot wish away the latest technological developments, but it would be a fatal error if the society was not made aware of the serious health hazards, emanating from unbridled use of technology.



Indo-US ties set to scale new heights, says Sushma Swaraj



External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in a meeting with Ivanka Trump, Advisor to the US President in Hyderabad on Tuesday

OUR CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Tuesday said the relationship between India and the US under the current leadership will scale new heights and contribute to global peace and prosperity.

The minister said this while proposing a vote of thanks at the inaugural session of the Global Entrepreneur Summit 2017, which among others

was attended by Ivanka Trump, US President Donald Trump's daughter and advisor to the White House. "I have no doubt that under leadership of Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi and President Trump, India and US relations will scale new heights and contribute to global peace and prosperity," she said.

The minister also underlined the need for according priority to women entrepreneurship, saying it should be a priority for India as well as the

rest of the world.

She further said that while India is a land of entrepreneurs, the US is a nation that is identified with spirit of enterprise.

"The relationship between the two countries have developed into a partnership of global significance. Woman entrepreneurs are epitome of courage and leadership.

CBI books former deputy director of ED in DA case

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The CBI has registered a case against a former deputy director of the Enforcement Directorate for allegedly amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Gurnam Singh from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Chandigarh, was on deputation in the ED between 2012 and 2017. The value of the

assets he amassed is 328 per cent more than his genuine income, the CBI alleged in an FIR.

Singh was relieved by the ED in January this year, sources in the directorate said.

It is alleged that at the start of his deputation with the anti-money laundering agency, Singh had assets worth Rs 12.86 lakh. Their value grew to Rs 1.85 crore in five years, the CBI said.

The agency in its FIR alleged that Singh and his family members purchased a luxury car, properties and also carried out high-value cash transactions.

After deducting expendi-

ture from income during the period, the CBI concluded that the value of his assets was 328 per cent more than his lawful income, prompting the agency to register a case against him.

West Bengal Health Recruitment Board
GN 31, Sector-V, Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700091
www.wbhrb.in
Abridged Advt.No. R/FSO/46(1)/2017
Recruitment to the posts of Food Safety Officer

The West Bengal Health Recruitment Board invites online applications from eligible Candidates for recruitment to 179 posts of Food Safety Officer in the cadre of West Bengal General Service, under Commissioner of Food Safety, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal.

1. Category wise break up of Posts:

Name of Unreserved Post	SC	ST	BC Category A	BC Category B	PWD	Total						
Food Safety Officer	UR (EC)* SC	SC (EC) ST	ST (EC)* OBC A OBC (EC)*	OBC B OBC (BEC)*	PWD	Total						
	62	29	28	12	8	3	12	6	9	4	6	179

2. Only online registration of application (including printing of Govt. Challan) will be allowed on the website between 01.12.2017 to 11.12.2017 (before 8 PM).

3. Application Fee is to be submitted, as stated in advertisement, wherein applicable, in any branch of Banks participating in the GRIPS (Govt. Receipt in Portal System), Government of West Bengal.

4. Detail of eligibility, Scale of Pay, other conditions, Advertisements and Application Form will be available in the West Bengal Health Recruitment Board Website.

Sd/-
Secretary & Controller of Examinations
West Bengal Health Recruitment Board

Dated : 28.11.2017

STEEL AUTHORITY OF INDIA LIMITED
DURGAPUR STEEL PLANT
Durgapur-713203, (W.B.)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (Abridged Version)

NIT No: MM/TC/MED/11414/13/17-18 dt. 27-11-17

Sealed tenders (in Two-Part system) are invited for "AMC BOILER LAUNDRY". DOWN LOADING OF TENDER: 27.11.2017 to 11.12.2017. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF TENDER: On 11.12.2017 before 15.00 hours. For details and downloading, please visit our WEBSITE www.saitenders.co.in (under the link "Active Tenders", Tender Category as "Services", Item Category: "Job Orders", Plant/Unit as "Durgapur Steel Plant" and Tender Type as "Open"). Contact Person: P K Panda, AGM (TC), M: 9434791111

Registered Office: Ispat Bhawan, Lodi Road, New Delhi 110 003
Corporate Identity Number: L27109DL1973G0006454, Website: www.sail.co.in

There's a little bit of SAIL in everybody's life

West Bengal Agro Industries Corp. Ltd.
(A Government Undertaking)
23B, Netaji Subhas Road, 3rd Floor, Kolkata-700001
Phone : 2230-2314/15, Fax : 2230-0156

NleT No. 40 (2nd call) & NleT No.- 44/2017-18
Dated: 27.11.2017

e-Tender are invited by the General Manager on behalf of West Bengal Agro Industries Corp. Ltd, 23B, Netaji Subhas Road, 3rd, Floor, Kolkata-700001 from bonafide and resourceful Agencies for completion of civil work at Jalpaiguri & Alipurduar. Tender document may be downloaded from <http://wbenders.gov.in> Bid submission start date 29.11.2017 after 9.00 AM. Bid submission end date 07.12.2017 & 17.12.2017 respectively before 5.00 PM

Date: 28.12.2017 Sd/-
General Manager

EDITORIAL

How independent is your autonomy?

To what extent can we protect the autonomy of an individual? Is there any possibility of freedom when every thought and action is the result of our perception of the outside world? Since external influence is compulsory, on what basis do we define freedom? What does it mean to be free—can the misguided decision making of an adult be considered as autonomous decision making? On what ground do we decide what is right and what is wrong—ultimately it boils down to a game of perception and benefits. These questions are not only abstract; they are complex and parallelly palpable. The Supreme Court has been battling an issue that has gained precedence on the public front because of these very perplexing questions. The complicated story of Hadiya has got the brightest minds of the country logging horns to decide the intellectual validity and the practical feasibility of deliberating on independence, autonomy and manipulation. The underground network of Love Jihad has been doing the rounds in recent news. Radical Islamists are supposedly culpable of forcefully converting young Hindu girls on the pretext of marriage to subsequently engage them in terror activities. The NIA has been on its toes cracking this underground network. For many, the strong Muslim man forms the exotic other, who irks senses more than the bland Hindu—known for his subservience. The validity of the underground Love Jihad network though still remains unfounded. Not to dismiss its validity in totality, on the public front there has been little evidence to prove the true functioning of this unholy network. Hadiya's story emerges from this background. Married to Shafin Jahan, which Hadiya says was an outcome of her autonomous will, she converted to Islam prior to her nuptials. Her father alleges that this was an instance of Love Jihad, as the young girl, all of 24, was still unable to think for herself. An appeal to the Kerala High Court subsequently led to the annulment of their marriage as Hadiya was handed over to her parents' custody. As the Supreme Court went on to hear the petition filed by her husband, Hadiya for once spoke out, reinstating that she was now a devout Muslim of her own will and she wished to remain married to her husband while continuing her education in Homeopathic medicine. The Court has, till now, granted her the second will. Hadiya will go back to continue her studies, living in the hostel, not in the jurisdiction of either her father or her husband. While Hadiya repeatedly emphasised on her autonomy and free will to make choices, the Courts were faced with a critical dilemma: to what extent must they restrain their power to question the autonomy of an individual? While Hadiya's repeated statement of wishful engagement with her husband stands undisputed, what is also concerning is the NIA's findings of a truly active underground network that seeks to exploit young Hindu girls with the attempt to radicalise them. A quick detour—there is a growing number of home-grown terrorists in Kashmir today, whose fragile minds are tapped upon by violent extremists who convert these naïve boys into killing machines, a slow process that has unfurled over time. While Hadiya's story might not at all be similar to their's in North India, the growing terror threats to the country emboldens the government's concerns towards protecting the sovereignty of its citizens. The human mind is strong, stubborn but also fragile and open to manipulation. Autonomy need not always be independent; it is, in fact, always dependent on external circumstances. The sifting has to be done to separate the nourishing elements of the external world from the potentially destructive ones. With adequate manipulation, even the most dangerous thoughts can be planted with the façade of independence. Hadiya's case is truly complex. It impinges upon the very question of autonomy which we as a democracy must never fumble to protect. Yet, given the foibles of the growing world, can we ever discount the evils that loom in the shadows of our everyday, waiting to clutch on to the easiest prey? While the NIA proceeds its studies, another relevant aspect that mustn't be overemphasised is communal difference. Even 70-years after independence we are shackled by fuelling hatred between Hindus and Muslims. A marriage between two communities, which form the majority in the country should be as normal as the act of marriage itself. These false divergences hold no value in the modern world where each individual must focus their attempts to reduce prevailing hatred. We already live in a hateful world where animosity spreads quicker than a virus. Whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Sikh, each community should realise how petty their differences are. If God exists, then s/he exists as one; unperturbed by a turban, a beard, a white robe or a saffron tilak.

Service in death

In a refreshing and welcome move, the Ministry of State for Health and Family Welfare emphasised on the need to promote the practice of organ donation across the country. The surprising fact in India is that most donations are being done by living donors and of the donations made only 23 per cent is being transplanted to the needy patients. We are battling a shortage of donations across the country and to top that, if the successful conversion of donations too meets a roadblock, then the situation would be undoubtedly unfortunate. Being a country with proliferating population, the only upside in sight would be the subsequent growing rate of mortality and thereby avenues for acquiring consensual organs from patients who have succumbed to death but can still contribute to societal well-being. The lack of awareness and superstitions surrounding the donation of organs post-death continues to be a significant barrier that is impeding the successful conversion of organ transplantation in the country. An estimated 1.8 lakh people suffer from renal failure annually, of which only 6000 are able to receive a new organ. Around two lakh people die annually of liver failure, of which only 10-15 per cent are saved with a timely transplant. At any given time, eight to 10 people are suffering from a brain-stem death in the ICU's of major cities, yet very few of these patients' organs are utilised for donation. Death of a near one is a difficult time for the family, often making rationalisation an obstacle. However, by emphasising our efforts on increasing awareness we can overcome a major hurdle in the availability of organs that could save the lives of lakhs of people suffering from renal failure, liver damage, or corneal blindness in our country. The black market for selling organs continues to thrive in our country, because of the absence of a well-organised institutional infrastructure that would support the successful procedure of legal donation and transplant. The government must allocate its budget to improve the backbone that would support this entire process of retrieving and replanting organs. While the government plays its role, the society has a big spot to fill in—with community awareness, discussion and motivating one another to take the correct step by shedding superficial traditions. Superstitions regarding after-life and preserving the entire dead body before its journey to heaven continues to be an obstacle that deters many from donating the organs of their dear ones. However, it must be held in mind that there is no greater religious duty than service to mankind; and organ donation today tops the list among the services that we can provide to our fellow citizens who are battling diseases that are bringing their lives to a quick halt. What better way to begin the journey to heaven than by contributing to unconditional service, even in death.



DR. VARTIKA NANDA

At the end of the day, people do watch cinema for entertainment, period. And prisons are not a piece of entertainment, period. When a film revolves around a subject with sketchy research, a weak script, or is interwoven with weak lyrics, it sends a different message

Quote martial

It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow, and transform

ROY T. BENNETT

Balancing reel and reforms

Despite their popularity on screen, sensitivity towards prisoners is limited and demands immediate accentuation

Prisons are *de rigueur*. Or at least this is what seems to be the trending fashion in India, as of now. With the release of films such as *Daddy*, *Lucknow Central* and *Haseena Parkar* towards the year-end, it is clear that Bollywood has consciously kept prisons in mind; it is quite evident that prisons sell, and how.

This is not an unusual or even unexpected incident that has occurred. Since the advent of cinema, a number of films have been made across the globe, dealing with various aspects of the intricate matrix of human rights and prison reforms.

One of the most outstanding films in this genre has been *Do Aankhen Barah Haath* (1957), directed by the legendary V Shantaram. The film was about a progressive reform-minded young warden who gets permission to take six murderers from a prison environment to a dilapidated country farm in order to rehabilitate it and subsequently to reform the inmates.

There are ample such examples from Bollywood and parallel experiments from international cinema too. One cannot deny that films like *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) and *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (2013) have been able to evoke sensitivity among the masses on the subject, yet a large section of such films revolved around the dark, pungent face of crime and retribution, pointedly resulting in more profits.

With a freshness in its script, *Lucknow Central* revolves around the concept of the miscarriage of justice (till the last reels anyway), role stereotypes within jails, and the whole issue of prison reforms that we avoid even talking about. At one point, when the protagonist says that the inmates are not pieces of exhibition and they cannot be



Prisoners continue to occupy space on the reel, but in real their relevance is still numbered REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

put out to be displayed, she highlights a very crucial point. With my experience as a prison reformer and my background in crime reporting for over two decades now, this whole idea of exhibiting the inmates to outsiders has always troubled me.

Recently Tihar jail organised its *Tihar Utsav* and subsequently opened the *Hunar Haat* at the Pragati Maidan Mela so that the outside world is sensitised towards the world inside jails. However, one cannot deny that at times, the officials themselves are not sensitive enough to deal with such delicate issues. Frequently, the bigger and better-known jails start working towards gathering media hype for themselves, rather than evoking serious discussions per se. When jails organise fashion shows and expect inmates to walk the ramp in front of the headline-thirsty media, it creates a chaos of priorities and brings a bitter taste in the mouth of the silenced inmates who get an immediate feeling of being used and exploited for a widely televised or reported event, without benefiting from it.

Undoubtedly, it is a welcome idea to showcase the hidden talents of the inmates and providing them with some limelight; but asking them to walk the ramp as clothes horses, devoid of a literary basis from their view-

point at all, is like inviting all and sundry to ogle at them—those whose wings have been clipped— and expect them to exhibit their vulnerability and emotional nakedness in full view.

Prisons grow, moss-like, in solitude. They bring loneliness but often turn into petri dishes of introspection and aloneness, resulting in various creative forms. This period of silence and rumination is often translated into creative writing. This is one of the reasons that jails have also gained the reputation for literary pursuits. However, the unfortunate fact remains that there are officials of different hues. As one can see in *Lucknow Central* too, there is a perpetual undercurrent of conflict of interests among the jail staff, IPS officers and the ruling ministers, highlighted in the film quite realistically and this happens everywhere in India. One can see officers who have an abiding interest and passion towards prison reforms, whereas there are others who neither understand the need for it, nor the others' passion to contribute to it.

In this juxtapose, one can see a different world of NGOs emerging and quite often with their own agenda of interests, being run by the spouses of the bureaucrats or police officers as adjuncts, or even directly by the politicians themselves. In

major conferences, seminars and symposiums, there are a select few who are asked to represent or present their point of view. It is ironical when people are invited because of their political, bureaucratic or page three credentials, but generally not because of their work and passion for the subject.

There ought to be a word of caution here. When Bollywood deals with such not-so-common and sensitive subjects, the audience gets enticed. It is not surprising to see the halls almost full of people keen to watch films related to crime, the underworld or prisoners. It is very difficult to pacify oneself by believing that the Indian audience has matured; the protests on sundry issues relating to film releases and assumed offence to their sensibilities or religious sentiments jolts one out of the comfort zone of that belief. At the end of the day, people do watch cinema for entertainment, period. And prisons are not a piece of entertainment, period. When a film revolves around a subject with sketchy research, a weak script, or is interwoven with weak lyrics, it sends a different message. The masala which goes into such films may get them good reviews (deserved or otherwise) but that does not solve the crucial larger issue which loses itself in the labyrinth of debates.

Similarly, there are political figures too, who never fully understand the essence of the subject and yet, they are enjoined with this responsibility. By holding the portfolio of prisons, they contribute immensely to add chaos to the already amorphous status. On many occasions, unless and until the ministers themselves land inside the prison (hopefully as a visitor), they never understand what the fuss is all about. The moment that situation arises, they take every possible step to improve the situation in the closest periphery of the low-hanging fruits, treating the symptoms, if at all, rather than the disease. Their concern tends to revolve more around populist measures such as addressing inmates' demand to get an air-conditioner or a fan installed, comfortable beds, facilities to use their mobile phones and thereby to exercise some power inside, as an extension of their standing outside.

Though prisons are now being 'showcased' on both big and small screens, they have not been able to evoke focused, serious discussions. One must appreciate that every jail has inmates of various types—some who have committed crimes and some who have not, some habitual offenders and some first-timers. One cannot treat each one of them with the same yardstick. With the prevalent overcrowding in jails and several other issues, jails need a pucca road to reformation, subsequently heading towards a holistic transformation.

(The author is a prison reforms activist. She is the founder of TINKA TINKA, a unique initiative for prison reforms & was given Sri Shakti Award by the President of India in 2014. Her name has been included in Limca Book of Records twice for her work on prisons. The views expressed are strictly personal.)

WE HEAR YOU!

The Hadiya case is truly baffling. When an adult woman is speaking for her freedom and expressing her independent desire to stay with her husband, the courts have no right to interfere. We must overcome the barriers of religious divide and learn to accept fellow Indians for who they are, what they eat and what they wear. We cannot be shackled by these primitive thoughts; they do not augur well for our progressing economy.

DAMINI KOTHARI Via email

dear EDITOR

millenniumpost.in

Log on to write letters to the editor or send them to letter2editor.mp@gmail.com

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Entrepreneurship Culture

India is battling a fear of failure which is preventing individuals from acing the field of entrepreneurship writes Dipak Banerji

In an article titled, 'How To Stop Worrying and Love Failure', Mr Rajan Anandan, Vice President and MD of Google India Ltd, had something interesting to say. He wrote, "Asia, as a region had the highest fear of being an entrepreneur and India, is no different from anywhere else. Almost 40 per cent of potential entrepreneurs in India don't set up their businesses because they are worried about failure. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 20 per cent of people surveyed said they were afraid to fail. When did India become a less scary environment than Africa? That fear explains why we Indians avoid being entrepreneurs and why we must change. Ironically, there has never been a better time to set up a business in India."

Here is what an Indian patriot-saint and yogi suggested from the US in 1890, for his fellow Indians back home. "If anyone forms a company and exports Indian goods here (to the USA) and into England, it will be a good trade. Dal Soup will have a go if properly introduced. There will be a good demand for these things if they are sent from house to house in small packets with directions for cooking on them and a depot is also started for storing a quantity of them." The name of the yogi was Swami Vivekananda.

Between then and now, there has been some welcome change in this direction. But the level of activity is far below the optimum. So much so that India, with its galaxy of star leaders in the global corporate community, lags behind Sub-Saharan Africa in nurturing entrepreneurs out of the fear of failure.

The point, therefore, is to revive the culture of fearlessness inherent in Indians. The percentage of normal fear is only 5 per cent as against imaginary fears of 95 per cent. Normal fear is healthy fear. Imaginary fears have no objective reality. Is there any certainty in



Burdened by fear, millennials are losing their entrepreneurial spirit REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

any sphere of life? Everything we do is a calculated risk. A noble mission, an intense passion or tough times open up an unknown column of energy to withstand failures with enthusiasm. Fortune always favours the prepared, albeit with successive burn-outs.

What is the way by which we can get rid of this fear psychosis? Before we try to delineate steps to bring about this change of culture, it will be worthy to muse the reasons that have led us to embrace this culture of fear.

First, the colonial and post-colonial hangover of our *naukri* culture sapped our love for independence and sense of self-reliance. Second, technological development and economic imperialism of the Highly Developed Countries had driven our young aspiring professionals to seek instant gratification.

But what happens when the world economic order takes a downturn? Let us have a look at the latest job-report of ILO World Employment and Social Outlook for 2017. The number of unemployed people in India is estimated to rise from 17.7 million to 18 million by 2018. Globally, the ILO reckons that

the number of unemployed people will increase by 3.4 million in 2017, with the pace of labour-force growth outstripping job-creation.

In such a scenario, we may huddle together and pray for jobs to come from nowhere. Alternatively, we may opt to be courageous and strive to become entrepreneurs. In all probability, success will be ours.

An entrepreneurial nation requires the active involvement of all sections of society—spiritual masters, writers, academic institutions and corporates. Ideally, we should start with high school students. With creative modules of motivation, we can sow the seeds of dreams and self-reliance into young minds. Parents and teachers are great motivators. Home is the springboard of a value-based culture. Teachers as mentors and friends leave lasting impressions on students even after they leave campus.

Universities, academic and professional institutes, engineering colleges and business schools can play significant roles in inspiring students to become entrepreneurs. Corporates, through CSR programmes, could launch innovative

training modules to have a cascading impact on employees, their wards and vendors. The idea is to cast the net wider to encompass individuals from diverse sectors viz. NGOs, advocates of women empowerment and rural development.

We do not have any dearth of talent or intellect. What is needed is a determined attitude to becoming self-reliant. Many nations have done it successfully. They are now the role models for others. Let us consider three instances.

The USA is what it is because of her entrepreneurial culture. The early settlers had to face a lot of hostility. They had to strive to create a life of bounty from scratch to become an icon of world-class supremacy.

Japan was pulverised to ashes after WWII. Once, the Japanese products were even synonymous with cheap price and poor quality, but Japan surged ahead of the debris and banished both the tags to redefine quality and productivity standards worldwide. Today, Japanese products outclass the pioneers in automobiles, electronics and several other industries. Unsurprisingly, Japan is also a hub of teeming small-industry entrepreneurs. China offers yet another inspiring case study. After years of communist rule decrying individual ownership and wealth accumulation, it is baffling how its leaders could motivate people for such a gargantuan change!

From the above examples, it is simple to infer that, given the urge and the will, we can resurrect a culture of fearlessness to become job creators and not just job seekers. We are at the crossroads of a cultural evolution and it is pertinent to recall what Charles Darwin prophesied about evolution in a related context: "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

(The views expressed are strictly personal.)

Disrupting Middle-East

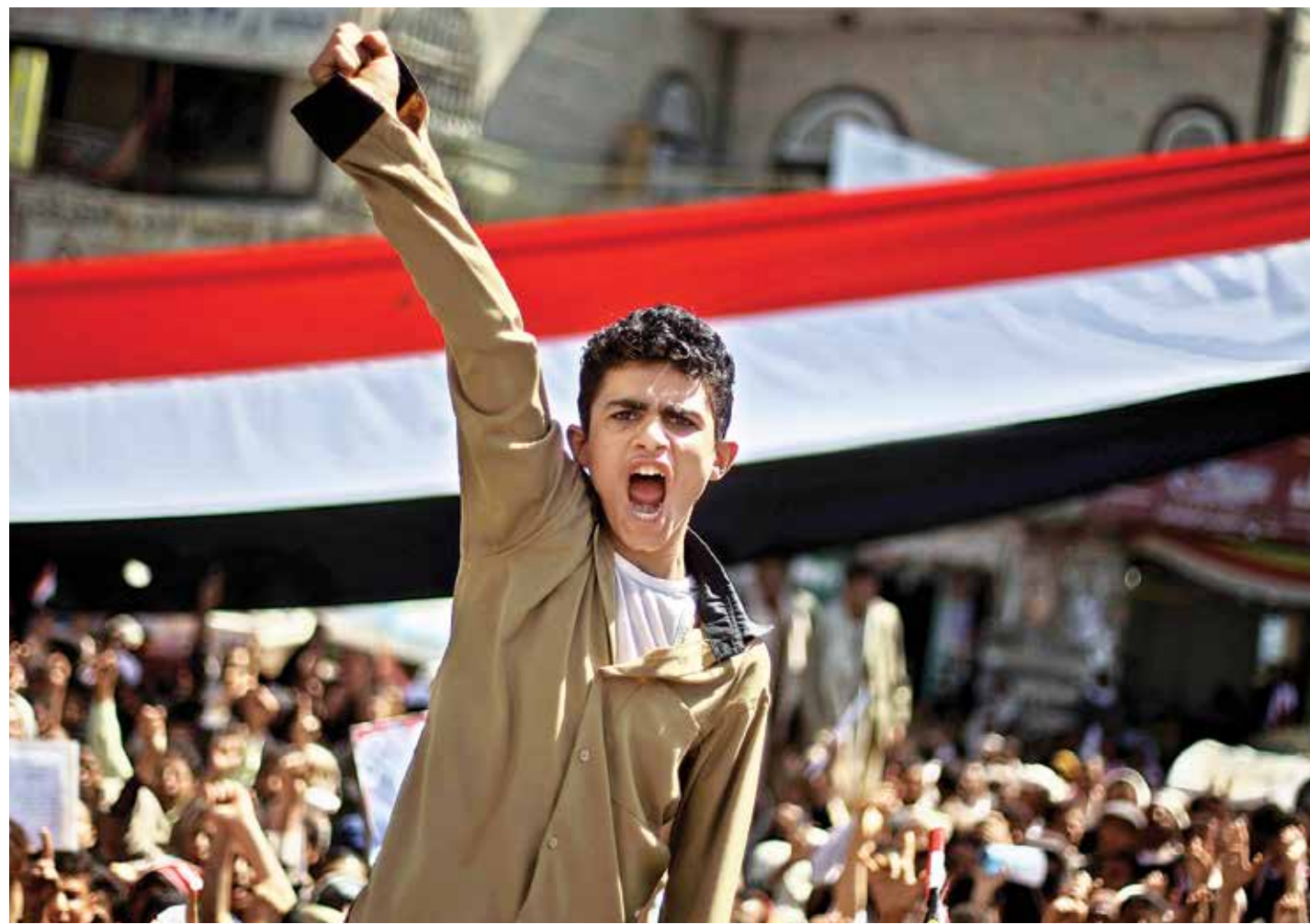
The US-Saudi alliance targeting Iran is fuming crisis in the Middle-East, causing dismay to the entire region, writes Jane Green

Peace in the Middle East has, for many decades, been a rare commodity. The flow of oil, gas, and minerals, which has seen the development of some of the richest states on the planet, has not brought with it a rush of democratic control. On the contrary, from the controlling input of the oil transnationals under British colonial rule to the dynastic dictatorships sold to the Western public as “royal” families, the mineral wealth of the region has been ruthlessly exploited to benefit a select few. Over recent decades, the power balance has ebbed and flowed with different allegiances being fashioned to suit the needs of the West and to ensure that oil supplies are kept flowing and rival economies are kept at bay.

The dictatorship of the Shah of Iran suited the needs of the British and the US interests in Iranian oil fields during the decades that followed the World War-II. The establishment of the Islamic Republic put an end to that arrangement, and thus, the West was quick to back Saddam Hussein in Iraq in the 1980s when it was clear that Western interests could still be protected. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, in spite of being a single-family dictatorship, is nevertheless fawned over by presidents and royalty who are keen to keep the oil flowing and the arms sales booming.

Now, the two regimes—Iran and Saudi Arabia—are in a power struggle to control the Middle East, while the US and other Western states try to game the conflict from above, for their own benefits. The revolution in Iran in 1979—followed by the unexpected seizure of power by a ruthless theocracy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic—was the key point at which relationships began to change significantly. Not only did the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran mark a significant break in guaranteed allegiances with the West, it also exacerbated differences within the Muslim world between the Shi’ite and Sunni strands of Islam.

The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) was a significant attempt by the West—which backed Saddam Hussein’s attack upon Iran—to restore the pre-revolutionary balance in the region. Inevitably, as with most efforts by the West in the region, the plan backfired and Iran emerged stronger in the eyes



Caught in the crossfire of political powerplay, people of the Middle-East are bearing the brunt of evil propaganda

of many looking for a focal point for opposition to Western interference in the Middle East. That such a regime could be seen as remotely anti-imperialist is both an irony and a contradiction. The reality of Iran’s human rights abuses against its own peace activists, political opposition, trade unionists, and women should have paid off any illusions that the regime represented anything remotely progressive, long ago.

However, for some Muslims, the alternative Saudi-led interpretation of Sunni Islam is regarded as infinitely worse than whatever Shi’ite Iran has offered. The anti-Western feeling in the region has been heightened by the failure to curb Israeli brutality in Palestine, the post-September 11, 2001 invasion of Iraq,

and interventions in Afghanistan and Libya. The more recent Western efforts to stoke civil war in Syria, as well as supporting the Saudi blockade and bombardment of Yemen, have added mileage to the feeling of the adage “my enemy’s enemy is my friend”.

Significantly, much of the military equipment used by the Saudis in Yemen comes from Britain, while the effective Saudi blockade of Yemen’s borders has not been challenged by either the US or the EU. The recent bizarre resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri can only be understood in the context of the wider power play unfolding in the region. Hariri was called to Riyadh, where upon landing, his mobile phone and those of his body-

guards were confiscated.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman’s own “night of the long knives” began only hours after Hariri’s arrival in Riyadh. It has seen the house arrest of 11 princes, including the immensely wealthy Al-Waleed bin Talal, four ministers, and scores of other former government lackeys. Up to 1,700 bank accounts have also been frozen. His plan appears to include an attempt to destabilise Lebanon by removing Hariri and effectively throwing down the gauntlet to cabinet partners Hezbollah, who are backed by Iran.

This is supported by the fact that Hariri read out — on Saudi-owned TV — a scripted announcement of his resignation as Prime Minister of Lebanon while calling for the dis-

arming of Hezbollah and accusing Iran of interference across the region. Over the same weekend, Houthi rebels, suffering relentless Saudi bombardment in Yemen, launched a missile attack upon the Riyadh airport. Although the Saudis managed to intercept the missile before it hit the ground, they have nevertheless proclaimed the attack as “an act of war” by Iran. Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed al-Jubeir has threatened to take “appropriate” action when the time is right.

Jubeir claims that the missile was made in Iran and smuggled in parts into Yemen where, he claimed, “operatives from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah” helped put it back together again and then launch it. The wider context of recent

events must also include the 2015 nuclear deal brokered with Iran—which US President Donald Trump is keen to tear up—and US insistence on keeping all options open when dealing with Iran.

While those options may not necessarily mean a direct attack by the US on Iran, it seems increasingly probable that a US proxy—such as Israel or Saudi Arabia—could be the conduit for such an action or an orchestration of a regional crisis involving Iran. To suggest that the escalation of such a conflict would be a threat to world peace is no exaggeration. As the recent years of conflict in Syria have shown, alliances in the region rarely take account of the needs of the people but are instead geared towards the control of the rich oil and mineral resources of the Middle East.

While the rhetoric of “fighting for democratic freedoms” will still be deployed when deemed useful, the reality remains that little, if any, democracy has come from Western interventions in the region in the past decades. There is every prospect that the West, however, particularly the US, may regard intervention against Iran, in some way necessary.

The defeat of the Islamic State forces, across Iraq and Syria, has involved Iranian-trained fighters on the ground. Iran now controls a significant land corridor, running from Tehran to Tartous in Syria, providing an important access route to the Mediterranean. Iran’s designs on extending its influence across the region take account of the continued supremacy of its theocratic rule.

The Saudis and Israel claim that the extension of Iranian influence in the region represents an existential threat. As unlikely as they may seem as allies, both the Saudis and Israel are backed by the US, itself struggling to retain its hegemonic foothold in the region.

Recent events do not augur well for the people of the Middle East, who are inevitably caught in the crossfire. The Saudi blockade of Yemen alone, which relies on imports for 90 per cent of its food supply, is creating a humanitarian crisis of major proportions.

(The author is a regular contributor to the ‘People’s World’. The views expressed are strictly personal.)

As the recent years of conflict in Syria have shown, alliances in the region rarely take account of the needs of the people but are instead geared towards the control of the rich oil and mineral resources of the Middle East

Healthy path for recovery

Forecasting ahead, OECD lists factors for upturn from 2018 onwards



S. SETHURAMAN

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley may derive some cheer with a more meaningful agenda boost from OECD, as he starts work on a challenging budget for 2018-19. More taxes are to augment revenues and monetary easing in 2018 are being held up to accelerate recovery in 2018-19. OECD notes after suffering from a temporary setback, the economy is “bouncing back”.

The Modi Government, still overcoming the totally disruptive impact of demonetisation in November 2016, also has to make the hurriedly launched GST more workable with further rate readjustments and easing the tax compliance, especially for small-scale business sectors. Exporters continue to face delays in tax refunds.

With a belated launch of recapitalisation plan for public sector banks, the government is also caught in the labyrinth of ways of funding means and sorting out legal issues related to bankruptcy procedures for delinquent borrowers. OECD urges that the large recapitalisation for PSBs should be accompanied by governance reform so that banks do not run into a renewed accumulation of bad loans.

Overall, the Modi Government will have no smooth sailing for the months to come. Yet, a modicum of progress on these structural reforms will become a key factor for restoring credit growth and triggering a private investment revival.

Now, in line with downward revisions by other global institutions, OECD puts growth estimate at 6.7 per cent for the current fiscal year ending March 2018. It expects growth to pick up to 7 per cent in 2018-19 and 7.4 per cent in 2019-20. This is predicated on progress with the ongoing bank and other reform efforts (GST). The economy is projected to “strengthen to above 7 per cent, gradually



OECD has emphasised on improving public expenditure to smoothen the pace of the economy REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

recovering from the transitory adverse impact of rolling out the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and measures to choke off the black economy, including demonetisation”.

In the longer run, GST would boost corporate investment, productivity and growth by creating a single market and reducing the cost of capital equipment, OECD said in its latest Global Outlook (Nov.28). The investment will be further supported both by the plan to recapitalise public banks and by the new road plan.

Currently, consumption is led by growth, though depressed in the months after demonetisation. Consumption is recovering from the liquidity crunch and there is some rebound in rural consumption as well as a rebound in two-wheelers sales, bountiful crops in a nor-

mal monsoon year, and higher rural wages. The large increases in wages, pensions and various allowances for public servants are also boosting private consumption, in particular in urban areas.

Import growth has slowed, after the surge in gold and silver import ahead of tax changes. Investment has failed to rebound so far, affected by the weak financial position of most public banks and some corporations, combined with a low capacity utilisation.

According to OECD, an increase in public pensions and wages, as well as debt write-offs in some states, is resulting in a “broadly neutral” fiscal stance over the projection period (2017-19). Given the high public debt-to-GDP ratio, increased spending on social (health and education) and physical infra-

structure would require additional revenues by raising more property and income taxes.

With inflation expectations adjusting down to around 4 per cent, some easing of monetary policy is proposed. OECD has assumed policy lending rate (repo) to be cut from 6 per cent now to 5.75 per cent in mid-2018 and to remain constant thereafter if inflation durably remains below 4 per cent. Overall, inflation has fluctuated well below the 4 per cent target, since October 2016 and inflation expectations are adjusting down. Some price spikes are likely in the coming months, as base effects vanish, OECD says.

Globally interest rates would go up with US FED expected to gradually hike key interest rate from 1.25 at present to reach 2.75 per cent by December 2019. Another assumption

is that international oil prices would average 60 dollars a barrel throughout 2017-2019. This would mean in India a build-up of both fiscal strains and inflationary pressures while higher global interest rates could also lead to some capital outflows, though manageable with current reserves. The Current Account deficit is also set to worsen in the next two years, despite global trade expansion at over 4 per cent in these years.

OECD sees scope for improving the quality of public expenditure and notes recent efforts to move away from the informal economy and to digitise transactions are boosting tax revenue. However, non-tax revenues, dividends, privatisation and telecom receipts are below budget. On the spending side, wages and various allowances for government employees are being adjusted up while several states have announced farm loan waivers, leaving little scope for a further fiscal stimulus with the deficit already high. Still, in the medium term, the expectation is that the GST would spur tax revenue.

Creating more and better quality jobs, for both women and men, is necessary to promote inclusive growth. The prospect for further structural reforms, in particular in the labour market, is a clear positive risk for growth; OECD urges the Central government to pursue its proposals to modernise labour codes besides encouraging states to reform the labour legislation in their domain.

Global growth is strengthening at 3.6 to 3.7 per cent in 2017-19, the fastest since 2010, but the question posed both in developed and emerging market economies is whether the upturn in investment and asynchronous growth momentum would raise productivity with real wages and higher living standards for all.

(The views expressed are strictly personal.)

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Mumbai to Goa Rs 635 toll tax. Rs 550 in #Maharashtra. Even the collectors at the booth were embarrassed about it, given the state of #NH4 in MH beyond Pune. @NHAI Socialmedia why collect toll for roads that are still being built? #justasking why collect toll at all?



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Constituents filled our voicemail over Thanksgiving weekend opposing FCC’s #NetNeutrality decision. This isn’t just a hashtag, it’s a guarantee that the internet should be open and accessible for everyone.

Suu Kyi stripped of Freedom of Oxford award



LONDON: Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been stripped of the Freedom of Oxford award over her "inaction" in handling the raging Rohingya refugee crisis and turning a "blind eye to violence" in the country that forced over 600,000 people to flee to Bangladesh.

Oxford City Council voted unanimously last night to permanently remove the honour given to 72-year-old Suu Kyi in 1997.

"On Tuesday we have taken the unprecedented step of stripping her of her city's highest honour because of her inaction in the face of oppression of the minority Rohingya population," Councillor Mary Clarkson said.

"We hope that on Tuesday we have added our small voice to others calling for human rights and justice for the Rohingya people," she said in a statement.

More than 600,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh following a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state, creating one of the world's most dire refugee crises. Last week, Myanmar signed a deal with Bangladesh to allow the refugees to return home.

While the United Nations

has described the violence and mass exodus as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing", Suu Kyi has dismissed all allegations.

Oxford City Council said that when Suu Kyi had been given the Freedom of the City it was because she reflected the city's values of "tolerance and internationalism" and as a celebration of her opposition to oppression and military rule in Myanmar but now any association with her would tarnish the city's reputation.

"The burning of their [Rohingya] villages has been independently confirmed by satellite images, and the UN has called the situation 'a textbook example of genocide' yet Aung San Suu Kyi has denied any ethnic cleansing and dismissed numerous claims of sexual violence against Rohingya women as 'fake rape'," it said.

"Oxford has a long tradition of being a diverse and humane city, and our reputation is tarnished by honouring those who turn a blind eye to violence," it added.

A series of UK institutions have been distancing themselves from the Nobel Peace laureate in the wake of the Rohingya crisis. AGENCIES

Bangladesh approves controversial Rohingya island

DHAKA: Bangladesh approved a controversial \$280 million project to transform a desolate island off its southern coast into a temporary camp for 100,000 Rohingya refugees on Tuesday, despite warnings the site is uninhabitable.

The announcement comes just days after Bangladesh signed an agreement to repatriate to Myanmar the Rohingya refugees languishing in overburdened camps along its border.

A government economic council chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave the greenlight to the planned redevelopment of Bhashan Char island, a project that has attracted fierce criticism since being first proposed in 2015.

Planning Secretary Ziaul Islam said it was hoped the island would be ready from May to accommodate some of the more than 620,000 Rohingya Muslims that have crossed the border in the past three months.

"Approximately one lakh



(100,000) people will be shifted here for the time being. We hope the project work will be completed by 2018," he told AFP.

"The navy has been given the task in an effort to expedite the (project) work"

Apart from building shelters, low-lying areas of the island must be filled in and embankments erected around the entire perimeter to ensure it can resist tidal flooding, monsoon storms and seasonal cyclones.

The silty strip of land only emerged from the Bay of Bengal in 2006, and lies one hour's boat journey from the nearest inhabited island.

Bangladesh, a low-lying riverine country at risk from rising sea levels, shelved plans last

year to turn the island into a way station for refugees amid warnings it could be completely inundated by floods.

But the scheme was revived in late August as unprecedented numbers of new Rohingya arrivals poured into Bangladesh's southernmost Cox's Bazar district, placing enormous strain on limited resources and makeshift camps in the border region.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.H. Mahmood Ali in September appealed for international assistance to transport Rohingya to the island.

But leaders for the persecuted Muslim minority remain opposed to the idea and a UN agency official warned any attempt at a forced relocation would be "very complex and controversial".

The navy has built two helipads and a small road on the island in recent months but concerns persist over its suitability for human habitation, with experts warning it could be swallowed by tides and rising seas. AGENCIES

Pope Francis fails to mention Rohingya in Myanmar speech



NAYPYIDAW: Pope Francis failed to mention Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya minority as he shared a stage with the country's civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, in which he said the country was suffering from civil conflict and hostilities "that have lasted all too long and created deep divisions".

Speaking in the capital, Naypyitaw, on Tuesday afternoon, the pontiff talked of the need to "respect the rights of all who call this land their home".

His visit to Myanmar comes after an exodus of more than 620,000 Rohingya from Rakhine state to the southern tip of Bangladesh after a military crackdown that the UN, US and UK have described as ethnic cleansing. The trip is, however, so delicate that some papal advisers warned him against even saying the word "Rohingya". AGENCIES

Three alleged Islamists killed in Bangladesh before Pope's visit

DHAKA: Three suspected Islamist extremists were killed on Tuesday in a raid by Bangladesh police as security was stepped up before Pope Francis's landmark visit to the Muslim-majority nation, officials said.

The suspects opened fire and threw bombs at Rapid Action Battalion police who cordoned off a house where they were hiding near the border with India, officials said. "We called on them to sur-

render. But they responded by opening fire and throwing bombs. Moments later we heard loud explosions inside the house," Major Ashraf, an RAB officer, say.

The officer said a search of the tin-roofed house in Chapai Nawabganj district in the northwest of the country was being completed.

RAB deputy head Colonel Anwar Latif Khan told AFP that "three people who were involved in Islamist militancy

were killed" in the explosions. RAB officials said the house was raided following a tip-off.

Pope Francis arrives in Bangladesh on Thursday for a three-day visit, the first by a Vatican leader in 31 years.

The visit will be dominated by the plight of more than 620,000 Rohingya Muslims who have fled ethnic unrest in Myanmar and taken refuge in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh authorities have tightened security in the capi-

tal before the visit, with police patrolling around Christian churches and places where Francis will visit.

"There will be the highest security measures for the Pope," Dhaka police spokesman Masudur Rahman told AFP. "We have taken the measures in consultations with the Christian community here."

The Pope will meet a group of Rohingya refugees in Dhaka and conduct a mass at Suhrawardi Udyan. AGENCIES

Top Chinese General kills self to escape anti-graft probe: PLA

BEIJING: A top Chinese General has committed suicide to escape a probe against him over his alleged links to two corruption-tainted former PLA generals, becoming the first senior army official to have killed himself in the anti-graft campaign of President Xi Jinping. Zhang Yang, 66, a member of the Central Military Commission - China's highest military body - hanged himself at his home in Beijing on November 23, state-run Xinhua news agency on Tuesday quoted the CMC as saying. In its first comment on Zhang's death, the Chinese military has termed the suicide as a "shameful" attempt to escape punishment. It was described as a "bad move to escape punishment". AGENCIES

Hariri will quit if Hezbollah doesn't stay neutral



Saad Hariri

BEIRUT: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri has said that he will resign if the Hezbollah resistance movement refuses to remain neutral in the country.

Hariri, in remarks to French broadcaster CNews, said on Monday that he would continue as Prime Minister "if Hezbollah accepted to stick by the state policy of staying out of regional conflicts from Syria to Iraq and Yemen".

"They know we have to remain neutral in the region," Hariri was quoted as saying by Press TV.

Hezbollah is an opponent of Hariri's Saudi Arabia-backed Future Movement though it is also a member of Hariri's coalition government.

Hariri announced his resignation on November 4 in Saudi Arabia, shocking Lebanon and plunging it into political uncertainty. He accused Iran and Hezbollah of sowing strife in the Arab world, an allegation rejected by both sides.

Shortly afterwards, Lebanese President Michel Aoun accused Riyadh of kidnapping Hariri. The European Union, France and Germany also called on the Saudis for his return.

Hariri then travelled back to Lebanon and put his resignation on hold at Aoun's request in favour of a national dialogue.

According to reports, Hariri had been forced to step down by the Kingdom over his failing to "confront" Hezbollah. "Lebanon cannot resolve a question like Hezbollah which is in Syria, Iraq, everywhere because of Iran. It is a regional political solution that needs to be done," Hariri said on Monday. He also rejected claims that he had forcibly resigned. He said he had written his resignation statement himself. AGENCIES

US charges three Chinese for hacking American corporations

WASHINGTON: Three Chinese nationals have been indicted by the US Justice Department for allegedly hacking and stealing sensitive internal documents of American corporations like Moody's Analytics and Siemens for nearly six years. The indictment, which was unsealed Monday, charged that the three defendants and others participated in "coordinated and unauthorised" cyber attacks in order to steal confidential business information and intentionally cause damage to those computer systems.

The three defendants have been identified as Wu Yingzhuo, Dong Hao and Xia Lei. Moody's Analytics, Siemens AG and Trimble were the American corporations that were hacked by

Moody's Analytics, Siemens AG and Trimble were the American corporations that were hacked by the trio

the trio. According to the indictment, Wu, Dong and Xia were owners, employees and associates of Guangzhou Bo Yu Information Technology Company, a firm in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou that offers cyber security services.

For one victim, information that the defendants targeted and stole trade secrets between

December 2015 and March 2016, the US Department of Justice said. "Defendants Wu, Dong and Xia launched coordinated and targeted cyber intrusions against businesses operating in the US, including here in the Western District of Pennsylvania, in order to steal confidential business information," said Acting US Attorney Soo C Song for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

He said, "These conspirators masked their criminal conspiracy by exploiting unwitting computers, called 'hop points', conducting 'spearphish' email campaigns to gain unauthorised access to corporate computers, and deploying malicious code to infiltrate the victim computer networks". AGENCIES

Police foil Australia New Year's Eve 'terror plot'

MELBOURNE: An Islamic State sympathiser planned to buy a gun and kill as many revellers as possible on New Year's Eve in Melbourne, police alleged Tuesday after foiling the plot.

Ali Ali, born in Australia to Somali parents, was arrested in a raid on a house in the Melbourne suburb of Werribee on Monday. He appeared in court Tuesday charged with preparing to commit a terrorist attack and collecting documents to facilitate a terror attack. No bail was applied for.

Police claim the 20-year-old accessed a guide book online produced by Al-Qaeda on how to carry out terror acts and use firearms, but was arrested before he could purchase an automatic rifle.

"What we will be alleging is that he was intending to use a firearm to shoot and kill as



many people as he could in the Federation Square area on New Year's Eve," said Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Shane Patton.

"It is a tremendous concern to us that (during) the festive season, when people are out enjoying themselves, that there is a potential plot to commit a terrorist act. That is a huge issue for us but that is

why we put the resources in" Federation Square is in the heart of the city, opposite a busy train station and St Paul's Cathedral. It is one of the most popular places to see-in the new year and would be packed on December 31.

The alleged plot comes a year after police prevented what they said was another attack in the same area on

Christmas Day, arresting several men who planned to use explosives, knives and guns to target the location.

Patton said Ali, who lives with his parents, had been on their radar since the beginning of the year, part of a small community of extremists that police have been monitoring.

His behaviour had gradually escalated over time, but police believe he was acting alone. "The potential of the attack was catastrophic," said Patton, adding that the man was an "Islamic State sympathiser". A person who knows Ali told the Melbourne Herald Sun: "He is a very quiet guy. This is an absolute shock."

Justice Minister Michael Keenan said the fact that the Christmas - New Year period was again a target "reminds us of the depravity of terrorists". AGENCIES

Following ICJ defeat, Britain replaces UN Ambassador

WASHINGTON: Britain on Tuesday appointed Karen Pierce as its new Ambassador to the UN, replacing incumbent Matthew Rycroft under whom it suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of India in the recent election to the International Court of Justice.

Pierce is the first woman appointed to this role, and is uniquely suited for the position having previously served as deputy permanent representative to the UN in New York, and more recently as the permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, the UK Mission to the UN said in a statement.

Britain's Permanent Mission to the United Nations did not give any reason for appointing Pierce as new ambassador to the world body, which comes days after it failed to get its Judge Christopher Greenwood elected to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) after India's Judge Dalveer Bhandari consistently received nearly two-third of the votes in the UN General Assembly.



Matthew Rycroft

Bhandari was on Tuesday re-elected to the ICJ as the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly threw its weight behind him, forcing Britain to withdraw its candidate from the hard-fought race to the world court. This is for the first time in 70 years that Britain would have no judge in the 15-member panel of the ICJ.

Political analysts and editors in British media have described it as a diplomatic failure of the Theresa May government. "Britain has a proud history of working for positive change through the United Nations, not least in addressing the problems in Libya and Syria," British foreign secretary Boris Johnson said. AGENCIES

Russia loses contact with satellite after launch

VOSTOCHNY: Russia said it had lost contact Tuesday with a weather satellite just hours after it was launched from its Vostochny cosmodrome, in only the second rocket liftoff from the new spaceport.

The glitch is a fresh embarrassment for Russia's beleaguered space programme which has suffered a series of setbacks over recent years as Moscow seeks to ease dependence on the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

"During the first scheduled communication session with the space vehicle, contact has not been established because it is not on its planned orbit," the Russian space agency Roscosmos said in a statement. "Information is currently being analysed."

The statement did not provide further details and its representatives declined immediate comment. Marking another milestone after the inaugural liftoff last year, the Soyuz rocket carrying the Meteor weather satellite and other equipment took off at 2:41 pm (05:41 GMT) from far eastern Russia. "All the initial stages of the rocket's flight went according to plan," Roscosmos said after the liftoff.



A Soyuz-2.1b rocket lifts off from the Vostochny Cosmodrome

National television broadcast live footage of the launch, showing the rocket taking off into a grey sky in the Amur region near the Chinese border.

Apart from the weather satellite, the rocket carried 18 payloads from institutions and companies in Canada, the United States, Japan, Germany, Sweden and Norway, the space agency said.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said Monday that such contracts would help Russia modernise its space industry.

"The launch of foreign devices with the help of Russian launch vehicles should strengthen our positions on the global market of space ser-

vices and increase the volume of extra-budgetary funds and investments," Medvedev told a meeting.

The first launch from Vostochny spaceport took place in April 2016, with President Vladimir Putin overseeing the take-off.

It represented a major development for the country's space sector, with the new cosmodrome touted to mark a rebirth of an industry plagued by a string of embarrassments.

In December last year, an unmanned Progress ship carrying supplies lost contact with Earth minutes after blast-off and burnt up in the atmosphere over Siberia. AGENCIES

Micro organisms found from Atacama Desert may cure HIV

LONDON: Scientists have found a treasure trove of micro organisms with potential to treat HIV in Chile's Atacama Desert, one of the highest and driest places on Earth. Researchers have explained these exciting findings from soil samples taken from heights of 3,000 to 5,000 metres above sea level.

Michael Goodfellow, from the Newcastle University in the UK, said the study focused on actinobacteria as they are keystone species in our ecosystems and are acknowledged as an unrivalled source of bioactive compounds.

"Surprisingly, we found that this landscape is an extraordinary repository for actinobacterial 'dark matter' - which comprises the vast majority of microbes that microbiologists are currently unable to cultivate," said Goodfellow in the study published in the journal *Extremophiles*.

"It is particularly interesting that there is so much 'dark matter' in Atacama Desert soils, which until recently



were thought to be devoid of life," he said.

The researchers found that 40 per cent of the actinobacteria captured in samples could not be given ascribed names as they had never before been discovered.

"This microbial seed bank represents an enormous untapped resource for biotechnology programmes, especially in an era where resistance to existing antibiotics is rapidly becoming a major threat to global health," Goodfellow said.

He said the discovery of new bacteria could potentially be used to create new treatments. AGENCIES

Kenyatta sworn in as Kenya's prez after oppn rally is hit by tear gas



NAIROBI: Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta was sworn in for a second term on Tuesday amid thunderous applause of supporters even as pro-government forces fired on protesters angered by the contentious election process that kept him in power.

The inauguration capped an incredibly fraught few months for Kenya that saw an election where results were annulled, weeks of unrest, an opposition boycott and finally a new election that gave Kenyatta 98 per cent of the vote, but with a turnout of less than 40 per cent.

Even as Kenyatta was sworn in, police across town opened fire on opposition demonstrators, with reports of at least one death. An impromptu rally later by opposition leader Raila Odinga was also hit by tear gas, forcing his abrupt retreat to his vehicle.

Kenyatta took the oath on the same Bible used by his father — Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta in 1964 — and the capacity crowd erupted into cheers in the 60,000 seat Kasarani Stadium decked out in the red and gold of Kenyatta's party. Neighboring heads of state looked on, including the leaders of Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan.

In his speech, Kenyatta noted that the past few months "have been a trying time" but assured the country that the elections "are now firmly behind us."

So many people tried to push into the stadium for the event that police had to fire tear gas outside the venue to control the crowd. "This is the

day that we have been waiting for. It's finally here. Our God had done this for us. The elections have tormented and almost destroyed our country. We hope that this will be the beginning of a new chapter," said 30-year-old businessman Marvin Muriithi Muniya. "Let's now focus on our country."

The extended election season stretching from August until the inauguration exacerbated the deep divisions in Kenya. Support for Kenyatta and his opponent, Odinga, broke along on ethnic lines. The business community also backed Odinga while many in more marginalized regions turned to Odinga to stem the endemic corruption in the country. Odinga attempted to stage a parallel prayer rally during the inauguration for those killed during the election-related violence. Some 70 people are estimated to have died in confrontations with police over the past few months.

The government declared the rally illegal and blocked the roads leading to the Jacaranda grounds, preventing it from taking place.

Residents of the area said police used live fire to disperse protesters. The residents held up spent cartridges as evidence that gunfire was used. At least one body could be seen.

The crowd chanted "Uhuru must go" and "Thief."

Supporters barricaded streets in the neighborhood with stones and said the forces attacking them were the Mungiki, a pro-government gang, rather than police. AGENCIES

Ireland's deputy PM Frances Fitzgerald resigns amid crisis

DUBLIN: Ireland's deputy prime minister Frances Fitzgerald has said she is resigning for the sake of the country, averting a snap general election.

Taoiseach (Irish prime minister) Leo Varadkar has accepted her resignation.

Ms Fitzgerald had been at the centre of a Garda (Irish police) whistleblower controversy which could have resulted in bringing down the government. She quit hours before a motion of no confidence in her was to be proposed by the main opposition party, Fianna Fáil.

There were fears that an Irish election could have complicated next month's EU meeting, at which the Republic of Ireland's position will influence the assessment of the UK's progress in Brexit talks. According to Irish broadcaster, RTE, Ms Fitzgerald told a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday that she was not asked or forced to resign, but took the decision herself.

"I believe it is necessary to take this decision to avoid an unwelcome and potentially destabilising general election at this historically critical time," she Fitzgerald held the dual roles of tanaiste (Irish deputy prime minister) and minister for business, enterprise and innovation. AGENCIES

May faces fresh accusations of 'rigging Parliament'

LONDON: Theresa May faces fresh allegations of "rigging Parliament" over a near-unprecedented move to prevent MPs amending the Budget.

Labour has accused the Prime Minister of running scared of an expected attempt to use the Finance Bill to force a vote on scrapping VAT on domestic fuel.

With the Democratic Unionist Party likely to oppose the Government on such a vote, it left her facing a possible embarrassing defeat, the Opposition claimed.

An amendment was expected because — like the notorious £350m-a-week extra for the NHS — zero-rating of fuel was a key plank of the Vote Leave campaign that secured Brexit.

Another likely challenge was over the issue of "period poverty", with ministers under pressure to agree to put in free sanitary products in schools.

The controversy comes hard-on-the-heels of the row over the Conservatives seizing control of all Commons committees — despite losing their majority at the general election.

The Independent revealed that plan ahead of it being



Theresa May

forced through in September, potentially helping ministers to ram through up to 1,000 "corrections" to EU law ahead of Brexit.

Now Labour has accused the Government of a similar manoeuvre to prevent most amendments to the Finance Bill, which will enact last week's Budget.

"Once again we have fur-

ther evidence of the Government's unprecedented rigging of Parliament because they cannot rely on their backbenchers or the DUP," said Peter Dowd, the Shadow Treasury Chief Secretary.

"This comes in the wake of the Tories stitch up of standing committees and its undemocratic and arrogant decision to ignore opposition motions."

And Paula Sherriff, the Labour MP who successfully amended the Budget over the so-called "tampon tax", told The Independent: "That ended up being welcomed on all sides of the House."

"And, this year, there are MPs across parties who want to press for action on period poverty and get a clear timetable for the tampon tax to come

to an end with commitments to continue support for women's services.

"We can't let the Government shut down the debate. If they think this is over, they should think again."

However, the Government dismissed the controversy, describing the change to procedures for amendments as "a practical modernisation".

Increasingly, MPs have seized on the Finance Bill as a mechanism to force the Government to change course on tax measures — including over the "tampon tax" and over solar panels. In March last year, George Osborne was forced to announce the abolition of the 5 per cent VAT charged on women's sanitary products, after a cross-party revolt.

Labour campaigners joined forces with Eurosceptic Tories keen to assert Britain's power to set its own tax rates, forcing the then-Chancellor into the limelight.

A similar alliance also forced Mr Osborne to scrap a proposed VAT hike on solar panels, wind turbines, hydro-power equipment and energy efficiency products, from 5 per cent to 20 per cent. AGENCIES

China permits limited tours to South Korea as relations warm

BEIJING: China is resuming limited tour group travel to South Korea, a sign of warming relations which were strained by Seoul's installation of a US missile defence system.

Tour group operators in Beijing said on Tuesday the city's tourism bureau had told them they could resume booking group visits to South Korea.

China halted group travel to the South in March after the country began deploying the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, which Seoul and Washington say is intended to combat missile threats from nuclear-armed North Korea.

China sees it as a threat to its own military capabilities and slapped a series of restrictions on South Korea in moves seen as economic retaliation.

In addition to the travel curbs it imposed a series of measures on South Korean firms operating in China.

The undeclared sanctions have taken a toll on South Korea's economy, with its economic growth slowing this summer amid shrinking exports. "We just received the notice on Tuesday," said Zhang, an employee at Huanan Yuntong International Travel Agency, who said the tourism bureau would

allow them to resume sending groups to South Korea.

"At present, according to the tourism bureau's rules, we still can't cooperate with websites," she said, noting they would resume selling to over-the-counter travel agents.

The end of the ban appeared restricted to a few areas. Tour operators in other major Chinese cities told AFP they still could not book group visits to South Korea. Both countries late last month took steps to improve relations, saying they had agreed to address China's concerns over THAAD through future discussions. AGENCIES

Hawaii urges top US court not to fully allow Donald Trump's travel ban

WASHINGTON: The state of Hawaii on Tuesday urged the US Supreme Court not to allow President Donald Trump's latest travel ban that would bar entry of people from six Muslim-majority countries to go into full effect after it was partially blocked by lower courts.

Lawyers for the Democratic-governed state, which filed a legal challenge to the ban, were responding to the Trump administration's request last week asking the conservative-majority court to allow the ban to go into effect completely.

Hawaii's lawyers wrote that the latest ban, Trump's third, discriminates against Muslims in violation of the US Constitution and is not permissible under immigration laws.

On Nov. 13, the San Francisco-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals allowed the ban to go partly into effect, lifting part of a district court judge's nationwide injunction.

The Republican president's ban was announced on Sept. 24 and replaced two pre-

vious versions that had been impeded by federal courts. The ban currently applies to people from Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia and Chad who do not have connections to the United States. Those with family relationships and other formal connections with the United States, such as through a university, can enter the country.

In a separate case in Maryland spearheaded by the American Civil Liberties Union, a federal judge partly blocked the ban.

The administration has also asked the Supreme Court for that injunction to be lifted.

The ban also covers people from North Korea and certain government officials from Venezuela, and lower courts have allowed those provisions to go into effect.

Trump has said the travel ban is needed to protect the United States from terrorism by Muslim militants. As a candidate, Trump had promised "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." AGENCIES

At least 11 dead as floods and landslide hit Indonesia

JAKARTA: At least 11 people have died in severe floods and landslides in the east of Indonesia's main island of Java, an official said on Tuesday. A landslide killed nine people at Pacitan in East Java province and two people died in floods triggered by heavy rain in the same area.

Thousands of homes were flooded and 4,000 people forced to evacuate them, said a spokesman for the national disaster mitigation agency.

The extreme weather will continue to hit the Indonesian islands of Java and Bali, the spokesman added, warning people to be prepared for floods, landslides and tornados.

The agency said it urgently needs blankets, clothes and inflatable boats for affected areas. Indonesia is often hit by landslides and floods.

Twelve people including three children died in a landslide on the holiday island of Bali in February.

In September last year almost 30 people died in devastating floods and landslides in Garut, West Java. AGENCIES

Greek terror squad detains 9 Turks ahead of Erdogan visit

ATHENS: Greek counter-terrorism police detained nine Turks in Athens on Tuesday in an investigation into Turkish leftist militant groups, ahead of a scheduled visit next month by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. A police statement said the Turkish nationals, eight men and a woman, were detained in the central Athens areas of Neos Kosmos and Kallithea. The operation was not connected with suspected Islamist terrorism, police said. The detainees are suspected of links with the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front, or DHKP-C,

deemed a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. Police said that searches of three homes where the Turks were detained produced detonators and materials "available on the market that could potentially be used to make explosives." Erdogan's visit, announced on Tuesday, is set for December 7-8. In 2014, four Turkish men were arrested in Athens on terrorism-related offences in connection with DHKP-C, after a raid on an Athens apartment that uncovered weapons, explosives and detonators. AGENCIES

Mali justice minister resigns after activist's acquittal

BAMAKO: Mali's justice minister resigned late Monday following the acquittal of a popular radio presenter and activist who alleged that the president and top military leaders were failing to keep the country secure.

No official reason was given for Mamadou Ismael Konate's abrupt departure from the government, but a source close to the minister told AFP his decision was "related to the Ras Bath case".

Mohamed Youssouf Bathily, alias Ras Bath, himself a minister's son, regularly broadcast tirades against the administration of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita until his arrest in August 2016.

News of Bathily's detention led to protests on the streets of the Malian capital Bamako, and one person was killed and dozens injured in the ensuing violence, which also caused widespread damage.

He was cleared of all charges yesterday following months of legal wrangling after being sentenced while out of the country to a year in prison for "inciting troop disobedience", a decision overturned on appeal on Monday. AGENCIES

BALI VOLCANO

Residents living in evacuation zone urged to leave now



BALI: Bali airport is remaining closed for a further 24 hours because of volcanic ash from nearby Mount Agung. With around 450 more flights cancelled, it adds tens of thousands more travellers to the list of passengers stranded on the Indonesian island.

Forecasts from the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre in Darwin, northern Australia show that the ash cloud is now spreading south-west from the volcano. This should allow the airport on the neighbouring island of Lombok, to the east, to operate normally.

The authorities are said to be laying on buses to take trav-

ellers from Denpasar airport in Bali to the port at Padang Bai on the east of the island, from where they can take the four-hour ferry ride to Lombok.

The prospects for Bali's airport re-opening on Wednesday look bleak, and the Australian airline, Jetstar, has already cancelled some flights.

It is offering Australian passengers booked to travel to the island the option to switch to much further-flung destinations, including Thailand, Vietnam and Japan.

Frustration is growing among travellers who are either trying to leave the island or booked to go there,

with the leading Indonesian airline, Garuda, facing criticism. Dagmar Zwebe tweeted: "I have been trying to call your lines but it is impossible to get somebody on the line. I also tried the life chat but nobody is answering."

"Would it be possible to change our flight to a different destination? Is there any other way to contact you?"

The Australian foreign ministry is warning: "Depending on the weather conditions at the time of an eruption, an ash cloud could affect flights and ash fall may impact Denpasar and neighbouring airports in East Java and Lombok." AGENCIES

Putin warns of Russian demographic decline

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday announced a string of reforms aimed at boosting birth rates in Russia as the population continues its long-term decline following a period of improvement.

"On Tuesday... Russia's demographic situation is once again deteriorating," Putin said at a meeting on child policy in Moscow. "This tendency was predictable and is linked to the consequences of previous, overlapping deep demographic declines," he said.

He pointed to the decline of the Russian population as a result of the Second World War and "roughly the same decline in the mid-1990s due to enormous problems in the economy and de facto breakdown of the social sphere."

The government would reset its demographic development policy and pay particular attention to low-income families, he said. Putin, who has made improving the country's demography a priority in his three presidential terms, announced new monthly handouts for the birth of a first child that will come into effect from January 1. The Russian leader said his government would allocate \$2.4 billion (two billion euros) to the scheme, which would give Russian women an allowance of \$180 for 18 months after the birth of their first child.

Russia, home to 146.9 million people, has seen its population decrease by more than five million since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The country then plunged into a deep demographic crisis due to worsening living standards, an increasing death rate and falling birth rates.

After a period of improvement, Moscow's demographic decline now seems to be worsening again. AGENCIES

'3,000 migrants died in Mediterranean this year'

GENEVA: More than 3,000 migrants and refugees have died crossing the Mediterranean in a desperate bid to reach Europe's shores since the start of the year, the International Organization for Migration said on Tuesday.

The figure so far represents a 40 per cent drop compared to last year's record of 5,000 known or suspected drownings.

"That mark (was) probably passed sometime over last weekend," when more than 30 migrants died off the coast of Libya, IOM spokesman Joel Millman told reporters in Geneva.

The 3,033 deaths happened across three main sea routes in the Mediterranean.

"We've been saying this for years and we'll keep on saying it: It's no longer enough to simply count these tragic statistics. We must also act," IOM director general William Lacy Swing said in a statement.

The number of migrants and refugees who have arrived in Europe this year — nearly 164,000 — is less than half of last year's total of 348,000.

Three-quarters of the arrivals in 2017 have been in Italy, the remainder in Greece, Cyprus and Spain.

The flow has been stemmed by controversial deals between the EU, Turkey and Libya.



The EU has been desperate to slow the migrant influx

place. "People are still dying at sea in enormous numbers, even after years of seeing this happen repeatedly. We have to ask ourselves, why is this still happening?" Ambrosi said Monday in Brussels.

"Rescue at sea needs to be more robust and well resourced, with a clear, life-saving mandate and better cooperation among all actors involved. But at the same time, the best way to save lives is to offer migrants a way around smugglers through safe and legal bridges to Europe," he added. AGENCIES

Women must lead world biz growth: Ivanka

Prez Trump's daughter leading US contingent at Summit themed *Women First, Prosperity for All*

HYDERABAD: Ivanka Trump, daughter of and advisor to US President Donald Trump, on Tuesday pitched for access to capital and equitable laws for women entrepreneurs, saying closing the gender entrepreneurship gap could grow global GDP by up to 2 per cent.

In her keynote address at the 8th annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES), she said that despite the soaring rate of female entrepreneurs, women still face steep obstacles to starting, owning, and growing their businesses.

"Fuelling the growth of women-led businesses isn't simply good for our society -- it's good for our economy. One study estimates that closing the gender entrepreneurship gap worldwide could grow our global GDP by as much as 2 per cent," she said.

Ivanka, 36, a businesswoman, fashion designer and the eldest daughter of the US President, was invited by Prime Minister Narendra Modi dur-

ing his visit to the White House in June to speak at the Summit. She is leading the US contingent at the Summit themed 'Women First, Prosperity for All'.

She opened her speech by stressing how all over the world entrepreneurs are "revolutionising our economies, and improving our societies".

"You are rewriting the rules," she said and went on to talk about this year's GES theme. "This year's Summit is focussed on a theme that is key to our future: Women First, Prosperity For All. I am proud that for the first time ever, women make up the majority of the 1,500 entrepreneurs selected to attend."

Women, according to Ivanka, can help lead the way in closing this gap and ushering in a new age of greater prosperity. "We must ensure women entrepreneurs have access to capital, access to networks and mentors, and access to equitable laws," she added.



While her trip to India has been hogging media limelight, questions have been raised about whether her message of empowering poor women matches her actions.

Critics have faulted her for failing to use her leadership role to call out labour and human rights abuses and her refusal to take a public stand on alleged abuses in her brand's own supply chain.

The Associated Press in a news report today said a September investigation by it "showed that Trump's supply chain has become more opaque than ever since she took on her White House role, making it impossible to know who her company is doing business with around the world. The brand has said supply chains are the responsibility of its licensees". In her speech at the GES,

Ivanka highlighted what the US is doing to reverse the trend. "The US Small Business Administration, for example, increased its lending to women by over 500 million dollars this year alone," she emphasised.

The US administration is fostering mentorship through programmes such as SCORE -- a nation-wide initiative where successful men and women coach those who want to become their own CEOs.

"Our Administration is striving to promote greater opportunity for women around the world, both through our domestic reforms and our international initiatives," she said.

At the G20 conference, the United States was a founding member of a bold, new initiative with the World Bank the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, or WeFi. This facility provides access to capital, networks, and mentorship for women in developing countries.

"At home, our administration is committed to empowering women entrepreneurs through domestic reforms. In the past 11 months, we have expanded apprenticeship programmes and prioritised STEM education to ensure that women -- and men -- have more opportunities to master the skills that drive progress in the 21st century," she stated.

The US has dramatically reduced job-crushing regulations which disproportionately hurt entrepreneurs and small business owners.

"And we are laser-focused on passing long overdue tax cuts. This will provide the much-needed relief to working families and businesses of all sizes," she said, adding that this year, the President's Budget included a proposal to establish a nation-wide programme for paid family leave.

"We are committed to supporting women, and men, who work, inside and outside of the home," Ivanka added. PTI

'Cutting gender gap by half can up Indian GDP by \$150 bn'

HYDERABAD: Ivanka Trump, US President Donald Trump's daughter, on Tuesday said reducing gender gap in the labour force by half can help boost Indian economy by over \$150 billion in the next three years and reiterated her father's words that "India has a true friend in the White House".

In her keynote address at the 8th annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES), she showered lavish praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is "doing to build India as a thriving economy -- a beacon of democracy -- and a symbol of hope to the world. What you are achieving is truly extraordinary".

"What you are achieving is truly extraordinary... from your childhood selling tea to election as India's Prime Minister," she said. PTI

"Through your own enterprise, entrepreneurship and hard work, the people of India have lifted more than 130 million citizens out of poverty -- a remarkable improvement, and one I know will continue to grow under the leadership of the Prime Minister," she added.

Ivanka, who is the advisor to the White House, said, "Here in India, I want to applaud Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his firm belief that 'the progress of humanity is incomplete without the empowerment of women,' she stressed.

India, she said, is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and has a true friend in the White House. President Trump earlier this year said India has a true friend in the White House, Ivanka recalled. PTI

Dredging Corp staff observe 'relay fast' against disinvestment plot

NEW DELHI: Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) on Tuesday said its employees are on a 'relay fast demonstration' till December 5 to protest against the government's move to sell its entire stake in the company.

The non-executive workers' union of the company has already threatened to launch an indefinite strike on or after December 6, 2017 to protest against the stake sale.

"The employees of DCI are participating in a 'relay fast demonstration' at Visakhapatnam from November 27 to December 5 from 900 hours to 1800 hours every day against the central government's decision for sale of entire stake..." Dredging Corporation of India Ltd said in a regulatory filing to the BSE on Tuesday. It said the management has taken steps for smooth functioning of the operations of the company and their is no disruption in the operations of the company.

Opposing the divest-

The national company's non-executive workers' union has already threatened to launch an indefinite strike on or after December 6, 2017, to protest against proposed stake 'throw-away'

ment plan, company workers, including shore-based executives, had gone on a mass leave on November 21 at Visakhapatnam.

The government, on November 1, approved sale of its entire 73.47 per cent stake in the DCI. The company has earlier said its management is holding discussions with the union to call-off the strike.

Earlier on November 21, after the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Ministry of Finance informed the company regarding constitution of an inter ministerial group for appointing transactional and legal advisers for the stake sale, both the shore based executives and non-exec-

tives of DCI at Head Office, Visakhapatnam had gone on mass leave.

The employees had also staged a dharna at the main gate and did not allow the Directors and the CMD to enter the head office.

The disinvestment of the government's entire 73.47 per cent stake in the company could fetch about Rs 1,400 crore to the exchequer.

The dredging company is under the administrative control of the shipping ministry.

It is involved in maintenance dredging, capital dredging, beach nourishment, land reclamation, shallow water dredging, project management consultancy and marine construction. PTI

Bhel shares gain over 2% on ₹64-crore order win

NEW DELHI: Shares of BHEL rose by more than 2 per cent on Tuesday after the company announced bagging an order worth over Rs 64 crore for setting up sewage treatment plants in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

The stock moved up by 2.28 per cent to end at Rs 94.15 on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 2.66 per cent to Rs 94.50.

On the NSE, shares of the company went up by 2.17 per cent to close at Rs 94.10.

"As part of its strategy to diversify into new areas, Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has won an order for setting up six decentralised sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Raipur, Chhattisgarh," a BHEL statement said.

According to the statement, the order is valued at over Rs 64 crore, and the STPs will have a cumulative capacity of 25.4 MLD (million litres per day).

The order has been placed on BHEL by Raipur Development Authority. PTI

Airbus, Rolls-Royce, Siemens working fast on hybrid plane

FRANKFURT: Airbus, Siemens and Rolls-Royce are teaming up to develop a hybrid passenger plane that would use a single electric turbofan engine along with three conventional jet engines running on aviation fuel.

The plane is an effort to develop and demonstrate technology that in the future could help limit emissions of carbon dioxide from aviation and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

The three companies on Tuesday said they aim to build a flying version of the E-Fan X technology demonstrator plane by 2020. The aircraft would be based on the existing BAe 146 four-engine regional jet.

The hybrid version would generate electric power through a turbine within the plane. That power would be used to turn the fan blades of the single electric turbofan engine.

If the system works, a second electric motor could be added, the companies said.

The companies said plane maker Airbus would be responsible for building the aircraft's systems into a working whole,

control systems and flight controls. Jet engine maker Rolls-Royce would make the generator and the turbo-shaft engine and engineering company Siemens would deliver the two-megawatt electric motor to power the engine.

The companies said they were looking ahead to the European Union's long-term goals of reducing CO2 emissions from

aviation by

60 per cent, as well as meeting noise and pollution limits that they said "cannot be achieved with technologies existing today." CO2 "carbon dioxide" is a greenhouse gas that scientists say contributes to global warming.

Other projects for hybrid or electric planes are in the works. Kirkland, Washington-based Zunum Aero says it is working on a 12-seat hybrid-electric commuter jet. The company's website lists its partners as Boeing, jetBlue Technology Ventures, and the Department of Commerce Clean Energy Fund. AP

ABB, Kawasaki join hands for collaborative robots

NEW DELHI: Global automation firms ABB and Kawasaki on Tuesday came together to share knowledge and promote benefits of collaborative robots, particularly those with dual arm designs.

"ABB and Kawasaki Heavy Industries will join forces to share knowledge and promote the benefits of collaborative robots, in particular those with dual arm

designs," a joint statement, issued in Zurich in Switzerland today, said.

According to the statement, the global cooperation will become effective immediately. Under the new framework, which is the world's first to focus on 'cobots' --short for collaborative robots --both companies will independently continue manufacturing and marketing their own offerings while working together on joint technical and awareness opportunities, it said.

This includes educating policymakers, NGOs and the public about the benefits of collaborative automation, and creating common industry approaches to safety, programming and communications, it added.

Collaboration between people and robots, machines and processes is getting increasingly important as production in many industries has shifted from larger lots with little variation to low volumes with a high mix. This means more variability and more human intervention.

Collaborative automation allows people and robots to each contribute their unique strengths people offer process knowledge, insight and improvisation for change while robots offer tireless endurance for repetitive tasks.

The cooperation also represents collaboration across borders, with ABB as Europe's largest robot supplier and Kawasaki one of Asia's industrial giants. "The scale and pace of change in the robotics industry today is unimaginable," said Per Vegard Nersteth, Managing Director of ABB's Robotics business, in the statement. PTI

collaborative automation, and creating common industry approaches to safety, programming and communications, it added.

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Bharat 22 ETF lists on bourses with sober gain of around 4%

NEW DELHI: Bharat 22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF), comprising 22 companies, made a modest debut on the bourses on Tuesday, surging nearly four per cent over the issue price of Rs 35.97. The ETF listed at Rs 36.30 per unit on BSE, up 0.92 per cent over the issue price of Rs 35.97. In the intra-day trade, it had touched a high of Rs 37.38 and a low of Rs 36.30. It closed the session at Rs 37.33, up 3.78 per cent.

On National Stock Exchange (NSE), the fund settled 3.7 per cent higher at Rs 37.30. It had opened at Rs 36.11 and hit a high of Rs 37.40 in the intra-day trade.

Bharat 22 ETF, managed by ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund, is a unique blend of shares of key CPSEs, Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and also the government-owned shares in blue chip private companies like Larsen & Toubro (L&T), Axis Bank and ITC.

The government raised Rs 14,500 crore through Bharat 22 ETF, which opened for subscription for retail investors from November 15-17. It had an initial issue size of Rs 8,000 crore. Bharat 22 ETF saw bids of nearly Rs 32,000 crore coming in, with foreign portfolio investors bidding for one-third of the money. PTI

'GST mop-up, compliance unlikely to improve near-term'

MUMBAI: Both goods and services tax (GST) collections as well as its compliance in the first four months since the rollout of the new tax regime remain well below the target, and the situation is unlikely to improve in the near-term, says a report.

This is excluding the Excise duty collections on petroleum products and the basic Customs duty both of which have been on an uptick due to the spike in crude prices, says a report by brokerage Kotak Securities today.

"Both collection as well as compliance of GST remains low, with the compliance being at around 50 per cent and is unlikely to increase

significantly till the complete framework including returns matching, e-way bill, and reverse charges, are implemented fully," it noted.

Collections may fall further, unless there is a massive improvement in compliance, as the government had massively reduced the tax rates on most of the items. While it has brought down the 28 per cent tax slab to just under 50 items from over 250 items, it has brought as many as 200 items into 18 per cent tax bracket from the 28 per cent earlier.

There are around 9.6 million registered taxpayers under GST, including around 1.5 million of composition dealers, who are required to file taxes

quarterly. Total GST collections in October stood at Rs 83,350 crore much below the previous two months, when it averaged at around Rs 92,000 crore each.

But total tax returns (GSTR-3B) in October was nearly 0.7-0.8 million lower than the previous months, till now, the report stated. The government attributed lower revenues to IGST, overall rationalisation of taxes on certain goods, implementation issues and compliance. "Because of the first time requirement of paying IGST on transfer of goods from one state to another state even within the same company, there was an additional cash flow of IGST in the first three months," the report noted. PTI

Badri Narain Sharma is chief of anti-profiteering body

NEW DELHI: Senior bureaucrat Badri Narain Sharma was on Tuesday appointed as the chairman of the national anti-profiteering authority under the GST regime, according to an official order.

Sharma, a 1985 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, is at present additional secretary in the department of revenue.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment to the post in the rank and pay of secretary to the government of India, the order by the ministry of personnel said.

The Union Cabinet had on

November 16 approved setting up of the five-member authority, mandated to ensure that the benefits of GST rate reduction is passed on to consumers.

As per the structure of the anti-profiteering mechanism in the GST regime, complaints of local nature will be first sent to the state-level screening committee, while those of national level will be marked for the standing committee. If the complaints have merit, the respective committees would refer the cases for further investigation to the Directorate General of Safeguards.

The DG Safeguards would

generally take about three months to complete the investigation and send the report to the anti-profiteering authority.

If the authority finds that a company has not passed on GST benefits, it will either direct the entity to pass on the benefits to consumers or if the beneficiary cannot be identified, it will ask the company to transfer the amount to the 'consumer welfare fund' within a specified timeline. The authority will have the power to cancel registration of any entity or business if it fails to pass on to consumers the benefit of lower taxes under the GST. PTI

Internet companies hail Trai's Net neutrality proposals, telcos cry wolf

NEW DELHI: Internet firms on Tuesday lauded Trai's recommendations on Net neutrality, which calls for unhindered access to content and services over the web, while telecom operators said that the regulator has applied a 'narrow definition' to the topic.

They said Trai did not address the issues related to connecting the unconnected in India and licensing of apps or websites providing calls and messaging services such as WhatsApp, Skype, Viber and Google Duo.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on Tuesday recommended barring telecom operators from imposing any restriction, like reducing Net speed or blocking the access of any content or service available on the Internet, except in special cases like court orders and government

directions.

"We had proposed broad approach on Net neutrality covering national priority of connecting the next 1 billion unconnected people in India and licensing for over-the-top players," telecom operators body COAI Director General Rajan S Mathews said.

All this should have been included in the Trai proposals, he said, adding that the Net neutrality framework in India should be in accordance with the needs of the nation.

Trai has recommended a narrow definition of Net neutrality, he said.

"In narrow definition, we agree with it in-principle. We are still studying the recommendations and will update our views as we will note key points."

Mathews said the recommendations to set-up a com-



mittee to decide on violation of rules is an unnecessary and bureaucratic move.

Industry body representing Internet firms IAMAI lauded the recommendations, calling them progressive and pragmatic, which recognise the requirements of expansion of digital services in the country.

The Internet in India, unlike possibly in the US or China, is going to be 'free and

open' upholding the democratic principles, it said.

"However, the government needs to act with speed on these recommendations. The Trai position on differential pricing had a sunset clause of 2 years which is fast coming to an end," said the Internet and Mobile Association of India.

Trai had in February last year barred telecom operators from imposing any sort of

discrimination in content and services available on the Internet on the basis of pricing.

An Edelweiss report said that recommendations to exclude content delivery networks (CDNs) from Net neutrality restrictions will give integrated operators like Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio an upper hand versus pure play connectivity providers.

"We expect Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel to be key beneficiaries as they already have presence in content platforms," the report said.

Law Firm Khaitan & Co, Associate Partner, Harsh Walia said that all Internet of Things (IoT) services are not excluded from the principle of non-discrimination, but only those that fall within the ambit of specialised services to the satisfaction of the Department of Telecom. PTI

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON: The Federal Communications Commission chairman, Ajit Pai, has come under a blistering attack by several Indian-American lawmakers and activists for his proposal to repeal the Obama-era net neutrality policy.

The activists also protested outside Pai's home in Virginia with signs directing at his children.

Pai, 44, blasted the activists for "harassing" his family members, saying they "crossed the line".

He is facing backlash from his opponents for his proposal which seeks to reverse Obama era's net neutrality, which meant that all websites are treated equally by Internet providers.

His proposal would end net neutrality and give big Internet providers like Comcast

and Verizon broad powers to determine what website should reach out to subscribers faster than others.

The activists not only staged protest outside Pai's home with signs directing at his children, they also reportedly sent pizzas to his home every half-and-hour. Some media reports said the frequency was every 15 minutes.

This is the first instance that a senior Indian-American administration official in any of the presidential administration being harassed and threatened by opponents.

Signboards and placards placed by protestors outside Pai's house in Virginia mocked him for his views.

"I understand that people are passionate about policy, but the one thing in America that should remain sacred is that families, wives and kids, should remain out of it. And stop

harassing us at our homes," Pai told 'Fox and Friends'.

His proposal is scheduled to come out to vote before FCC on December 14. This is expected to pass as the Republicans have five votes as against three from the Democratic Party.

Pai expressed his displeasure when asked about the protest outside his house in Virginia. "It was a little nerve-racking, especially for my wife," he said.

"Internet regulation activists have crossed the line by threatening and harassing my family. They should leave my family out of this and focus on debating the merits of the issue," Pai was quoted as saying by The Washington Post.

In an interview to PBS News early this month, Pai had said the digital landscape has changed, and the government should stop "micromanaging the Web". PTI

Pradhan defends mega oil refinery amid e-vehicle push

NEW DELHI: Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday strongly defended plans to build the Rs 2.7 lakh crore oil refinery on the west coast by 2022 despite the push for electric vehicles, saying that India needs multi-source fuels to meet its fast-growing energy needs.

The plan to build the 60 million tonnes (MT) a year capacity refinery in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra has come in for questioning after Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that only electric cars would be produced in the country after 2030.

Besides, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal has said that diesel locomotives will be phased out by 2022.

"India consumes just 6 per cent of the global primary energy at present but it will account for 25 per cent of incremental growth," Pradhan said at a KPMG Energy Summit here.

In order to meet the vast growing energy needs, India needs "multi-source fuels," he said, adding that there is a requirement for conventional fuels, coal, renewable sources as well as nuclear.

India has a capacity to refine 232.066 MT of crude oil into fuel a year, which



exceeded the demand of 194.2 MT in 2016-17 fiscal.

According to the International Energy Agency (EA), this demand is expected to reach 458 MT by 2040.

Pradhan said India's per capita petrochemical consumption is just 10 kg as against the global average of 30 kg. And the nation is import dependent to meet its petrochemical needs.

"So if the petrochemical demand grows with the expanding economy, we would need domestic production," he said.

The planned Rs 2.7 lakh crore project in Ratanagiri district of Maharashtra will have a 10-12 MT petrochemical complex.

Petrochemicals which form the building blocks for products used in the manufacture of wide range of items, from plastics to cosmetics, is derived from refining crude oil or natural gas.

Refineries world over are looking at value addition to produce petrochemicals.

Pradhan said that just a couple of days back Saudi Aramco and Saudi Arabia's chemicals company SABIC announced plans to develop a fully-integrated crude oil to chemicals (COTC) complex.

The \$20 billion project is planned to process 400,000 barrels per day (20 MT) of crude oil and produce some 9 MT of chemicals and base oils per year by 2025. PFI

Oil minister pitches for including gas in GST

NEW DELHI: Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday made a strong case for inclusion of natural gas in the Goods and Services Tax, saying that if polluting coal can be included, then the environment-friendly fuel certainly deserves a place in the new regime.

"Coal has been included and levied with 5 per cent tax but gas is outside GST, how fair is that," he said at the KPMG Energy Summit here. Crude oil, petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) or jet fuel and natural gas are not included in GST, which has amalgamated over a dozen indirect taxes including excise duty, service tax and VAT since it kicked in from July 1.

Hence, while various goods and services procured by the oil and gas industry are subjected to GST, the sale and supply of oil, gas and petroleum products continue to attract earlier taxes like excise

duty and VAT. Unlike other industries which can take credit for any tax paid towards the furtherance of business, no credits on input GST will be available to the oil and gas industry leading to the huge additional indirect tax burden.

Pradhan's ministry had previously written to the Finance Ministry to consider including natural gas in GST. Industry body Ficci has also pitched for the inclusion of natural gas in the new indirect tax regime so as to help producers contain cost and aid in moving towards a gas-based economy.

In a letter to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Ficci said that keeping natural gas out of the GST is causing hardships and having an adverse impact on the producers as it is increasing their costs.

Gas sales including CNG and piped gas supplies attract VAT ranging from 5-12 per cent. PFI

Pradeep Singh Kharola named Air India CMD

NEW DELHI: Senior IAS officer Pradeep Singh Kharola has been appointed as the new CMD of disinvestment-bound Air India, the government said on Tuesday.

Kharola would take over as the chairman and managing director of the flagship carrier from Rajiv Bansal, who was given an extension only last week.

A 1985-batch Karnataka cadre officer, Kharola would be steering the national airline at a time when the government has started the process for its strategic disinvestment.

Kharola has been appointed as the CMD of Air India in the rank and pay of Secretary to Government of India, an official release said. He has been the managing director of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd since February 2015.

Among others, Kharola has worked in various posts in Karnataka, including as the chairman of Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation Ltd. He has also served as principal secretary to the Karnataka chief minister.

Interestingly, Bansal -- who is also additional secretary and financial adviser at the petroleum ministry -- had got an extension as Air India CMD only last week after his initial three-month tenure ended on November 23. PFI



AI launches simulator training centre for ATR pilots

HYDERABAD: National carrier Air India on Tuesday commissioned its first ATR simulator at its Central Training Establishment (CTE) in Hyderabad.

Set up at an investment of Rs 63 crore, including the acquisition cost, the new ATR 72-600 full-flight simulator (FFS) will meet the training requirements of the ATR pilots of Alliance Air, its regional arm, an AI official said.

Pilots will begin simulated training at the centre from tomorrow, the official added.

Till now these pilots were going to Singapore, Bangkok or France for training on regional jets, which was costly.

Alliance Air, the regional arm of Air India, has 15 ATR 72-600s and it plans to add five more by March.

Spread over 20 acres, the facility currently has two simulators for Airbus A320s in Hyderabad. Apart from training pilots, CTE offers training to cabin crew in aviation security, aircraft engineering, marketing and management. PFI

Lodha group raises \$125 mn to repay costlier debt

NEW DELHI: Leading real estate firm Lodha group has raised an additional \$125 million through bonds to pre-pay its costlier debt and reduce interest expense.

Mumbai-based Lodha group's subsidiary Lodha Developers International Ltd had raised \$200 million in March 2015 through issue of bonds with maturity in 2020.

The company has now raised an incremental \$125 million through issue of bonds with same maturity date, taking the total size to \$325 million.

"Lodha Developers International has priced a \$125 million tap of its 2020 bonds at a yield of 8.89 per cent, a 310 basis points (3.1 per cent) reduction in yield from the original issue which was done at a yield of 12 per cent," Lodha group said in a statement.

The tap issue has been done at a price of 106.25, at a pre-

mium to the original issuance. The bonds are listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX).

Lodha International, which is based in Mauritius and undertakes development of projects in London market, said that the company planned to raise \$100 million but the size of the issue was raised on strong interest from global investors.

"The total order book, at final pricing was in excess of \$320 million. On account of this strong interest, the deal was upsized to \$125 million," the statement said.

Lodha group said the proceeds would be used to pre-pay its higher cost debt and is leverage neutral for the group.

In July, Lodha Group MD Abhishek Lodha had said that its Indian debt stood at Rs 14,500 crore, while the debt of London business was about 300 million pounds. PFI

HSBC pegs Q2 growth at 6.3%, sees inflation holding rates

MUMBAI: British brokerage HSBC on Tuesday said GVA growth will come in at 6.3 per cent for the second quarter, and risks to inflation will prevent the Reserve Bank from tinkering its policy rates at the next review. Growth data for the July-September period is expected to be released on Thursday, while the Reserve Bank will be coming out with a bi-monthly review on December 6.

"While recovery is expected to be only modest, inflation risks are edging higher," economists at the brokerage said.

In a note, they said gross value added (GVA) growth will come at 6.3 per cent for the second quarter, which is higher than the three-year-low of 5.7 per cent clocked for the preceding three months, but much lower than the economy's potential.

It said agricultural growth will moderate on low production of key crops and a drag from animal husbandry to its long-term average, while industrial growth will go above 4 per cent as manufacturing is picking up pace.

On inflation, the note warned food



inflation could be joining core and fuel in becoming a potential upside risk in the coming months.

After slumping in June, core inflation climbed back to over 4 per cent and is expected to remain sticky or accelerate further as well, on items like household goods and services, health, personal care, it said.

It pointed out that fuel inflation is also a risk, given the limited fiscal room to cut the high duties on fuels. PFI

RCom shares end nearly 4% lower on insolvency case buzz

NEW DELHI: Shares of Reliance Communications on Tuesday ended nearly 4 per cent lower amid reports that China Development Bank has filed an insolvency case against the telecom firm, which the company has denied.

Trimming most of its early losses, the stock ended the day at Rs 12.90, down 3.37 per cent on BSE. During the day, it slipped 8.61 per cent to Rs 12.20. At NSE, shares of the company went down 3.74 per cent to close at Rs 12.85.

In terms of equity volume, 67.51 lakh shares of the company were traded on BSE and over 7 crore shares changed hands at NSE during the day.

BSE had sought clarification from Reliance Communications after market hours yesterday with respect to news that China Development Bank has filed an insolvency case against it.

In a clarification to BSE,

Reliance Communications spokesperson yesterday said: "The company has not been served any notice of the application filed by China Development Bank with NCLT, as reported in the media."

However, in the interest of all stakeholders, the spokesperson said: "The company is engaged through the JLF (joint lenders forum) with all its lenders for a successful resolution of the SDR process. China Development Bank has also been actively participating in the JLF." The company is therefore, surprised by the untimely and premature action of China Development Bank of filing an application at NCLT, the spokesperson added.

The company continues to remain engaged with all lenders including China Development Bank and is confident and committed to a full resolution with the support of all the lenders. PFI

Ficci welcomes UP Govt Draft Textiles Policy

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: L K Jhunjhunwala, Chairman, Ficci UP State Council and SK Khandelia, Co-chairman, Ficci Textiles Committee on Tuesday attended the meeting called by the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, to discuss the draft textile policy for the State.

S K Khandelia welcomed the Draft Textiles Policy of UP which shall set the vision for the sector in the State. Prior to the release of the draft policy, Ficci had submitted detailed suggestions to the UP Government for formulation of a vibrant and competitive Textiles Policy.

Commenting on the Draft

Policy, Khandelia said "It is heartening to see that many of the suggestions submitted by Ficci like Open access for existing as well as new units, capital subsidy for new and existing units over and above TUFs, interest subsidy over and above Central Government's subsidy for technology upgradation have been included in the draft Policy. All this would help in attracting investments in the sector in value added segments".

Jhunjhunwala said "UP has abundant labour force that currently is largely employed in the industry outside the State. This policy has the potential to provide jobs to millions of natives as it is a labor intensive sector".

There were other sugges-

tions also made by Ficci which the State Government may like to consider. These are:

Higher subsidy on electricity tariff: 1.5 per unit power subsidy in tier 1 cities/ areas, 2 per unit power subsidy in tier 2 cities / areas and 2.5 per unit power subsidy in tier 3 cities/ areas. Rs 20 crore subsidy for each cluster/park in addition to the Central Government's subsidy of Rs 40 crore under Scheme for Integrated Textiles Park (SITP). Capital Subsidy by State Government for Technical Textiles sector (It needs to be clarified). The State Government to provide 50% of the CETP project cost or Rs 20 crores whichever is less for setting up a CETP in new or existing textile parks/ clusters.

Domestic airlines are required to deploy only CAT-III compliant planes and crew trained to fly under low visibility conditions while operating

Air India Express gets CAT-III-B certification

MUMBAI: Air India Express (AIE), the overseas budget arm of Air India, has secured the Category III-B certification from regulator DGCA, which allows it to operate in dense foggy conditions.

Air India Express flights can now land and takeoff in low visibility conditions even up to an RVR (runway visual range) as low as up to 50 meters, the airline said on Tuesday.

The airline is now 100 per cent CAT III B certified and all its pilots have also completed the low visibility training, required for carrying out operations in foggy conditions.

The airline has a fleet of 23 Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft, six of which are brand new. PFI

in and out of a CAT-III. At present, only three airports - New Delhi, Jaipur and Lucknow - are CAT III-B compliant aerodromes.

The fog season in the North generally sets in from the first week of December every year.

The airline is also qualified for LVTO (low visibility Take-off) of up to 125 meters, which will avoid delays during foggy days, the AI Express said.

A wholly-owned subsidiary of the disinvestment-bound national carrier, Air India Express operates around 555 departures a week, connecting 16 cities to 13 destinations in the Middle East and South-east Asia.

The airline has a fleet of 23 Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft, six of which are brand new. PFI

'Data usage per smartphone to grow 5-fold in India by 2023'

NEW DELHI: The monthly data consumption on every smartphone in India is estimated to grow nearly five times from 3.9 GB in 2017 to 18 GB by 2023, Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson said in its mobility report on Tuesday.

"The total mobile data traffic per month in India is expected to grow 11 times during the forecast period (2017-2023) from 1.3 EB (exabytes) to 14 EB by 2023. The report estimates that the monthly data usage per smartphone (GB/month) in India will increase 5 times from 3.9 GB in 2017 to 18 GB by 2023," Ericsson said.

Globally, the mobile data growth witnessed highest

year-on-year growth due to surge in data consumption in India. "It shows the highest year-on-year mobile data growth globally since 2013, led by massive growth in India, and highlights the underlying need for mobile data," the report said.

India jumped to top spot in data usage in a period of 1 year after Reliance Jio launched its 4G (LTE) services. "We expect LTE to be the most dominant technology in India by 2023. LTE will account for more than 60 per cent of the total subscriptions in the country by 2023 compared to the 12 per cent LTE subscriptions in 2017," Ericsson India Managing Director Nitin Bansal.

The report estimates that

there will be around 800 million VoLTE (voice over 4G) subscribers in India by 2023.

At present entire network of Reliance Jio supports VoLTE (voice over 4G) calls which are upgraded version of calls made using internet connections. Bharti Airtel too is launching VoLTE services gradually across the country.

As per the report, there will be 1 billion 5G subscriptions for enhanced mobile broadband by 2023. Ericsson Mobility report expects 5G to cover over 20 per cent of the world's population by the end of 2023 and first commercial networks based on 5G technology are expected to go live in 2019, with major deployments wfrom 2020. PFI

CORPORATE KALEIDOSCOPE



NBCC celebrated its 57th Foundation Day on November 15, 2017 in New Delhi. The evening was graced by Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs (I/C); Manoj Sinha, Minister of State for Communication (I/C) and Railways; Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, (MoHUA); Dr. Anoop Kumar Mittal, CMD, NBCC; Directors of NBCC and other distinguished guests



On National Organ Donation Day, Airports Authority of India signed an MoU with the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS). As per MoU, AAI will give financial aid of Rs 84 lakh each year for 5 years for EWS patients undergoing liver transplant surgery at ILBS. The MoU was signed by Sanjeev Jindal, General Manager (CSR) and Dr Bimal Rai Sharma, Deputy Head, Operations, ILBS in presence of Dr Guruprasad Mohapatra, Chairman, AAI, S Raheja, Member (Planning), AAI, G K Chaukiyal, ED (RCS), AAI, Rajesh Kalra, Regional Executive Director (Northern Region), Dr S K Sarin, Director (ILBS) and Dr Anil Aggarwal, ILBS were present on the occasion



Yogamaya Acharya, president, Ladies Club & Sneha Opportunity School of Neyveli, presenting 'poshak' food packets to the differently abled persons during her visit to the Oasis Trust, School for Handicapped, Vanarapalayam, Cuddalore, on Monday. Kanchan Rakesh Kumar, Shanthi Vikraman were also present on the occasion



JUVENTUS FORWARD GONZALO HIGUAIN UNDERGOES SURGERY

ROME: Juventus forward Gonzalo Higuain has undergone surgery to repair a fractured finger on his left hand, the Serie A defending champions announced. The Italian football club, however, did not reveal when the Argentine forward was expected to return to competition. "The operation, which lasted approximately 45 minutes and concluded successfully," the team said.

BRAZIL, SPAIN AND FRANCE ARE STEP AHEAD OF ARGENTINA, SAYS SAMPAOLI

BUENOS AIRES: Brazil, Spain and France are early favourites to win next year's FIFA World Cup in Russia, according to Argentina national football team coach Jorge Sampaoli. But Germany are not at the level that saw them defeat Argentina in the final to win the last World Cup in Brazil in 2014, he said.

DORTMUND'S MARIO GOETZE TO MISS 2017 SEASON FOR INJURY

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund midfielder Mario Goetze has been ruled out for six weeks due to an injury, the Bundesliga football club confirmed in an official statement. The 25-year-old Germany international sustained a torn ligament in his ankle in Saturday's dramatic 4-4 draw against rivals Schalke, reports Xinhua.



Herath ruled out due to sore back

NEW DELHI: Veteran Sri Lanka spinner Ranga Herath was on Tuesday ruled out of the third Test against India due to a sore back, compounding the visiting team's problems in the ongoing series.



Leg-break bowler Jeffrey Vandersay has been added to the touring squad as Herath's replacement. Sri Lanka, who were handed an innings and 239-run defeat by the hosts in the second Test in Nagpur, trail the three-match series 0-1.

The third game is scheduled to be held in the national capital from December 2 to 6.

It was learnt that left-arm spinner Malinda Pushpakumara was Sri Lanka's first choice to replace Herath but the 30-year-old failed the fitness test.

The 39-year-old Herath is due to fly back home on Thursday. Herath, who last month

became the first left-arm spinner to take 400 Test wickets, has been ineffective on this tour thus far. In the first Test in Kolkata, Herath bowled only eight overs in seaming conditions, but was required to send down 39 overs in the only innings that India batted in Nagpur, after which he complained of back pain.

Vandersay has played 11 ODIs and seven T20s for Sri Lanka but is yet to make his Test debut.

AGENCIES

Pujara rises to 2nd, Kohli stays 5th in ICC rankings

DUBAI: Indian batsman Cheteshwar Pujara jumped a couple of rungs to second, while skipper Virat Kohli held on to the fifth spot in the latest ICC rankings for Test batsmen, issued on Tuesday.

Pujara trails Australian captain Steve Smith, who has extended his lead at the top but the next four batsmen are separated by just 11 points in the latest rankings, the ICC said in a statement.

Pujara has returned to number-two ranking after scoring 143 in his side's huge victory by an innings and 239 runs against Sri Lanka in Nagpur.

He had first peaked to second following the Ranji Test against Australia in March, while the last time he was second was following his 133 against Sri Lanka in Colombo in August. Pujara has been rewarded with 22 points, lifting him from fourth to second on a career-high 888 points.

The 29-year-old now leads his fifth-ranked captain Kohli by 11 points. Kohli has vaulted from 817 points to 877 points after scoring his fifth career



double-century in 62 Tests. Smith, on the other hand, stroked an unbeaten 141, his 21st century in his 57th Test, which was the cornerstone of Australia's 10-wicket victory over England in the first Ashes Test. For his performance, Smith has gained five points to rise to 941 points, making him joint-fifth in terms of the highest points tally in batting history in Tests behind Sir Don

Bradman (961), Len Hutton (945), Jack Hobbs (942) and Ricky Ponting (942), and at par with Peter May (941).

England captain Joe Root is sitting third and New Zealand captain Kane Williamson is occupying the fourth spot, while sixth-ranked David Warner of Australia is another 51 points behind Kohli.

India opener Murali Vijay and middle-order batsman

Rohit Sharma, who were the other centurions in the just-concluded Test, have also made impressive gains. Vijay has risen eight places to 28th position, while Rohit has shot up seven places to 46th spot.

Some of the leading batsmen heading in the wrong direction include KL Rahul (ninth, down by one), Ajinkya Rahane (15th, down by two), Dimuth Karunaratne (18th,

down by one), and Shikhar Dhawan (29th, down by one).

In the bowlers' rankings, Ravindra Jadeja has reclaimed the second position following his match figures of five for 84, while Mitchell Starc has returned to the top 10 in 10th position after his match figures of six for 128 helped him to gain three places.

Ravichandran Ashwin, who became the fastest man to 300 wickets in Tests, has consolidated his fourth position by gaining nine points, which helped him to be on 849 points.

The India off-spinner is now 42 points behind number-one ranked James Anderson, who has dropped five points after claiming two wickets in the Brisbane Test.

Other bowlers to improve their rankings include Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ishant Sharma, who have moved up one place each to 28th and 30th respectively.

In the all-rounders' rankings, Ashwin has returned to third place in the list which is headed by Shakib Al Hasan of Bangladesh.

Ashwin is currently the best spinner in the world: Murali

NEW DELHI: Sri Lankan spin legend Muttiah Muralitharan feels India's Ravichandran Ashwin is presently the best spinner in the world and his achievements with the ball are a testimony to his greatness.

Ashwin on Monday became the fastest bowler to reach the milestone of 300 Test wickets in his 54th match, breaking Dennis Lillee's record during India's convincing win over Sri Lanka in the second Test. And Muralitharan congratulated the Indian off-spinner on his achievement.

"I want to congratulate Ashwin. It's a big achievement as getting 300 Test wickets is not an easy job. Definitely, he is the best spinner in the world at the moment," Muralitharan said.

"He is not in the One-Day team but hopefully he will return and do wonders in the shorter formats also," said the spin legend, who holds the world record of capturing 800 wickets in 133 Test matches.

Australian legend Lillee had reached the milestone in 56 Tests in 1981 and it took 36 years for another bowler to eclipse the record. Ashwin is ahead of some of the illustrious names, who had completed the milestone in quick time.

CENTRAL PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
PRESS NOTICE
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

The Executive Engineer(E), DCED, CPWD, 20-Subhash Road, Dehradun-248001 invites Percentage rate bid on behalf of President of India from Approved and eligible registered contractors in Composite Category in appropriate class in CPWD for the following work:

- NIT No. 134/DCED/2017-18.

Name of Work:- 1) RMO 2X320 KVA DG set at FSI office Kaulagarh Road Dehradun (SH- Operation of DG set). 2) RMO pump sets at FSI Colonies Kaulagarh Road & Convent Road Dehradun during 2017-18. (SH- Operation of drinking Water Pump & DG Set).

Estimated Cost Rs.12,68,088/- Earnest money Rs.25,362/- and Period of Completion: 12 Months, Last Time & date of submission of bid: 05-12-2017 at 3:00 PM. & the same shall be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM. The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website www.tenderwizard.com / CPWD or www.cpwd.gov.in.

DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
E-Tender Press Notice No. 28/FO/Hort./N/W/2017-18

On line Item Rate Tenders are invited/Re-invited through e-tendering mode for the following works by the Dy. Director (Hort.), I, Rama Market Pitampura, New Delhi-110034 & Dy. Director (Hort.), III B 2 B Janakpuri New Delhi-110058 & Dy. Director (Hort.)-X C.S.C. 656, Sanjay Enclave, Jahangirpuri, Delhi-110033. On behalf of Delhi Development Authority from the approved and eligible contractors registered under Horticulture category only of DDA & CPWD and those of appropriate list of MES, BSNL and Railway. The last date and time of submission of tender is 07.12.2017 upto 3.00 PM.

- NIT No. 24/DD(Hort.)-II/DDA/2017-18. (Re-called). Name of work: M/o Parks Plantations trucks and other equipment in Hort. Wing N/A-II. M/o Rejuvenation old orchard at Ashok Vihar, Ph-IV (Janak Wala Bagh). SH: Complete Maintenance of Lawn, wood land and sweeping of path for 12 months at site. Estimated Cost: Rs. 10,21,074/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 20,421/-, Period of completion: 12 Months.
- NIT No. 28/DD(Hort.)-II/DDA/2017-18. (Re-called) Name of work: M/o Various Parks (296.38 Acres) area under N/A-I, M/o Park at Idgah. SH: S/S of Good earth, cattle manure, Jamuna Sand, S/o Organic Manure and Complete maintenance of Lawn, Sweeping of path for 12 months at site. Estimated Cost: Rs. 5,57,020/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 11,140/-, Period of completion: 12 Months.
- NIT No. 29/DD(Hort.)-II/DDA/2017-18. (Re-called) Name of work: M/o Various Parks (296.38 Acres) area under N/A-I, M/o Park at Motia Khan. SH: Complete maintenance of Lawn, wood land and sweeping of path for 12 months at site. Estimated Cost: Rs. 6,78,760/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 13,575/-, Period of completion: 12 Months.
- NIT No. 30/DD(Hort.)-II/DDA/2017-18. (Re-called) Name of work: M/o Parks Plantations trucks and other equipment in Hort. Wing N/A-II M/o Zonal Green area at Saraswati Vihar (Nursery). SH: Complete maintenance of Lawn and sweeping of path for 12 months at site. Estimated Cost: Rs. 8,70,266/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 17,405/-, Period of completion: 12 months.
- NIT No. 02/DD(H)-III/DDA/2017-18. Name of work: M/o Completed scheme of N/A-II under SWZ. M/o NHP Society area south of Rohtak Road Paschim Vihar (LIC Colony). SH: Complete M/o entire garden, clearing sweeping of path, S/S good earth etc. site. Estimated Cost: Rs. 7,50,441/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 15,208/-, Period of completion: 12 months.
- NIT No. 03/DD(H)-III/DDA/2017-18. Name of work: M/o Completed scheme of N/A-II under SWZ M/o NHP Society area south of Rohtak Road Paschim Vihar (Ambika Vihar). SH: Complete M/o entire garden, woodland clearing, sweeping of path, S/S good earth at site. Estimated Cost: Rs. 7,87,857/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 15,757/-, Period of completion: 12 Months.
- NIT No. 04/DD(H)-III/DDA/2017-18. Name of work: M/o Completed scheme of N/A-II under SWZ. M/o Sanitary Land Fill Pit No. 2 Hastal. SH: S/S Good earth, Cattle Manure, Jamuna Sand, Red Bajri, Digging of holes, P/F of MS tree guard, S/o Plant, Renovation of Lawn P/F Precast Conc. Bench. Estimated Cost: Rs. 6,12,259/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 12,245/-, Period of completion: 45 days.
- NIT No. 09/DD(H)-III/DDA/2017-18. Name of work: M/o Completed scheme of N/A-II under SWZ M/o Distt. Park at Vishnu Garden. SH: Complete M/o entire garden Cleaning sweeping of path, S/S good earth at site. Estimated Cost: Rs. 7,62,401/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 15,248/-, Period of completion: 12 months.
- NIT No. 116/DD(H)-X/DDA/2017-18. Name of work: M/o Completed scheme North Zone, M/o, RSP at Sector A-9 Narela. SH: Complete M/o RSP. S/S WDCM, watering of plants through water tanker, digging holes etc. at site for 12 months. Estimated Cost: Rs. 13,85,233/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 27,704/-, Period of completion: 12 months.
- NIT No. 130/DD(H)-X/DDA/2017-18. Name of work: M/o Parks Plantations trucks and other equipment in Hort. Wing N/A-II. M/o Distt. Park Smritivan Sec A-7 at Narela. SH: Complete maintenance of Lawn, wood land and Clearing, sweeping of path etc at site (for 04 months). Estimated Cost: Rs. 8,96,981/-, Earnest Money: Rs. 17,940/-, Period of completion: 04 months.

Please also visit the website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> or send mail cpp-nic@nic.in or dial Help Line No. 1800-233-7315. Mobile No.: +91-7878007972 & +91-7878007973.

Please give your feedback on DDA Apps at Google play
Please visit DDA's website : www.dda.org.in or Dial Toll Free No. 1800110332.

ASHES OUTCAST BEN STOKES EYES NEW ZEALAND HIT-OUT

SYDNEY: Suspended England allrounder Ben Stokes plans to play first-class cricket in New Zealand, officials said, potentially paving the way for a dramatic Ashes call-up. Social media went into overdrive late Monday when a picture showing Stokes leaving London's Heathrow airport sparked speculation he was set to join his England teammates in Australia. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) poured cold water on the suggestion, saying the 26-year-old was simply heading to New Zealand to visit family. But it soon emerged Stokes aims to play first-class cricket for Canterbury during his trip to the South Island, keeping him in shape if required for the Ashes.

AGENCIES

Gujarat, Kerala qualify for Ranji quarter-finals

RANCHI: Defending champions Gujarat thrashed Jharkhand by 10 wickets after left-arm spinner Hardik Patel starred with the ball with an impressive four-wicket haul to qualify for the quarterfinals as Group B toppers in the Ranji Trophy cricket tournament here on Tuesday.

Gujarat needed just 10 balls to chase down the fourth-innings target of 15 after Jharkhand imploded on the fourth and final morning with Hardik triggering the home

side batting collapse. The 10-wicket bonus-point win ensured a top-of-the-table finish for Gujarat with 34 points from six matches. Having been asked to follow-on on the third day yesterday, Jharkhand were always facing an uphill battle. They did not begin the fourth morning too well, losing two wickets in the first three overs. Virat Singh and Ishan Kishan made some resistance with a 48-run partnership for the fifth wicket, but Jharkhand

crumbled once Singh was dismissed for 52, losing six wickets for 26 runs to be bowled out for 183. Patel had remarkable figures of 4 for 9 in six overs. Gujarat openers collected all their runs in fours to breeze to the target, reaching to 16 for no loss in 1.4 overs. In Rohtak, Kerala picked up an innings-and-eight-run win against Haryana to join Gujarat in the quarterfinals from Group B. Kerala were in the driv-

ers seat after taking a 181-run first innings lead and having reduced to Haryana to 83 for 5 by the third evening. They needed just five wickets for a win on the fourth and final day today and they did that in style with seamer M D Nidheesh grabbing three wickets to earn Kerala a bonus-point win. Kerala finished second on the Group B table with 31 points, while Haryana's season ended with their fourth loss in six matches.

AGENCIES

Government of Chhattisgarh
Water Resources Department
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
WATER MANAGEMENT DIVISION NO. 1, RAIPUR
CORRIGENDUM NO. - I

In System Tender No. 23099 N.I.T. No. 19/SAC/2017-18, Raipur Dated: 31/10/17 whose G-Number is 45376 Dtd. 03.11.2017, following amendments are made :-

S.No	Earlier Published Dates	Amendments Now Read as
1	Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 21.11.2017 at 17:30 Hour	Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 27.11.2017 at 17:30 Hour

Note :- Accordingly Date-Time Detail(s) are changed. Detailed Date-Time Detail(s) can be viewed from the Government of Chhattisgarh e-Procurement Portal <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> and all other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer
Water Management Division No. 1, Raipur
For, Superintending Engineer,
Mahanadi Circle, Raipur (C.G.)

G 45925/8

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
P.W.D. KANKER CIRCLE KANKER (C.G.)
e-Procurement Short-time Tender Notice

Online tenders are invited for Construction Of Building work ,up to Date 09/12/2017

Sr No	NIT No.	System Tender No.	Name of work	Probable Amount of Contract.	Tender Downloaded upto
1	2	3	4	5	6
01	80	23915	Construction of 50 Seated Girls Hostel "E" Type Quarter for Superintendent, & Guard room i/c Water Supply & Sanitary Fitting, Approach Road & Electrification work at Polytechnic College Kanker.	190.48 Lakh	09.12.2017 (1 st Call)

All Documents related to Tender are to be submitted by Tenderers online only, failing which the tenderer can not participate in the bidding, for tender details please visit <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

Superintending Engineer
P.W.D, Kanker Circle
Kanker

G 45979/5

कार्यालय वनमंडलाधिकारी, बिलासपुर वनमंडल, बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)
//निविदा आमंत्रण//

बिलासपुर वनमंडल अंतर्गत निम्नानुसार सामग्री काय देवु नीचे दशाथे विवरण के अनुसार निविदाएं, निविदा प्रपत्र में विचारित निविदा निम्न 11/12/2017 को दोपहर 2.00 बजे तक मुकुन्द विमान पंजीकृत डाक/स्प्रीड पोस्ट /सीधे कार्यालय वनमंडलाधिकारी, बिलासपुर वनमंडल, (छ.ग.) में आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदाएं उसी तिथि को सायं 3:00 बजे उपस्थित निविदाकारों के समक्ष जोड़ी जायेगी। निविदा से संबंधित शर्तें एवं अन्य जानकारी कार्यालयीन समय में प्राप्त की जा सकती है। निविदा जोलने की तिथि में अवकाश हो या अधोस्तराकार्य शासकीय दौरे पर हो तो निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस को जोड़ी जायेगी।

क्र.	सामग्री का विवरण	सामग्री की मात्रा	धरोहर राशि (सर्वकार की राशि)	प्रदाय स्थल	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य
1	1. Precast interlocking concrete block 60mm thick precast interlocking concrete blocks of approved size (approx 305 sqcm) and shape/ pattern, over 40 mm thick & complete of minimum compressive strength of 250 kg/sq.cm	आवश्यकतानुसार	50,000.00 (पचास हजार रु.) वनमंडलाधिकारी, बिलासपुर वनमंडल बिलासपुर के फर्क में देय हो (लिकाना तकनीकी बीड)	कानन पेण्डारी जूलॉजिकल गार्डन सकरी बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)	750.00 (सात सौ पचास रुपये मात्र)

निविदा शर्तों का विस्तृत विवरण विभाग की वेबसाईट से भी डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है।

वनमंडलाधिकारी
बिलासपुर वनमंडल, बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)

G 45963/4

At drinks, Kaul gets biggest career newsbreak

NAGPUR: The biggest news-break of Siddharth Kaul's crick-eting career came during a drinks break. The 27-year-old Punjab medium pacer, picked for next month's ODI series against Sri Lanka, was bowling against Services in a Ranji Trophy game when match referee Sunil Chaturvedi sent in the message of his selection in the national squad through umpires Vineet Kulkarni and K Srinath. "It was drinks break at that time and one of the umpires came up to me and said that match referee sir (Chaturvedi) had informed that I have been selected in the Indian ODI squad. I didn't know how to react at that moment. It was the biggest piece of news in my crick-eting career and I got it in the field," Kaul, who took five wickets against Services in the Ranji match, said. Kaul came into spotlight when he bowled the famous last over during that 2008 U-19 World Cup final against South Africa in Kuala Lumpur where Virat Kohli was leading



the side. India were defending 18 runs in the final over and Kaul gave just six to seal it in India's favour. Kohli has since gone on to become one of India's greatest batsmen. Ravindra Jadeja has been an established name from that squad while the likes of Saurabh Tiwary and Abhinav Mukund have made sporadic national team appearances. Kaul could not make it as big but did not lose hope, plying his trade for Punjab, North Zone, India A and Sunrisers Hyderabad consistently. He has 175 first-class wickets from 50 games and 99 List A scalps from 52 matches.

AGENCIES

Kohli undecided on Lanka T20s

NAGPUR: Rested from the one-dayers against Sri Lanka, Indian captain Virat Kohli is uncertain for the Twenty20 series as well and will decide on his participation after consulting the team management and the selection committee later this week. "Virat has told the selectors that he needs some time to take a call on whether he will be playing the T20s or not. That's reason why they have not announced the T20 squad," a BCCI official, privy to selection matters, said on conditions of anonymity. "Virat has some personal commitments till December 12. Post that, whether he would like to take rest or just play T20s will be his call completely," he added. The national selection committee and the team management — comprising chief coach Ravi Shastri and Kohli — will be deciding on the matter during the team selection meeting for the South Africa Tests in New Delhi, later this week. The three T20 Internationals will be held on December 20, 22 and 24 at Cuttack, Indore, Visakhapatnam, respectively.

AGENCIES

NADA, FTP to top BCCI's Dec 11 SGM

NEW DELHI: The tussle with NADA over dope testing of Indian cricketers will come up for discussion when the much-awaited Special General Meeting of BCCI is held in the national capital on December 11. Also on the agenda will be revocation of Rajasthan Cricket Association suspension, Future Tours Programme (FTP) from 2019-2021 and the compensation claim of the now-defunct IPL franchise Kochi Tuskers Kerala. The Board's acting secretary Amitabh Chaudhary sent an official notification as far as the SGM was concerned, acting BCCI president C K Khanna said.



In a stern response to the the National Anti Doping Agency earlier this month, the BCCI had said that the government body has no jurisdiction to conduct dopes tests on Indian cricketers. The matter will be dis-

cussed at the SGM despite the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) deciding that the BCCI doesn't need to come under NADA as there is a satisfactory anti-doping system already in place.

AGENCIES

East Bengal draw 2-2 against Aizawl in I-League opener



KOLKATA: Aizawl held East Bengal to a 2-2 draw in their I-League season opener on Tuesday in Kolkata. Former Mohun Bagan players Katsumi Yusa and Eduardo Ferreira scored for the Red and Golds while William Lalunfela scored a brace to guarantee the defending champions a point. East Bengal coach Khalid Jamil fielded the team in a 4-2-3-1 formation with three debutantes in the starting XI. Defenders Mehtab Singh, Deepak K. and goalkeeper Mirshad K. made their I-League debuts for the Red and Golds.

Mohammed Rafique and Armand Bazzou were deployed as the central midfielders with Mahmoud Al Amna, Katsumi Yusa and Brandon Vanlalremdika upfront. Willis Plaza was designated the role of the lone striker while Salam Ranjan Singh partnered Eduardo Ferreira at the heart of the defence.

The defending champions took the field in a 4-4-2 shape with Japanese Striker Yugo Kobayashi partnering William Lalunfela upfront. Leonce Dodoz operated on the flanks while skipper Alfred Jaryan played at the heart of midfield.

Aizawl FC enjoyed the lion's share of possession throughout the first half as the home side were restricted to counter attacks. The first major chance came in the 7th minute as Wil-

lis Plaza met Mehtab Singh's cross inside the 6-yard box. From a handshaking distance, the Trinidad and Tobago striker failed to find the back of the net. Within seven minutes Plaza got yet another chance but his shot was comfortably saved by Aizawl custodian Avilash Paul.

Youngster Mehtab Singh was the weak link in East Bengal's defence as he struggled against Aizawl's Dodoz. The Ivory Coast winger exploited East Bengal's right side and was a threat.

Plaza completed a hat-trick of misses in the 35th minute when his shot hit the woodwork. The striker attempted shot from the edge of the box beat a diving Avilash but unfortunately did not go in. Khalid Jamil made his first substitution in the 37th minute as Lalramchullova replaced Mehtab Singh at the right back position. Another former Mohun Bagan player Katsumi Yusa doubled the lead in the 72nd minute. Avilash was left wrong-footed from the initial shot taken by Rafique which took a wicket deflection off Katsumi and beat the hapless goalkeeper.

The away side found the equaliser in the 96th minute to break East Bengal's hearts. William Lalunfela scored his second goal of the night from a Lalthathanga Khawlhing corner with was the last move of the match. **AGENCIES**

India to face Pak in opening match of CWG hockey C'ship

GOLD COAST: Reigning silver medallists India will open their campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan in a mouth-watering men's hockey contest of the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

According to the schedule announced by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Tuesday, Asian champions India are placed in a relatively easy but tricky Pool B alongside Pakistan, last edition's bronze medallists England, Malaysia and Wales.

Five-time champions and hosts Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and Scotland feature in Pool A. The Indian men's team will play Pakistan in its first match on April 7, followed by games against Wales (April 8), Malaysia (April 10) and England (April 11).

Meanwhile, the Indian women's team have been clubbed in Pool A, which consists of current silver medallists England, South Africa, Malaysia and Wales.

Title holders Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Canada and Ghana are placed in Pool B of the women's competition.

The Indian women's team will play the tournament opener against Wales on April 5 before it squares off against Malaysia (April 6), followed by England (April 8) and South Africa (April 10). In the men's competition, Australia has been reigning supreme when it comes to the Commonwealth Games — five editions, five victories — so there will be a queue of nations lining up for a crack at the title, not least recently crowned Asian champions India, who have been runners-up in the past two editions.

In the women's competition, current champions Australia will want to impress in front of the home crowd, while England and New Zealand will both look to get their names on the trophy for the first time.

Two teams from each pool in men's and women's section



will qualify directly for the semi-finals while the rest will play classification matches. The semi-finals in the wom-

en's competition will be held on April 12 while the men's last four matches will be played a day later on April 13.

The bronze medal as well as the final matches of both the men's and women's competition will be played on April 14.

The 11th Commonwealth Games will be held in Gold Coast, Australia from April 5 to 14 next year. **AGENCIES**

Thapa fights back to win gold at national taekwondo meet

MUMBAI: Rahul Thapa from Professional Taekwondo Academy, Sonapat defeated Ajinkya Parab from Swaraj Sports Foundation, Mumbai to win the gold medal in the Senior Kyorugi Male (Fin weight) category at the inaugural Mumbai Consul General Cup National Taekwondo Championship on Tuesday.

In the first round, Thapa's opponent, Parab held the upper hand as he had inflicted three kicks to the former's torso to take his score to 6, while the former's solitary punch helped him to score 1 point.

However, Thapa fought back in the final seconds of round with three kicks to his opponent's body to decrease the margin to two points and trailed 4-6.

Thapa was constantly trying to break the strong defence of his opponent throughout the second round and finally found an opening to kick his opponent on the face and push him off the mat.

This enabled Thapa to take the lead with five seconds left, three points for his lethal attack and one point for the gunjum (where opponent is kicked out of the mat). Thapa thus won his first gold medal in a senior category. The inaugural event is supported by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Mumbai and organised by KUKKIWON (World Taekwondo Headquarters) at the Bharat Ratna Rajiv Gandhi Sports Complex, Dharavi.

The winners in Finweight were Rahul Thapa, Sonapat bt Ajinkya Parab, Mumbai 8-7; Heavyweight: Aseem Singh Sodi, Mumbai bt Anup Pegu, Mumbai 10-6.

The winners in Women: Under 51 kg were Durmaya Thapa, Delhi bt Khushi Bhati, Delhi. In junior boys, winners Deepanshu, Sonapat bt Himagnha Baruah, Assam; Under 51 kg: Sree Hari, Tamil Nadu bt Vikash Jha, Delhi. **AGENCIES**

Gianluigi Buffon leaves door open for Italy return

Just two weeks after announcing his retirement from international duty, legendary goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon had admitted he could play for the Italy national team again.

Buffon bid a tearful farewell to the Azzurri on November 13, just minutes after Italy fell to Sweden in a two-leg playoff and failed to reach the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

Though that appeared to be the end of a legendary international career, the 39-year-old has now admitted he could return for Italy at some point.

"I took a break from the national team," Buffon said at the Gran Gala del Calcio in Milan on Monday.

"Both for Juventus and for the national team I have always considered myself a soldier," Buffon continued.

"Even when I'm 60 I could never turn down any call because I have in me the concept of nation."

The 39-year-old has now admitted he could return for Italy at some point

Italy manager Gian Piero Ventura left his post following his team's embarrassing failure to qualify for Russia, but Buffon chose not to lay blame on the outgoing boss.

"Ventura has done the best job he could, but unfortunately we were unable to score in the two games against Sweden," Buffon said.

The Juventus goalkeeper took home prizes for the best Italian player and best Italian goalkeeper at the awards ceremony on Monday.

"I'm happy and proud. I never thought I'd get this kind of trophy," Buffon said, "and I'll hold tight to it because I've never won best youngster!"



Spain arrive in Bhubaneswar for HWL Final

BHUBANESWAR: Spain arrived here on Tuesday for the prestigious Mens Hockey World League (HWL) Final, scheduled to begin on December 1 at the Kalinga Stadium.

The squad was welcomed at the Biju Patnaik International Airport by Odisha government officials accompanied by host nation Hockey India.

According to the Spanish Coach Frederic Soye, playing against World No.1 Argentina will be their biggest test.

"We are in a tough group with World No.1 Argentina being our toughest test. We have four sessions of practice before we play our first match on December 2. We are quite prepared to play in these conditions. We have earlier played in Australia and have had good outing there. It will be great exposure for us to play the top teams of the world," Soye said.

Spain will play their first Pool A match against the Netherlands while Argentina will take on Belgium on December 2. **AGENCIES**

F1: Aston Martin will probably enter in 2021



Aston Martin says it will "probably" enter Formula 1 in 2021 as an engine supplier if the rules are changed in a way that makes it affordable.

F1 bosses have proposed new engine rules to reduce cost and complexity and attract new entrants, but existing manufacturers have objected. Aston Martin boss Andy Palmer said: "It moves from probably I wouldn't propose it to the board to probably I would."

He said existing rules were "annoying the public and driving them from F1". Palmer wants to use F1 as a

marketing platform as he seeks to expand Aston Martin's range of road cars.

But he added that he and the Red Bull team were acting in concert to try to influence a change in engine rules.

Aston Martin has this year had a sponsorship arrangement with the former world champions, who are vocal opponents of the turbo hybrid engines used in F1 since 2014, and the car company will next year become the team's title sponsor.

"The issue is making the sport entertaining again," Palmer said in an exclusive interview with BBC. **AGENCIES**

Woods makes another attempt to reclaim his kingdom

V KRISHNASWAMY

ALBANY: Tiger Woods makes one more attempt to reclaim the kingdom he once owned. The 41-year-old legend, whose multiple back problems, as also numerous other injuries, have become the staple of media around the world, will tee off for his first competitive round in nine months at the US\$ 3.5 million Hero World Challenge at Albany on Thursday.

He will play the first round in the company of the hottest player of 2017, Justin Thomas, 17 years younger than Woods. Thomas is the reigning FedExCup champion and the PGA Tour's Player of the Year.

Few athletes ranked outside of the Top-1000 command the kind of attention that Woods does. But this man is not 'just another' sportsman, but one who possesses 14 Majors and more than 100 international titles worldwide of which 79 have been on the world's toughest Tour, the PGA.

Looking totally at ease and smiling ear to ear, posing with the Hero Motorbikes and on

the eve of the tournament that raises funds for his own Tiger Woods Foundation, Woods said: "The fact I don't have any pain in my lower back anymore compared to what I was living with for years, it's just remarkable. There have been periods when I couldn't get out of the bed, let alone swing a club. Sometimes, I didn't think it was going to ever happen. I've been struggling for a long time and to come out of on the good side I'm blessed."

The struggle was clearly quite an effort. "I was struggling to get up from bed and struggled to go to my kids games, it meant so much for me to be able to participate with them in their games and I was not able to do that...now I can play around with football. Toss the baseball around... I feel blessed... I missed being able to do all that."

Woods added, "I missed being able to play golf with my friends. I had not done that in close to two years as my back was hurting so much. Now it is fantastic to come back and play with my

friends, I call them kids actually. All these are young guys have become very close. I have played a few rounds with JT (Justin Thomas), (Daniel) Berger, Rory (McIlroy), Rickie (Fowler), DJ (Dustin Johnson) you go out there and challenge yourself against these guys and see where do you stand... how good are my skills after a long layoff... in tournament how would I react... That's what I am enjoying."

Confidently, he added, "I think I can hit any shot I want, but I still need to go through a tournament... I haven't felt the adrenaline for a long time in my body..."

Eight of the world's Top-10 players will feature in the field that is one of the strongest ever in an invitational event. The field is led by Dustin Johnson and includes US Open winner Brooks Koepka, The Open Championship winner Jordan Spieth and PGA Championship winner Justin Thomas. World No. 3 Hideki Matsuyama is the defending champion who is aiming to regain the title against the star-studded field.





'Want to present a new aspect with each film'

Whenever Parineeti plays a character, she tries to bring it alive with 'human, believable traits'

NEW DELHI: She is just six years old in Hindi filmdom and has been a part of nine films, mostly in different genres. And actor Parineeti Chopra says she prefers not to play repetitive characters.

"Audiences are keen to see a performance, as much as they like watching the stars and larger-than-life films. So being able to deliver in different genres and tackle a variety of roles has more value. Personally, for me, repeating myself at this stage of my career would just be uninspiring. I like to challenge myself and put out (present) a new shade (aspect) with each film," Parineeti told.

She was last seen on screen in the comic entertainer *Golmaal Again*, which minted over Rs 200 crore in India. Does crossing these benchmarks matter to Parineeti?

"As an actor, you want to have a great body of work, but I would be lying if I said the Rs 100 crore benchmark doesn't matter. It matters to every actor. It just shows how audiences are accepting you, how much they love you. I'm loving the feeling that I have right now," she added.

Her next film project is Dibakar Banerjee's *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*. Parineeti says Banerjee was always in the list of her "dream directors" ever since she started acting.

"I have always been really fortunate to work with amazing directors. Dibakar has been on my dream directors' list ever since I took up acting. Working with him has involved elaborate prep and very focused workshops. He has an exquisite eye for nuance and detail," said the actor.

"His characters make his movie stand out. I am thoroughly enjoying this process of shooting

for the film with him," she said.

Parineeti will be seen as a fiercely ambitious girl in the film.

Is she similar in real life?

"I am ambitious, yes, just not fiercely ambitious. When I take up something, I give it my absolute best. I focus on it 100 per cent and try achieving it. I don't like ambition that tries to put down people and talent. I feel there is enough room for everyone to grow," she said.

Whether it was *Ladies vs Ricky Bahl*, *Ishaqzaade* and *Shuddh Desi Romance* or *Hasee Toh Phasee*, *Daawat-e-Ishq* and *Meri Pyaari Bindu*, Parineeti says when she plays a character, she tries to bring it alive with "human, believable traits and nuances".

"I want to work on varied characters, films and subjects. In that sense, I am passionate more than ambitious. My character in *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*, though, is super ambitious and that makes her different from me. It's also fun playing characters that are so different - it makes you live someone else's life, dreams, aspirations," she said.

Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar, which is slated to release next year, also stars her *Ishaqzaade* co-star Arjun Kapoor. She says her relationship with Arjun has not changed.

"Arjun has certainly evolved as one of the bankable actors that there is today, which is a huge achievement.

Arjun's understanding of the craft and his eagerness to learn sets him apart. With *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*, we are doing a very intense film together... We are at loggerheads in the movie," she said. IAMS



'The word nepotism haunts me today'

PANAJI: The word nepotism has been following Karan Johar around like a shadow, the director said, adding that despite his best efforts, he has not been able to get rid of it.

The 45-year-old filmmaker was described as the "flagbearer of nepotism" by actor Kangana Ranaut on his popular chat show earlier this year, triggering a row in Bollywood between those with a family background in cinema, and those without. Johar's father, Yash Johar, was a well-known producer.

"Can we just put a hold on this word 'nepotism'? ... It haunts me. It has become like 'mera saaya' (my shadow). I told somebody that I have developed 'nepospasm'," he said, tongue firmly in cheek. The word, he rued, had become a trending topic.

"It has been following me everywhere. Suddenly, it has become fashionable. Can we just get rid of it and start focusing on good content," he asked. Kangana's comment snow-

balled into a huge controversy, with Karan and actors Saif Ali Khan and Varun Dhawan taking potshots at her at this year's IIFA Award function. The trio later apologised for their remarks.

Karan, who was in conversation with film critic Anupama Chopra on a panel discussing 'How to make your own film' at the ongoing International Film Festival of India (IFFI), also aired a grouse against live tweet reviews.

Asked by Anupama what changes he sought to see in the film industry in the future, Karan replied that he wanted the trend of live-tweeting reviews to be done away with.

"I am tired of these live tweet reviews... How can they review when they are not watching the film and are on their phones? I plead for a ban on this," he said.

Producers Ekta Kapoor, Siddharth Roy Kapoor and Fox Star India CEO Vijay Singh were also a part of the panel. PTI

It was an artistic choice: Cameron on Jack's death in Titanic



it was that, or whether a smoke stack fell on him, he was going down. It's called art, things happen for artistic reasons, not for physics reasons," he said.

Fans have come up with their own theories to counter the director's theory that the door could not have supported two people but Cameron disagrees.

"I was in the water with the piece of wood putting people on it for about two days getting it exactly buoyant enough so that it would support one person with full free-board, meaning that she wasn't immersed at all in the 28 degree water so that she could survive the three hours it took until the rescue ship got there.

"(Jack) didn't know that she (Rose, played by Kate Winslet) was gonna get picked up by a lifeboat an hour later; he was dead anyway. And we very, very finely tuned it to be exactly what you see in the movie because I believed at the time, and still do, that that's what it would have taken for one person to survive," PTI

LOS ANGELES: It has been 20 years but *Titanic* fans are still angry with Rose DeWitt-Bukater for not making room for Jack Dawson on that door but director James Cameron says the character was always meant to die.

"...the answer is very simple because it says on page 147 (of the script) that Jack dies. Very simple. ... Obviously it was an artistic choice, the thing was just big enough to hold her, and not big enough to hold him..." Cameron said in an interview with the *Vanity Fair*.

The director said it is "kind of silly" to still have this discussion but it also shows that Jack (Leonardo DiCaprio) became so endearing to the audience that "it hurts them to see him die."

"Had he lived, the ending of the film would have been meaningless... The film is about death and separation; he had to die. So whether

Weinstein expelled from Directors Guild of America

LOS ANGELES: The Directors Guild of America (DGA) has expelled Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein over a month after announcing it had launched disciplinary proceedings.

A DGA representative recently said Weinstein had resigned his guild membership.

"We have no further comment," *variety.com* quoted the representative as saying.

The DGA also had removed Weinstein from its website. He had been listed as a DGA member on the *dga.org* site even after the DGA launched disciplinary proceedings on October 21.

The disciplinary proceedings were filed on October 13.

The DGA said: "The DGA has a long-standing practice of not commenting on internal union matters, but has decided to make an exception in this case to acknowledge the filing of charges. However, because of due process concerns that are a part of federal requirements for labour unions, the DGA cannot comment further."

Weinstein and his brother Bob Weinstein are credited as the co-directors on the 1986 movie *Playing for Keeps*.

Weinstein's career and reputation has been in free-fall since an article from a publication detailing settlements that were paid to women including Ashley Judd and Rose McGowan. The expose has prompted dozens of women to come forward with allegations of sexual harassment and assault, leading to multiple criminal investigations. IAMS



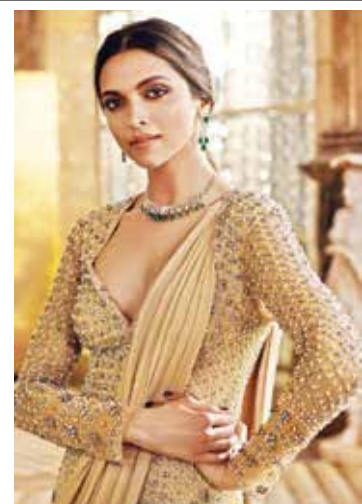
Women face challenges head on: Manushi on threats to Deepika

MUMBAI: Miss World Manushi Chhillar said Deepika Padukone is ably handling threats issued to her in the wake of *Padmavati* fracas as she believes Indian women are capable of tackling problems.

The Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed period drama has been mired in controversy with several Rajput outfits and political leaders, accusing the filmmaker of "distorting historical facts". The filmmaker has also received death threats.

Commenting on the issue, Manushi told reporters, "I feel if there's one thing all Indian women have in common is that we don't feel persecuted of who we are."

"We face our challenges head on. That's what we need to do. We need to be confident of who we are. Definitely, we will face a lot of limitations and sometimes we feel it isn't a women-friendly society. But as individuals,



was speaking at a special homecoming press conference here. The model was recently won the coveted title at a grand event held in Sanya, China.

The 20-year-old medical student from Haryana had won Femina Miss India World 2017 in May.

During her campaign, Manushi had taken up the issue of menstrual health in India.

Asked if it was sad that on one hand she is calling for awareness about menstruation, while the government has levied heavy GST on sanitary napkins, Manushi said there is certainly a dichotomy.

"I absolutely agree on that... There is a quote going around that menstruation is natural and sanitary pads are a necessity, not a luxury." So, I definitely feel that they should be available at a very low cost so that every woman is able to afford it. PTI

we should set an example and make women feel confident that you can do amazing things." The newly-crowned Miss World

Prince Harry says 'stars were aligned' when he met Meghan

LONDON: Britain's Prince Harry admitted that the "stars were aligned" when he met his fiancée Meghan Markle on a blind date and fell in love with her "so incredibly quickly".

Harry, one of the world's most eligible bachelors, revealed that he is getting hitched to outspoken American actor Markle next year after they got

Harry said "this beautiful woman just tripped and fell into my life" as he revealed how the pair got together.

"She didn't even let me finish. She said 'Can I say yes'.

Then there were hugs and I had the ring in my finger. I was like 'Can I give you the ring?'. It was a really nice moment.

Just the two of us," Harry recalled.

"The fact that I fell in love with Markle so incredibly quickly was confirmation to me that all the stars were aligned, everything was just perfect," he said.

The couple revealed that they had met on a blind date set up by a mutual friend in London last July and got to know each other camping in Botswana, South Africa.

"I think about three, maybe four weeks later I managed to persuade her to come and join me in Botswana. And we camped out with each other under the stars... she came and joined me for five days out there, which was absolutely fantastic," said Harry.

36-year-old Markle, who is already involved with humanitarian work and is a women's advocate with the United Nations (UN), confirmed that she would be moving away from her acting career to focus on her new royal role.

The star of US legal drama *Suits* said she was looking forward to focusing more energy on the causes that are important to her.

"I know that she will be unbelievably good at the job part of it (royalty) as well," Harry said.

The prince, who had designed Markle's engagement ring with diamonds from his late mother Prince Diana's



engaged earlier this month.

In his first interview since announcing his engagement to the *Suits* actor, the 33-year-old fifth in line to Britain's throne told the BBC that he proposed Markle, three years older to him, earlier this month over a "standard, typical" dinner of roast chicken at their Nottingham Cottage home in Kensington Palace in London.

"He went down on one knee," Markle said, adding that "it was just an amazing surprise. It was so sweet and natural and very romantic."

