

millenniumpost

PUBLISHED FROM DELHI & KOLKATA

VOL. 3, ISSUE 157 | Sunday, 11 June, 2017 | Kolkata | Pages 16 | Rs 3.00

NO HALF TRUTHS

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CID MEN TO QUIZ CMOHS OF 3 NORTH BENGAL DISTRICTS



SPORTS PAGE 7

OSTAPENKO STUNS SIMONA HALEP TO WIN FRENCH OPEN



FILM PAGE 15

STANDING OUT WITH STAND-UP COMEDY



Quick News

Govt, IT heads to prepare digital economy roadmap



NEW DELHI: In a first, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government has initiated a consultation process with the captains of Information Technology (IT) industry to prepare a roadmap for the promotion of digital economy in the country. The objective of the scheduled high-level round-table meeting with IT industry leaders is to fast-track the digitalisation of the Indian economy before 2019 parliamentary elections.

The meeting, which is scheduled to be held on June 16, would be chaired by Union Minister for Electronics & IT Ravi Shankar Prasad on the direction of PM Modi.

According to multiple sources in the government, every big name in the IT industry is expected to take part in the brainstorming session and discuss the challenges and solutions for the industry directly with the government.

See PG4

Coal India to stay single entity: Piyush Goyal

MUMBAI: Union minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday said state-run Coal India will continue to remain a single entity and will not be allowed to split further. The government's policy think-tank NITI Aayog recently recommended breaking up of Coal India into various subsidiaries. "It is not at all advisable and we are not taking up that recommendation at all. Coal India will continue to be one entity," Goyal said when asked about the Niti Aayog's recommendation of splitting the 'Maharatna' company. Goyal, who is the minister of state for power, coal, new and renewable energy (independent charge) was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an energy summit here on Saturday.

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MINISTER RIJITU REJECTS REPORTS OF TROUBLE AFTER CENTRE'S NOTIFICATION

Cow sale ban: 'All in N-E eating what they like'

GUWAHATI: Rubbishing reports of trouble in the North-East following the Centre's notification on cow slaughter, Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said that nobody was facing any difficulty in the region over the matter. Charging the Congress and "pseudo secular" groups with raising an "obsolete issue", he asked mediapersons to visit the North-Eastern states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur to see whether anyone was facing problems due to the notification.

"It is not at all an issue. There is no difficulty in the North-Eastern region. Everyone is eating what they like. (There is) no clash, no arrest.



No one is put behind the bars," the Minister of State for Home Affairs told reporters here.

"The Congress is making an issue out of nothing as there is no issue for them. Congress and some pseudo secular

groups are raising unnecessary issues which are obsolete. People have rejected them," he said.

On being quizzed about protests in some tribal states, he termed them as "political". Asked about the resignation

of two BJP district unit chiefs in Meghalaya opposing the notification, Rijiju said, "Only Congress and some others are making it an issue. Do not make an issue out of an individual resignation from the party. "Only Congress is protesting. They are falsely creating an issue of an individual resignation," he said. The Union minister stressed that his government would transform the country into a developed one.

"The North East was devastated in these years. We will correct it. We will not allow ourselves to get trapped in their (Congress and others) diversionary tactics," Rijiju said.

Meanwhile, a day after the death NSCN(K) chairman S S Khaplang, Rijiju said that all

Indian citizens in the Naga rebel group will be rehabilitated if they abjure violence. "We appeal that all the Indian Nagas in NSCN(K) should surrender and return to the mainstream. We will rehabilitate them," he told reporters.

"Anybody who gives up violence, we will rehabilitate them. We are giving rehabilitation package from the Indian Government. Anybody who abjures violence and respects Indian Constitution is welcome," Rijiju added.

The rebels should take advantage of the rehabilitation package and return, he said. Rijiju, however, said that India cannot talk about the Myanmarese citizens, who are part of NSCN(K).

DOHA: The Arabic news network Al-Jazeera, one of the most widely seen news channels in the world, has been thrust into the center of a storm as Qatar came under virtual siege by its Gulf neighbours, pressuring it to shut down the channel that has infuriated them with its coverage for 20 years. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed ties with Qatar this week over allegations it supports terrorism and, more specifically, that it uses Al-Jazeera "as a mouthpiece to destabilize the region".

Al-Jazeera was the first Arab satellite news channel to offer a range of views outside of heavily censored state media. Acting Director Gen-



eral of the Al-Jazeera Media Network, Mostefa Souag, said that he believes Al-Jazeera is being targeted because "we tell the truth." "Certain people maybe don't like the truth," he said, or possibly too because of the network's "relationship with Qatar."

"Al-Jazeera is going to continue with its editorial policy. We're doing the job to the best that we can," he added.

The world became familiar with Al-Jazeera after the

attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, when its golden-hued Arabic logo became synonymous with video messages by America's then-Most Wanted Terrorist, Osama bin Laden. The channel aired the messages it received, sparking frequent complaints by then-President George W Bush's White House. The station defended its policy, saying the messages were newsworthy.

Over the years, Al-Jazeera's reporters have not been spared of the region's politics and violence. One of its reporters was killed by US fire in Iraq in 2003, though Qatar says it had supplied the military with its office's coordinates to avoid being targeted. Its bureau in Kabul was hit in 2001 by the US.

AP

No more compromise on Hill impasse: CM

Mamata reviews situation with top officials, replaces Darjeeling SP in police force rejig

AMITAVA BANERJEE

DARJEELING: As the situation in the Darjeeling Hills limped back to normality on Saturday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee reviewed the situation with the police and administrative brass from Uttarkanya, the mini-secretariat in Jalpaiguri district. The Chief Minister declared that there will be timely elections to the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA.)

Talking to media persons at Uttorkanya, the mini Secretariat in Jalpaiguri after a meeting with administrative and police top brass, the CM remarked "The new GTA board has to be sworn in before August 2 as the 5 year tenure ends." The CM declared that there will be no more compromises in the hills. "Bandh is illegal. The Court has declared bandhs illegal. Whenever they are in a tight spot, they resort to bandhs" stated the CM without naming the GJM.

"Compromise can be done with peace but not with violence, with arson, with brick batting and arms. Law will take its own course. The Administration will take necessary action. No one is above law" added the CM. Reacting to talks of



Gurung's arrest doing the rounds in connection with the violence and arson unleashed in the Hills on Thursday, the CM stated "That is for the police and administration to decide. The police and administrative top brass are camping in Darjeeling. They are keeping a watch on the situation. No one is above law. Law is the same for me and for you."

Meanwhile there have been some reshuffles in the Police. Akhilesh Chaturvedi replaced Amit P Javalgi as the Superintendent of Police, Darjeeling. Chaturvedi was the Deputy Commissioner (Central) Kolkata before joining as SP, Darjeeling on Saturday. Chaturvedi had earlier served as Additional Superintendent of

Police, Darjeeling.

Tirtha Sarathi Nath, Inspector in Charge, Dinhata replaces Bhanu Rai as IC, Kalimpong. Parijat Sarkar, Inspector of the Police Commissionerate replaces Dipankar Som as IC, Kurseong.

With normality on Saturday after the 12 hour long Gorkha Janmukti Yuva Morcha bandh, vehicles started plying in the Hills. Stranded tourists took the opportunity to return. "We will continue providing the free State bus services from Darjeeling to Siliguri and from Siliguri to Kolkata. The service has been extended till Sunday. There are many who have missed their scheduled trains and can avail these services" stated the Chief Minister.

The CM keeping in mind the interest of the tourist has waved off the restriction for Hill vehicles to ply to other districts. "It is an old rule and will be done away with from Monday in the interest of tourists and transporters. They can now travel to any district" stated the CM.

The CM stated that tourism is the economic mainstay of the Hills and should be given priority be all. Reacting to the recent strife which resulted in tourists facing harassment, Banerjee stated "Because of the irrational and irresponsible behavior of some people the international brand Darjeeling is being maligned. Some people think that Darjeeling is their monopoly. There are one or two bad people. The others are good" claimed the CM. Regarding the time period of the deployment of Army, the CM stated "It is for the administration to decide."

Reacting to Morcha's indefinite bandh call from Monday, Tourism Minister Gautam Deb stated that it will be countered both administratively and politically. The TMC took out a rally in Darjeeling on Saturday demanding the immediate arrest of Gurung.

Xi skips Sharif meet after two Chinese nationals' murdered in Pak



BEIJING: In a rare snub to all-weather ally Pakistan, Chinese President Xi Jinping skipped a customary meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the SCO summit in Astana after the murder of two Chinese teachers in Balochistan.

Sharif returned from Astana after attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit on the sidelines of which he met Presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Russia. Conspicuously absent was a meeting with Xi.

Chinese state-run media highlighted Xi's meetings with Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Xi's unprecedented snub followed deep disappointment and grief among Chinese public over the slaying of the two Chinese citizens who were kidnapped last month from Quetta in Balochistan.

The two were brutally murdered reportedly by Islamic State (IS) militants.

1 killed, 2 pilots injured in Badrinath copter crash; all 5 passengers safe

DEHRADUN: A crew member was killed and two pilots suffered injuries when a helicopter carrying pilgrims met with an accident while taking off from the Himalayan shrine of Badrinath in Uttarakhand on Saturday. All the five passengers were safe.

An official at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in Delhi said that an engineer, who was part of the crew, died in the accident, while the two pilots suffered injuries. Chamoli Superintendent of Police Tripti Bhatt told PTI on the phone that the engineer, identified as Vikram Lamba, who hailed from Assam, was hit by rotor blades.

The police officer said the helicopter got disbalanced while taking off due to insufficient air



pressure and fell down. The accident took place around 7:45 am. The pilot of the chopper, Sanjay Waze, complained of slight backache, while co-pilot Alka Shukla, a resident of Kanpur, suffered minor injury.

All the pilgrims were from Vadodara in Gujarat and they had left for their respective destinations, the police officer said. The Agusta 119 helicopter, belonging to Mumbai-based private operator Krestal Aviation, was on its way from Badrinath to Haridwar.

Teams of the DGCA and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) have rushed to the spot. The AAIB will probe the accident, a senior DGCA official said.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat expressed grief at the death of the engineer. "Saddened by the news of death of an engineer of a Mumbai-based chopper company in SriBadrinath ji; pilot, copilot & all passengers are safe," Rawat said in a tweet.

GEARING UP FOR YOGA DAY... IN CHINA



Over 1,000 Yoga enthusiasts taking part in a preparatory event for the 3rd International Yoga day in Lishui, China, on Saturday

AP/PTI

Saudi-led bloc blacks out Al-Jazeera from TV & Net

DOHA: The Arabic news network Al-Jazeera, one of the most widely seen news channels in the world, has been thrust into the center of a storm as Qatar came under virtual siege by its Gulf neighbours, pressuring it to shut down the channel that has infuriated them with its coverage for 20 years. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed ties with Qatar this week over allegations it supports terrorism and, more specifically, that it uses Al-Jazeera "as a mouthpiece to destabilize the region".

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"Al-Jazeera is going to continue with its editorial policy. We're doing the job to the best that we can," he added.

The world became familiar with Al-Jazeera after the

Weekend Break

“Monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us, and sometimes, they win.”

- Stephen King

Fast-Forwarding Hollywood in 2017

After the release of some disastrous films like *Baywatch* and *XXX: Return of Xandar Cage*, the remaining year is expecting to see some soul satisfying films. The year 2017 still has the much awaited fight of *Thor* and *Hulk* coming up

KUMAR DEBVRAT

Hollywood summer releases have offered a sweet salty ride as of now with the release of disasters like *Baywatch* and *XXX: Return of the Xandar cage* and at the same time it has made us groove to the tunes of Peter Quills mixtape in *Guardians of Galaxy Vol 2*.

This Dichotomy of success seems to prevail as the Friday release *The mummy* was panned down by the critics while Wonder woman continues to amuse the audience and critics alike, skyrocketing it towards commercial and critical success.

After experiencing the dark and broody world of *Logan* and diving into the psyched world of M Night Shyamalan's *Split*, the movie buffs might be struck with complacency with the onset of numerous mediocre films right now. However, Hollywood has already started offering a bit of what might turn out to be a treasure trove of cinematic bliss.

Following the release of *The Mummy*,



the month of June still has a few more anticipated flicks to offer such as the fifth instalment of the *Transformers* series, *The Last Knight*, which ups the ante with a war between the humans and the transformers. During the uncalled absence of Optimus prime from earth,

Mark Walberg reprising his role as Cade Yeager teams up with an English lord (Anthony Hopkins) to save the world.

Other notable mention for the month



is Edgar Wright's star studded crime thriller *Baby Driver* with Kevin Spacey, Jamie Foxx and Jon Bernthal standing tall as the supporting cast. The third instalment of fan favourite animated series, *Despicable me 3* will be the cherry on top with an army of minions ready to follow Gru (Steve Carell) on a mission to stop 80's child star Balthazar Bratt (Trey Parker) from achieving world domination. Adding to the delight on the animation front, Lightning McQueen and all the beloved talking cars will return in Disney-Pixar's *Cars 3D* as well.

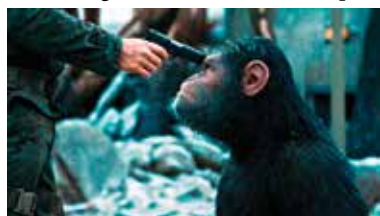
While the onset of monsoon is expected in the early July back home, Hollywood is all set to rain down at us with some expected blockbusters. Tom Holland's reprisal of his role as the Wall-crawler in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* after his outing in last year's *Captain America*:



Civil War is going to treat the marvel enthusiasts with the adventures of the teenage superhero. Under the tutelage of Tony Stark a.k.a Iron Man, he is expected to learn the value of humble beginnings for a superhero.

On the other hand, *War for the planet of Apes* sets up an epic end to the series as it pits the enhanced talking apes against an army of humans led by a ruthless colonel (Woody Harrelson) in an unrestrained conflict. The Primate Leader Caser gives up on the shared value for humanity after his kind suffers unimaginable loss, leading to a clash which would decide the fate of both the species.

Talking about ambitious sci-fi space



movies, Luc Besson's, *Valerian* has set up the hype and is going to fight it out with Christopher Nolan's war movie, *Dunkirk*. Being one of the most ambitious project by Nolan, *Dunkirk* portrays the harrowing experience of the allied troops in the 1940's before they were safely evacuated from the beaches.

August being the month of highest birth rate in the US has its fair share of cinematic births this year as it strikes from the beginning with the adaptation of the Stephen king's celebrated literary work, *The Dark Tower*. The titular character of the last gunslinger Roland Deschain in the movie is graced by Edris Alba's acting and the antagonist of the story-



line, the man in black is brought to life on screen by Academy Award winning actor Matthew McConaughey. The month doesn't end without its fair share of horror and comedy with the release of *Anabelle: Creation* and *The Hitman's Bodyguard*, starring Ryan Reynolds.

At the moment when it feels like that cinephiles would be satiated with the offerings of Tinsel town, the month of September and October will flood the gates of leisure with another set of promising projects including the likes of *IT*, *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*, *The Lego Ninjago Movie*, *The Blade Runner 2049* and *Saw: Legacy*.

With the release of *IT*, this year would be blessed with the second adaptation of a Stephen King classic wherein the evil clown pennywise strikes horror among the neighbourhood kids with the backdrop of children disappearances in the town of Derry.



'All is well that ends well' is an adage which the Movie-makers are conforming with the slated movies in November and December. Millennials are expected to go berserk at the year end with two major superhero ensemble offerings from DC and Marvel. In *Thor: Ragnarok*, the Norse god will be seen saving his home world and Asgardian culture against the all-powerful Hela, with Hulk and Doctor Strange playing major role in the story-line. While the world has seen two live-action *Avengers* movie in the recent past, cine-goers would experience the DC's



version of superhero team-up movie, appropriately titled, *Justice League* for the first time wherein Batman and wonder woman recruit a group of superheroes to face a greater threat following the events of *BvS: Dawn of Justice*. With the superhero frenzy floating around, adaptation of Agatha Christie's classic, *Murder on the Orient Express* is expected to provide the much needed gravity.

Putting an end to the overwhelming experience, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* and *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* would gush in the nostalgia setting up the perfect farewell for the year 2017.

Movies this week



THE MUMMY



PVR - Avani Riverside Mall, Shibpur 5:50PM

PVR - Diamond Plaza Mall, Jessore Road 4:00PM 6:20PM 8:40PM 11:00PM
PVR - Mani Square Mall, EM Bypass 8:20PM 10:50PM
RDB Cinema - Salt Lake 7:20PM 9:45PM
INOX - City Center 2 Mall, Rajarhat 9:10AM 11:35AM 5:00PM 7:25PM 9:50PM
INOX - City Center Mall, Salt Lake 8:50AM 11:10AM 1:35PM 4:00PM 6:25PM 8:50PM
INOX - Forum Mall, Elgin Road 8:50AM 11:10AM 1:35PM 4:00PM 6:25PM 8:50PM 11:15PM
INOX - Forum Rangoli Mall, Howrah 9:35AM 3:00PM 7:50PM 10:15PM
INOX - Metropolis Mall, Santoshpur 8:55AM 11:15AM 1:40PM 4:05PM 6:30PM 8:55PM 11:20PM
INOX - Quest Mall, Ballygunge 9:00AM 4:45PM 7:10PM 9:35PM
INOX - R D Mall, Liluah 9:10AM 2:00PM 6:50PM
INOX - South City Mall, Jadavpur 8:50AM 11:10AM 1:35PM 4:00PM 6:25PM 8:50PM 10:15PM 11:15PM
INOX - Swabhum, Phool Bagan 10:00AM 12:20PM 5:10PM 7:35PM 10:00PM
INOX Hind - Dharmatala 9:05AM 2:10PM 7:20PM 9:45PM
INOX Insignia - Quest Mall, Ballygunge 10:00AM 3:15PM 11:05PM
Cinepolis - Acropolis Mall, Rajdanga Road 1:50PM 4:15PM 6:40PM 9:05PM 11:30PM
Cinepolis - Lake Mall, Kalighat 1:45PM 4:10PM 6:40PM 9:05PM 11:30PM



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ARONI TAKHON

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WONDER WOMAN



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“When we, in public life, speak about icons of our nation and the world, we must always show utmost respect and sensitivity with language

- Mamata Banerjee in a tweet

FAKE DOCTOR CASES

CID team to set out for North Bengal to quiz CMOHs of three districts

The probing agency has also identified around 60 doctors who have fake registration numbers

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A team comprising senior officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) will be interrogating the Chief Medical Officer Health (CMOH) of three districts in North Bengal in connection with the fake doctor row.

The three districts whose CMOHs will be interrogated are Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and North Dinajpur.

The team will leave Kolkata soon for North Bengal and they will be questioning the doctors in the beginning of the next week.

It may be recalled that the first two fake doctors in the state were arrested from Dinajpur and further investigation had revealed that the arrest of those two doctors are nothing but tips of icebergs. Subsequently, the CID had arrested fake doctors from South Bengal



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

as well following investigation on the basis of the complaint lodged by the West Bengal Medical Council with Bidhanagar police station.

Sources said that the CID officers will be asking the CMOHs that how the fake doctors had managed to work in

government-run health establishments despite having fake certificates.

This comes at a time when CID has already identified around 60 fake doctors who are practicing in various private hospitals without valid registration numbers.

The investigating agency which has been conducting a probe in connection with this incident might arrest the accused doctors before filing a charge-sheet against them. On the basis of the investigation, the CID officers have prepared a list of suspected fake doctors

most of whom are from various private hospitals in the city and districts. These 60 doctors are practicing at various private hospitals in the city and chambers without proper registration numbers.

The CID officers from time to time submitted the list of suspected fake doctors to the West Bengal Medical Council to verify if they had any valid registration number from the Medical Council of India. During the probe, the investigating officers came to know about the whereabouts of many such fake doctors, while many others are still under scanner.

Meanwhile, North 24 Parganas' district police on Saturday have arrested one fake doctor who was illegally practicing in two of his chambers in Habra and Gobardanga area in North 24 Parganas for years. In view of a number of fake doctors being detected almost

every day, the local residents suspected that the accused Soumen Debnath who was using top degrees might not be a registered doctor and they wanted to see his certificates but he allegedly failed to produce any certificate.

The local people alleged that the accused has been using the degrees like MD and FRCS on his writing pad but he failed to produce any supporting documents. The local residents found discrepancies in his statement when they confronted him.

The local people then informed the matter to the police who in turn reached the spot and arrested the accused. During the investigation, police came to know that the accused used to run a pharmacy using another doctor's registration number. The police have started a detailed probe in this regard.

NARADA STING

CID to interrogate Narada chief in Cochin again

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A team comprising three officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will be interrogating Narada News CEO in Cochin.

Sources said that the officers from Kolkata will be reaching Delhi on Sunday morning from where they will be going to Cochin.

It may be mentioned that the Calcutta high court on Tuesday had directed CBI to find out whether Samuel had offered money to the leaders on his own or whether they had asked for money from him. The CBI counsel had submitted before the court that the investigating officer along with others from the agency will be questioning Samuel soon.

The CBI officers decided to go to Cochin to record the statement of Samuel as they were informed about his ill health and inability to turn up at Kolkata for the interrogation.

The CBI officers had earlier interrogated Samuel when the agency was undertaking a preliminary probe into the case as ordered by the Supreme Court. Subsequently, the case has been handed over to the CBI to undertake a complete investigation into the sting operation of Narada News.

It may be mentioned that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) also went to Cochin after Samuel didn't turn up at Kolkata after summoning repeatedly and interrogated him for two consecutive days.

The Kolkata Police have



The CBI officers decided to go to Cochin to record the statement of Samuel as they were informed about his ill health

also summoned Samuel in connection with the case of Munchipara police station in which a video footage featuring him was found in a laptop that was recovered from a hotel. A youth, who had fled from the hotel assessing that the police have conducted a raid, had been threatening a former Central minister to give money by showing the video footages.

Meanwhile, Iqbal Ahmed, deputy Mayor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), failed to turn up at the CBI office on Saturday owing to his ill health. He was summoned by the CBI in connection with the Narada News sting operation.

Six more officials to join team auditing GTA in Darjeeling

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Six more officials of the audit and accounts services will join the team that went to Darjeeling for special audit of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA).

With six more officials joining the team, there will be a total of 12 officials to carry out the entire process of the audit. The step to add more number of officials in the team has been taken to expedite the work of preparing the audit report.

It may be mentioned that the state government would be taking legal steps if any discrepancy is found in the audit report and FIR would be lodged against those who will be accused of the "misappropriation of funds".

According to the sources in

Nabanna, the six more officials will be going to Darjeeling soon. The team of the first six officials led by Deputy Commissioner Jayanta Majumdar has initiated the work to prepare the audit report on Friday.

The team will be submitting the preliminary report to the state government within 10 days and it was felt that more officials are needed to complete the task as early as possible.

GTA has received Rs 1,000 crore from the state government in the past three years and Rs 200 crore from the Centre in each of the past three years. It was alleged that the utilisation certificate of the money that has been given to the GTA to undertake developmental work was not submitted.

Creating better infrastructure in Bengal very important, says Suresh Prabhu

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: The railways will be investing as much as needed to create more infrastructure in Bengal, said the railway minister Suresh Prabhu. In the same breath, he took names of neighbouring countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar with which the Indian Railways is taking steps to develop railway connectivity.

Prabhu was speaking at the inaugural programme of several projects of the Eastern Railway, South Eastern and Metro Railways at Howrah Station on Saturday. He also inaugurated the commencement of construction work of underground Metro station at Esplanade of the East-West Metro Corridor. The Railway minister assured that all steps will be taken to resolve the issues those creating hindrances in undertaking the East-West Metro Corridor project in some parts. Stressing on the need of creating infrastructure, he said it will be of immense benefit if trains at a speed of 200 km per hour are made operational. But for that,



Union Railway minister Suresh Prabhu at Howrah Station on Saturday PIC/AMIT DATTA

necessary infrastructure has to be in place. He said that Kolkata was once an important commerce centre not only in the country but in entire Asia. People from across the world used to come and visit the city. The Budget allocation of railways for the state has also been increased by 300 percent in the past three years.

While speaking about further developing the infrastructure for the railway in the states in the eastern part of the country and to establish railway connectivity with neighbouring countries, Prabhu said: "We

had discussions when the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina came to Delhi a few days ago. Another minister from Bangladesh had also come two days ago and we held a meeting," Prabhu said that people will realise the difference when all the projects to create infrastructure will complete and there should be fast and efficient implementation of the projects. After speaking about the rich culture of Bengal, the railway minister asked the railway officials here that why Rabindrasangeet has not been played during the opening of the inaugural programme.

Prasun Banerjee, MP of Howrah, urged the Railway minister to take step to construct a flyover connecting Shalimar to Ramrajatala Station. He said: "This is a long-standing demand of the residents of the area as they face difficulties. They face a challenge when they need to take someone ill to the hospital as there is no fly-over," said Banerjee after appreciating the move to expedite the work of the East-west Metro project.

Villagers fall ill after consuming prasad

KOLKATA: Villagers fell ill after eating 'prasad' of a puja at a house in Nadia district's Nakashipara on Friday night. The district administration said that around 31 villagers fell ill after eating the prasad of a local resident; seven of whom were taken to a hospital in a critical condition. The district administration said that the puja was organised at one Sailendra Singha Roy's house.

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NIGERIAN NATIONAL DETAINED AT CITY AIRPORT

KOLKATA: Police detained a Nigerian youth from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport on Saturday morning suspecting his connection with a fake visa racket. The investigators found a fake travel visa from Abu Bakar Kundi, the man who was detained for interrogation. Airport sources said that he was detained at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport while he was going back to his country. He came from Bangladesh and landed in Kolkata to catch a connecting flight.

MPOST

Pregnant woman killed by in-laws

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: A pregnant woman was allegedly killed by her in-laws over dowry demands on Friday at Kuli Chaurastha, under the jurisdiction of Burwan police station in Murshidabad.

Police recovered one Anesha Biwi's body from her in-law's house on Saturday morning. The investigators suspected that the woman was choked to her death on Friday night by her in-laws who managed to escape from the spot.

The relatives of the deceased lodged an FIR with Burwan police and the cops started investigation on the basis of the complaint.

"We found strangulation marks on her neck which primarily suggests that she was choked to death. Her body was sent for post-mortem and we are waiting for the report," said

a police officer.

The investigators learnt that Anesha Biwi was married to Rahul Haque, a local youth in 2011. Rahul, an Army jawan, stays outside the state and her wife used to stay with her in-laws at Kuli Chaurastha.

Anesha Biwi's family had reportedly given Rs four lakh as dowry to Rahul's family. They had promised to provide Rs two lakh more at the end of the year.

Rahul's family wanted to get the money desperately and they started to torture Anesha Biwi. The investigators found that Rahul was never involved in torturing. But police would investigate his role in this incident that whether he was involved in any conspiracy or not. Anesha Biwi's parents and other relatives rushed to the spot from Birbhum's Mayureswar. Meanwhile, cops started raids to arrest the accused.

GJM declares indefinite bandh in Darjeeling over Gorkhaland demand

AMITAVA BANERJEE

DARJEELING: The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha declared an indefinite bandh in all government (state and Central), Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and Municipality offices and banks in the Darjeeling Hills from Monday.

An emergent GJM Central Committee meeting in Malidhura, five km from Darjeeling town resolved to walk the Gorkhaland path declaring the GTA an absolute failure. The indefinite office bandh announcement comes at a time when the state government has beefed up pressure on the GJM. While a special audit is underway at the GTA, police top brass are camping in Darjeeling and the Chief Minister declaring that law will take its own course in respect to the spurt of violence unleashed in the Hills on Thursday.

Addressing mediapersons after the central committee meeting, Roshan Giri, GJM general secretary stated: "From Monday, offices including state, Central, GTA, Municipality and banks will shut down indefinitely. Banks will however operate on Mondays and Thursdays of the weeks."

All offices will, however, remain open from June 27 till June 30. Though no reasons were given for the four-day exemption, it is a popular belief that usually payrolls are prepared during this period.

Indefinite office closures are not new in the Hills. With the GJM heralding in the agitation for Gorkhaland in 2007, seizing power from the Gorkha National Liberation Front, the Hills have been a witness to prolonged office bandhs which stretched for months only opening during time of salary follow-

ing which they used to be shut down again.

All emergency services including fire brigade office, health, water supply, conservation department of the Municipalities and judiciary have been exempted. "This is a non-cooperation movement. The state government collects huge revenue from the Hills. We want to dry this up. There will be picketers to enforce the office bandhs," remarked GJM president Bimal Gurung.

Incidentally, office bandhs along with general bandhs have been strictly countered by the state government in the past with pay cuts and discontinuation of service with Dies non. When questioned on this, Giri stated: "It is for Gorkhaland. The separate state demand is the aspiration of the public. They should be ready to sacrifice their salaries for Gorkhaland."

Giri stated that all signage in the Hills have to be in Nepali and English. On the Gorkhaland agitation front, fire torch rallies will be brought out on Mondays. On Thursdays and Sundays, the GJM will take out Gorkhaland rallies.

"We will hold an all party meeting for Gorkhaland on June 13. All political parties will be invited," stated Giri. Signature campaigns for Gorkhaland will take place throughout the Hills.

Gurung has written to the Home minister to initiate the process of Gorkhaland. "GTA is a failure. It was an interim arrangement. We want the Centre to adopt steps for the creation of Gorkhaland. A GJM team will soon meet the Prime Minister and Union Home minister with this demand. Only Gorkhaland can free us from the oppressive rule of Bengal," declared Giri.

Cops arrest two on charges of duping on pretext of GST training

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Police arrested two persons from a hotel in New Market on charges of cheating youth by assuring them training on Central government's Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Police said the accused Abhishek Tibriwal and Amit Saini had allegedly collected huge amount money from several people assuring them the training.

The accused had given advertisement in a newspaper

The accused had given advertisement in a newspaper. Several youth and their parents contacted them after going through the advertisement. They took Rs 5,500 from each of them and assured them giving training on GST on behalf of the Central government.

They organised a training programme at a hotel in New Market area where the victims started dropping in. The police had conducted a raid following a complaint lodged with New Market police station by an advocate of the Calcutta high court.

Parents of many other youth later went to the police station and showed the cut out of the advertisement that they had given in a daily. They also demanded punishment for the accused persons.

The police are trying to find out that whether the duo had earlier committed any such crimes and how many youth they have cheated till this time.

AGENCIES

'Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis on the rise in city'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Multi Drug resistant (MDR) Tuberculosis is on the rise in the city and outskirts in an alarming rate, said doctors who joined a programme at a city hotel organised by Tuberculosis Health Action Learning Initiative (THALI).

Rise of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis threatens to derail the progress in the country. Statistics say that 2 percent more paediatric TB cases have been reported from the city than the national average. Malnourished children in Bengal are more vulnerable to TB than others. Around 34 percent children are overweight which also contributes to the increasing number of victims.

Dr Sushmita Roy Chowdhury, a lung expert said that what is alarm-



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

ing is that more number of children are falling victims to the disease. The MDR TB is multiplying in hours and the early detection was necessary to check the disease. The disease can affect any organ if it was not detected and treated early. Earlier it was believed that upper-middle-class people were mostly affected with the

disease but now people belonging to lower-middle-class have also been affected by the disease.

She also pointed out the importance of continuing medication in case of a patients suffering from the disease up to a certain period of time. Many are found discontinuing medication which further complicates the

situation, Dr Roy Chowdhury said.

It may be mentioned that Kolkata is India's largest city with a population of 14.1 million (Census 2011). As per the 2016 TB report, the city reported 679 TB cases to the RNTCP from 5,281 registered private establishments. The lack of involvement of the private sector is, inter alia, a key contributor to under performance in TB outcomes, such as case detection and treatment success rate. According to the WHO 2016 Global Tuberculosis Report, every minute one person dies in TB in India.

Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has joined hands with the THALI to fight the disease. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed between the KMC and THALI to carry out a joint campaign and training to identify the victims.

Chouhan tries to quell farmers' frayed tempers

MPPOST BUREAU

BHOPAL: As the violent agrarian unrest entered its tenth day in Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday began his indefinite fast at the Dusslera Maidan here for restoration of peace and promised profitable prices to farmers for their produce.

"I know of the bumper crop production that has sent the prices crashing down in the state. I know your (farmers) problems," he said addressing a gathering, including cultivators, here. "The state government stands firm with the farmers. We are going to buy the farm produce and give profitable prices for it," he assured.

The farmers are, among other things, demanding satisfactory prices for their farm produce. Their stir turned violent when five persons died in police firing, while six others were injured on Tuesday in Mandsaur district.

"We have already bought huge quantity of onions at Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 8 per kg. Each onion of



Aam Aadmi Party activists being detained by the police during the 'Jail Bharo Andolan' protest against Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Jabalpur on Saturday

farmers will be bought. "Your labour won't go waste," he promised. "We are going to buy different varieties of pulses at MSP," the chief minister said.

Chouhan said his government was pro-farmer and recalled efforts underway to make farming a profitable business in MP.

He said the irrigation facil-

ity has increased manifold and due to abundant water, farmers were reaping rich harvest.

The BJP leader also hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for trying hard to make agriculture a profitable venture.

Chouhan said the government had extended Rs 4,800 crore as relief amount to farmers when their soyabean crop was destroyed last year. Sim-

Mandsaur peaceful, curfew relaxed for 12 hours

MANDSAUR: Mandsaur remained peaceful on Saturday with authorities relaxing curfew for 12 hours from 8 am to 8 pm. As the situation eased, markets reopened and locals stepped out to stock essentials such as vegetables and milk. District Collector O P Srivastava said normalcy was returning and there was no report of any untoward incident. Curfew, which was imposed after five people were killed in police firing during a farmers' protest on June 6, was relaxed for 12 hours in five police station areas of the district. Internet services, however, remained suspended in the area. "If the situation remains normal, curfew will be withdrawn tomorrow," Srivastava said.

MPPOST

ilarly, Rs 4,400 crore went as crop insurance compensation sum last year.

Earlier, the chief minister, clad in a kurta-pyjama and a Nehru jacket, with wife Sadhana on his side, commenced his indefinite fast around 11 AM at a 'pandal' erected in the BHEL Dusslera Maidan after former chief minister Kai-

lash Joshi put a 'tilak' on his forehead.

As the CM entered the venue, his supporters shouted "Kisan ka Samman hai, Shivraj Singh Chouhan hai, Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Bharat Mata ki Jai".

The Opposition Congress dubbed Chouhan's fast as a "nautanki" (drama or empty theatrics).

No corruption in BJP's three year rule: Venkaiah

OUR CORRESPONDENT

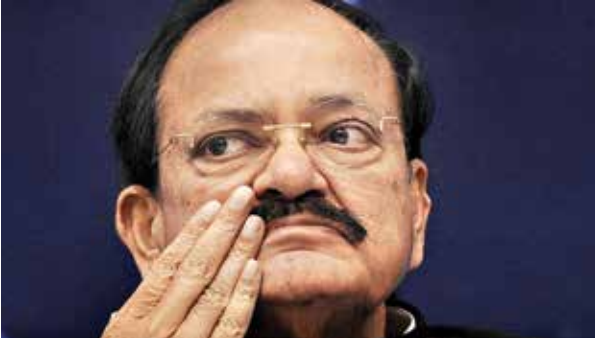
CHENNAI: The biggest achievement of the BJP's three-year rule was that there were no scams or corruption, Union Minister M Venkaiah Naidu said here on Saturday.

"Earlier, there was scam on land -- which is Commonwealth Games, scam under the land which is coal, scam in antariksha which is 3G," he told reporters.

"Compared to that (previous UPA regime) in three years of BJP rule there is no scam, no scandal no corruption. The overhead tank is very clean in Delhi," the Information and Broadcasting Minister said after inaugurating a seven-day exhibition as part of "MODI-fest" to mark the third anniversary of the Narendra Modi government. Stating that India was "recognised" and "respected" at the international level, he said the entire world is focusing on India.

"World economy is slowing down. The US' growth rate is 3 per cent. In India, it is around seven plus per cent," he said.

The Minister said that earlier (in the UPA regime) there



Venkaiah Naidu said that the visit of union ministers to various states to hold review meetings with ministers and officials was a new concept introduced by Modi. Centre and states must work together

was policy paralysis, but now there is a dynamic leader. "A leader recognised in the world," he said. "As per a survey, Modi will again be elected as Prime Minister. That is the mood of the nation," he said.

The visit of union ministers to various states to hold review meetings with ministers and officials was a new concept introduced by Modi. Centre

and states must work together.

"Team India is the concept," he said. He said he came to Chennai to meet Chief Minister K Palaniswami and the ministers to hold a review meeting and to know the requirements of the state.

Naidu said he had conducted such review meetings when J Jayalalithaa was the Chief Minister.

Eggs hurled at Union Agriculture Minister's vehicle; 5 arrested

BHUBANESWAR: The Youth Congress activists in Odisha on Saturday hurled eggs at Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh's vehicle and waved black flags near the state guest house in protest against the death of five farmers in Madhya Pradesh's Mandsaur district. The incident took place when the union minister left the state guest house and was on his way to attend a programme on "Sabka Sath Sabka Bikas" in Jatani.

"Though the eggs did not hit the minister, one or two eggs fell in front of his vehicle," according to an eye witness.

The police arrested five Youth Congress workers including its state president Loknath Maharathy in this connection, DCP Satyabrata Bhoi said. "Radha Mohan Singh has no moral right to remain in-charge of agriculture ministry after the killing of farmers in BJP ruled Madhya Pradesh," said Maharathy before he was taken into custody. Meanwhile, BJP strongly condemned the incident and blamed the state government for the incident. "The Congress has lost its credibility across the country. I suspect the egg were hurled at the instance of the ruling BJD," Odisha BJP leader in-charge Arun Singh said.

MPPOST

Former Kerala CM opposes plan for 2 new units at KNPP

OUR CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Veteran CPI-M leader V S Achuthanandan on Saturday expressed concern over the plans to set up two more reactors at Kundankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu's Tirunelveli district and said the move was condemnable.

The former Kerala Chief Minister said in a statement here that the existing units at Kudankulam Nuclear Power

Plant (KNPP) had triggered safety concerns.

India and Russia had last month signed an agreement for setting up of two more units of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tirunelveli.

The CPI-M had taken a stand from the beginning that work on the nuclear power plant had to be started only after addressing concerns of the people, but it was not considered, he said. "We have not received an answer so far to the question where residues



of the nuclear plant were being processed," he said. It was in these circumstances that the Centre had signed an agreement with Russia for setting up fifth and sixth reactors at the plant, he pointed out.

Oppn demands Shah's apology for *chatur baniya* remark

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Attacking BJP chief Amit Shah for describing Mahatma Gandhi as a "chatur baniya", Opposition parties on Saturday demanded that he should apologise to the nation and insisted that the "denigrating" remark is withdrawn.

The parties also alleged that the comment "exposed" the BJP's "contempt" for the father of the nation.

Taking strong exception to the remark, Congress spokesperson Ran-deep Surjewala said, "Rather than fighting casteism, they (BJP) identified even the father of the nation with his caste. This shows the character and ideology of the ruling party and its president. Where will these people take the country?"

"We demand that Amit Shah, BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologise to the country, the families of freedom fighters and every citizen for insulting the freedom movement... and the father of the nation," he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC president Mamata Banerjee said Shah "should withdraw his comment and apologise for it. It is a deliberate act. It is unfortunate, uncalled for and unethical". CPI general secretary S Sudhakar Reddy echoed Banerjee's views on the issue.

"As father of the nation everybody should respect Mahatma Gandhi. Calling a leader respected world over as a baniya is in bad taste," he added.

CPI national secretary D Raja said Shah, being president of the ruling party, should be aware of the language

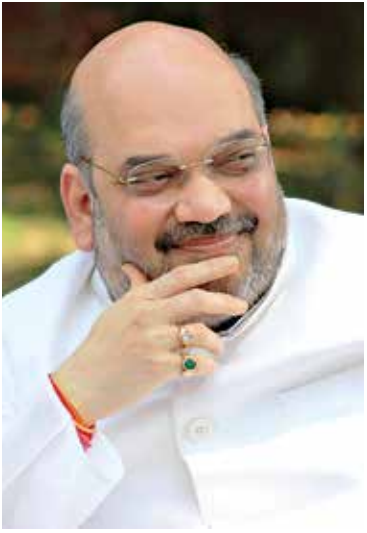
to be used while describing a leader of Gandhi's stature.

"We have no problem when he criticises Congress or other opposition parties (during political discourse). But dragging Mahatma Gandhi's name, using such a language is denigrating Gandhi," Raja said.

According to former CPI (M) general secretary Prakash Karat, Shah only revealed the BJP's actual opinion about Gandhi. "It just reveals the contempt the BJP-RSS has for Gandhiji," he said.

The BJP chief had yesterday referred to Mahatma Gandhi as a "chatur baniya" (a clever Baniya - the trading caste) while addressing a gathering in Raipur.

Shah's also said the Congress had never been a party based on principles and it was merely a "special purpose vehicle" to secure freedom.



Dangal actress escapes unhurt in road accident



OUR CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR: Dangal actress Zaira Wasim escaped unhurt after her car met with an accident in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Saturday.

The 16-year-old actress was travelling with her friend when the accident took place on Boulevard Road on the banks of Dal Lake late Friday night, they said. According to the eyewitnesses, the vehicle was moving at a high speed and the driver

lost control over the vehicle. The car jumped over the footpath and hit the parapet along the lake.

The car, according to some reports, belonged to a local politician, police said.

The police said since there were no reports of injuries or damage to public property, no case has been registered in the matter. Zaira shot to fame with her portrayal of younger version of wrestler Geeta Phogat in Aamir Khan's blockbuster "Dangal".

Govt, IT heads to prepare digital economy roadmap

DHIRENDRA KUMAR

NEW DELHI: In a first, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government has initiated a consultation process with the captains of Information Technology (IT) industry to prepare a roadmap for the promotion of digital economy in the country. The objective of the scheduled high-level round-table meeting with IT industry leaders is to fast-track the digitalisation of the Indian economy before 2019 parliamentary elections.

The meeting, which is scheduled to be held on June 16, would be chaired by Union Minister for Electronics & IT Ravi Shankar Prasad on the direction of PM Modi.

According to multiple sources in the government, every big name in the IT industry is expected to take part in the brainstorming session and discuss the challenges and solutions for the industry directly with the government.



"The meeting would also help in building confidence among IT industry players that the government is serious about the sector and ready to extend every support. The move would help in encouraging IT sector players to increase their investments in the sector," the source said.

"The platform would act as a bridge to resolve the apprehensions of the industry, if any, as they would directly discuss their issues with the govern-

ment. The meeting would also be meaningful for the IT sector as the industry is sceptical about the implications of GST roll-out," the source said.

"Given the fact that the Digital India is fast changing the digital profile of the nation, the new digital initiatives would not only create new job opportunities for youth but will also create exciting business opportunities in the ICT and related sectors," the source said, adding that it's the time to

take this partnership between industry and government to the next level.

"It's a move to develop the digital economy and bring it at such a level that it could be used to showcase that this government has really worked on its party's manifesto, which has digitalisation at top of the agenda," the source said.

"The meeting is also very important in the backdrop of recent fears of layoffs in IT industry. It's expected that a viable roadmap would come up from the high-level meeting, which will take care of not only the falling model of IT sector but also put India on the place they were formally on the digital map," the source said.

According to sources, heads of Microsoft, Google, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys Technologies, et al would be present in the first of its kind meet to develop a roadmap for the 1 trillion dollars digital economy of India.

NATION BRIEFS

RAINS BRING RELIEF TO ODISHA FOR THE SECOND DAY

BHUBANESWAR: Prolonged rainfall triggered by low pressure provided the much needed respite from scorching heat for the second day today across Odisha, where sunstroke has claimed 17 lives this summer. The mercury remained below the 40 degree Celsius mark across the state during the day barring two places in western Odisha. Balangir and Titlagarh recorded maximum temperature of 41 degree Celsius and 40.5 degrees respectively, the Met office said. As the state had virtually turned a cauldron during the peak of summer, the 40 degree mark had been breached daily at many places during peak summer. Bhubaneswar saw the mercury fall to 34 degree celsius on Saturday.

THREE ELEPHANTS ELECTROCUTED IN BORAPADA JUNGLE IN ODISHA

DHENKANAL: Three elephants, including a calf, were apparently electrocuted in Borapada jungle under Kapilas Forest Range near here, forest officials said on Saturday. The carcasses of three elephants two adult females and one calf were found decomposed and forest officials suspected that they might have died two to three days ago. Their carcasses were found near a high voltage electric wire, they said. "I have asked the electricity department to probe whether the jumbos died coming in touch with electric wire," said Energy Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallick.

Coal India will continue to remain a single entity: Goyal

India on track to become top global steel producer

MUMBAI: Union minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday said state-run Coal India will continue to remain a single entity and will not be allowed to split further.

The government's policy think-tank NITI Aayog has recently recommended breaking up of Coal India into various subsidiaries.

"It is not at all advisable and we are not taking up that recommendation at all. Coal India will continue to be one entity," Goyal said when asked about the Niti Aayog's recommendation of splitting the 'Maharatna' company.

Goyal, who is the minister of state for power, coal, new and renewable energy (independent charge) was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an energy summit here on Saturday.

NITI Aayog vice chairman Arvind Panagariya had recently said that unbundling of Coal India will create competition and increase transparency in pricing.

It is part of the National Energy Plan which NITI Aayog is going to finalise by July.

Meanwhile, Union minis-



Union minister Piyush Goyal also said that the Centre will soon come out with a scheme to revive various stalled power plants in the country which are half way through

ter Piyush Goyal also said that the Centre will soon come out with a scheme to revive various stalled power plants in the country. The broad polices to make stranded projects viable was decided in a meeting between the Ministry of Power and lenders earlier this week.

"We have had a discussion with lenders. We have broadly

worked out the contours of a scheme under which we will be able to complete all the stalled projects which are half way through," Goyal, who is minister of state for power, coal, new and renewable energy (independent charge) told reporters on the sidelines of an energy summit organised here on Saturday.

Goyal said the country is fac-

ing a situation of many projects having being initiated despite the fact that the demand growth at a particular trajectory did not warrant that.

"Therefore, we have nearly 20,000-25,000 mega watt of thermal power projects which are either stressed or potentially going to be stranded," Goyal said.

Will improve Railways infrastructure: Suresh Prabhu

KOLKATA: The government is focusing on improving the infrastructure of Indian Railways to make it more profitable, Railways Minister Suresh Prabhu said here on Saturday.

"Indian Railways was in a vicious circle. We want to change it. We have been focusing on bringing investments and improving the financial health of the Indian Railways with an efficient service provider," Prabhu said here, while dedicating a slew of projects.

He said the railways prepared an investment plan of more than Rs 8 lakh crore and it finalised Rs 3.75 lakh crore of capital expenditure to ramp up the infrastructure.

"Around 16 per cent network (of railways) used to handle more than 60 per cent traffic while the rest of the network handles 40 per cent traffic. Capacity utilisation becomes 150-160 per cent. That is why we have decided to invest where it is required the most," he said, adding the work for doubling or tripling of railway lines of 16,500 km has been approved in the last three years.

The minister said 42 per cent of railway lines are electrified. "We have decided to double it in the next five years." He said the speed of implementation of projects has increased more than two times.

In the last three years, steps have been taken to commission 50,000 mega watt capacity power plants, which were stalled

Union minister Piyush Goyal

He said the government has launched a coal linkage policy called Scheme to Harness and Allocate Koyla (Coal) Transparently in India (Shakti), which will help many power projects to become viable.

"Those which are not viable even after that scheme (Shakti), we are looking at a comprehensive solution which will take care of them going forward with the collective efforts of the bankers, the national utilities and the financial institutions," the minister said.

He said in the last three years, steps have been taken to expand power transmission and also to commission 50,000 mega watt capacity power plants, which were stalled.

In order to financially turnaround electricity distribution companies (Discoms), the government in 2015 had already launched a Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (Uday) scheme.

"The Uday scheme focuses in strengthening all the discoms and I have a strong belief that in next two to two-and-a-half years, all discoms will be profitable," he added.

'Steel processing unit to be operational soon in HP'

NEW DELHI: A steel processing unit, which involves an investment of Rs 76 crore, in Himachal Pradesh will be operationalised in few months, Steel Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh said on Saturday.

"The SPU project in Kangra in Himachal Pradesh ... will be operationalised within the next couple of months. This involves

NEW DELHI: India as a steel bright spot is highly encouraging and is on track to become a top global producer, says an industry body.

According to the latest report from BMI Research, demand from construction, automotive and infrastructure industries continues to accelerate.

The report has put down the sector's success to the government's push to raise capacity in order to meet demand from construction, automotive and infra sectors, said the Steel Users Federation of India (SUFI) in a statement on Saturday.

SUFI President Nikunj Turakhia said, "In recent years, the Indian steel industry has showcased a progressive output trend y-o-y."

Being recognised as a "bright spot" is highly encouraging as well as a large responsibility at the same time, he said, adding that with the introduction new steel and anti-dumping policies, India is on the path to become one of the top steel producers. The report highlighted that Indian steel giants such as Steel Authority of India



BMI Research has forecast India's steel output to clock an average annual growth of 8.9% during 2017-21, higher than 2.9% in 2012-16

Ltd (SAIL) and Tata Steel as the major drivers of such growth.

BMI Research has forecast India's steel output to clock an average annual growth of 8.9 per cent during 2017-21, higher than 2.9 per cent in 2012-16. India's steel output would grow to 128.6 mt by 2021 from 88.4 million tonnes (mt) in 2017 and the country's share of global steel production will accelerate to 7.7 per cent in 2021 from 5.4

per cent in 2017, it added.

Ahead of the GST Council meeting on Sunday, Turakhia expressed concern over the headwinds faced by the sector. He has also urged the government to relax imposition of GST penalties and prosecution.

SUFI was part of the delegation that recently presented its case on GST to Maharashtra Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar in Mumbai.

Five states in race for Niti Aayog's health programme

NEW DELHI: Five states have made it to the Niti Aayog's shortlist under a programme that aims to build three future 'role model' states for better health systems.

The government think tank had invited all states and UTs to participate in the programme named as Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital (SATH).

Sixteen states expressed their interest, of which 14 made their presentations to a committee headed by Niti Aayog member Bibek Debroy.

"Of these fourteen states, five have been shortlisted," Niti Aayog said in a statement on Saturday.

The think tank however did not disclose the names of the states that have been shortlisted.

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh had presented their project proposal to the Niti panel.

The panel is headed by NITI Aayog member Bibek Debroy and comprise CEO Amitabh Kant as well as a representative from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

"Three will be selected on the basis of further evaluations and objective assessment of criteria affecting the potential for impact and likelihood of success," Niti Aayog said.



16 states expressed their interest, of which 14 made their presentations to a committee headed by Niti Aayog member Bibek Debroy. Of these 14 states, 5 have been shortlisted

"Metrics such as MMR, IMR, incidence of malaria and others have been considered for determining potential impact while density of doctors and nurses, compliance to IPHS norms are some of the metrics used to determine likelihood of success," it said further.

The programme will be launched in the three selected states after the signing of MoUs.

Niti Aayog said that the programme will be implemented by it along with McK-

insey & Company and IPE Global consortium, who were selected through a competitive bidding process.

Under SATH, Niti will work in close collaboration with the state machinery to design a robust roadmap of intervention, develop a programme governance structure, set up monitoring and tracking mechanisms, hand-hold state institutions through the execution stage and provide support on a range of institutional measures to achieve the end objectives.

GSTN asks Suvidha Providers to get systems audited as per ISO

NEW DELHI: With the looming July 1 deadline for new indirect tax regime, GST Network has asked the GST Suvidha Providers to get their systems audited as per ISO standards before they start feeding data into the network.

This assumes significance as the country is gearing up for an overhaul of its indirect tax regime and thousands of businesses will upload their purchase-sale invoices on the GST Network (GSTN) on a daily basis.

GST Network - the company building the IT backbone for the new tax structure - has also asked the 34 GST Suvidha Providers (GSPs) to ensure security of their systems.

The GSPs will assist taxpayers in interacting with GST systems, from registration of entity to uploading of invoice details to filing of returns under the new regime.

"GSPs were told that they must have their systems audited as per the prevailing ISO standard on security from one of the auditors on the panel of CERT-IN before they connect with and start push-



ing data into the GST System," a finance ministry statement said.

At a meeting with GSPs, GSTN Chairman Navin Kumar assessed their preparedness. Besides, GSTN presented the timelines of the release of updated specifications for the new GST Return forms.

"GSTN also published and explained the method and manner in which the GSPs would be able to integrate with the GST system to be able to submit all the return forms on behalf of their clients and tax payers," the statement added.

GSTN also advised all GSPs to continue to visit the GSTN ecosystem webpage on the GSTN website (www.gstn.org/ecosystem) for all information, updates and guidelines, which are regularly updated.

For the convenience of tax-

payers, GSTN has also come up with an offline tool where data on invoices (business to business), exports, supplies to consumers etc., which are required to create GSTN-1 can be entered in an excel sheet in offline mode.

The tool can be run to upload all such data on the portal. Only while uploading the data on GST portal, internet connectivity will be required.

The offline tool will be provided free of cost and taxpayers will be able to download it from the GST portal (www.gst.gov.in) from last week of June.

GSTN will also release the format of excel in which businesses will start maintaining the data from July 1 for using the offline tool for uploading the invoice data and other return data.

Taxpayers using offline tool will not require services of any GSPs. Similarly, those having small number of business-to-business invoices, like retailers and small traders, can do the data entry on portal itself and they will also not require the services of GSPs, the statement said.

Commerce ministry engaging with stakeholders to resolve GST issues

NEW DELHI: The commerce and industry ministry is organising consultations with all stakeholders, including exporters, to resolve their issues pertaining to the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), under the ministry, has constituted a GST facilitation cell to assist and advise exporters, trade and industry for smooth transition from present regime to the GST.

"DGFT also convened a meeting of stakeholders to understand the issues being faced by them in GST system. These issues have been taken up with department of revenue and GSTN," the commerce ministry said in a statement.

Most of issues have been resolved by the department and GST Network, it added.

It said that exporters can email their queries concerning GST and pertaining to foreign trade policy to the facilitation



cell. "All regional offices of DGFT have also constituted GST facilitation cell and the cell would be headed by head of the regional office," it said.

The ministry has announced to align the mid-term review of foreign trade policy with roll out of GST for the convenience of exporters and industry. Introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a step in the reform of indirect taxation in India. The GST is governed by GST Council and its Chairman is Union Finance Minister of India - Arun Jaitley. GST is scheduled to be rolled out from July 1.

CAIT for nine months interim relief against any lapses

NEW DELHI: Traders body CAIT on Saturday demanded from the GST Council a nine-months interim period during which no penal action should be taken against them for any procedural lapses. Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said that the preparedness at the level of small businesses is at a low stage and about 60 per cent of traders are yet to adopt digital technology for GST compliance.

"Interim period from July 1 to March 31, 2018 will give ample opportunity to the traders to understand GST law, rules and regulations," CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said in a statement. CAIT has submitted its representation to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister urging for an interim period, he added.

Passenger plane market to double within 20 years: Airbus

PARIS: Airbus said that it expects the market for large passenger planes to more than double in the next 20 years driven by growth from Asian markets. Raising its previous forecasts for the next two decades, the European aircraft maker also said a slowdown in orders over the past several months did not signal a drop in the market.

"The trend is positive," said Airbus chief executive Fabrice Bregier.

Airbus last week had warned it expects slow orders

this year and perhaps next year, too, but said it was a normal part of the business cycle.

The planemaker predicts the need for 35,000 new planes worth \$5.3 trillion over the next two decades, an increase from last year's estimates.

"Air travel is remarkably resilient to external shocks and doubles every 15 years," said its chief operating officer for customer relations, John Leahy.

"Asia Pacific continues to be an engine for growth, with domestic China to become the world's largest market," AGENCIES

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US investigators seek Comey memos, Trump tapes

WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives and Senate investigators have sought from James Comey memos of his conversations with President Donald Trump and any records, including audio tapes, the White House may have of their discussions, amid a raging row over the FBI chief's firing.

The leaders of the House Russia investigation, Michael Conaway, a Texas Republican, and Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, sent a request directly to Comey for copies of his memos, CNN reported.

They sent a separate request to Trump's White House counsel, Don McGahn, for any record the White House had of their meetings.

The House requested Comey and the White House provide the records, including tapes if they exist, by June 23.

The Senate judiciary committee, meanwhile, sent a request to Columbia University law professor Daniel Richman for Comey's memos.



Richman confirmed Thursday that he was the friend Comey testified who had discussed the memos with the press.

Richman has been in touch with Senate judiciary through special counsel Bob Mueller's office, and that there will be

movement after the weekend, a source was quoted as saying.

"The matter will be addressed on Monday," the source said.

It was unclear if the memos will be turned over to Congress on Monday, the report said.

Four members of the Senate

Judiciary Committee, including Chairman Chuck Grassley and ranking Democrat Dianne Feinstein, had set a Friday deadline for Richman to respond after Comey testified that he gave the memo to him and asked him to anonymously disclose it to the media in an attempt to prompt

the naming of a special counsel.

The Senate committee sent a request for Comey's memos from the FBI on and a separate request to the White House for any records kept by Trump, on May 17.

Comey testified Thursday that Trump asked him to drop an investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn and implied Trump may have become the subject of investigation himself for interfering in the FBI's work.

Trump said he is "100 per cent" willing to testify under oath on Comey meetings and tell the FBI Special Consul Robert Mueller that he never asked FBI to stop investigating.

Trump also denied asking Comey for a pledge of loyalty.

"One hundred per cent...I would be glad to tell him (special counsel Robert Mueller) exactly what I told you," Trump said at a joint news press conference in the Rose Garden of the White House with the visiting Romanian President. AGENCIES

“ Britain is part of Europe, even if it will no longer be part of the European Union
German chancellor Angela Merkel

Trump 'ready to testify' over Comey conversations

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump has said he was "100 per cent" willing to testify over his conversations with James Comey after the sacked FBI chief made explosive revelations to Congress, alleging that the President tried to stop a probe into the Russian interference in the US polls.

Trump's assertion came after he branded Comey as a "leaker" and claimed "total and complete vindication" after ousted FBI director's testimony before a Senate Committee.

Trump said he is "100 per cent" willing to testify under oath on Comey meetings and tell the FBI Special Consul Robert Mueller that he never asked FBI to stop investigating.

Trump also denied asking Comey for a pledge of loyalty.

"One hundred per cent...I would be glad to tell him (special counsel Robert Mueller) exactly what I told you," Trump said at a joint news press conference in the Rose Garden of the White House with the visiting Romanian President.

Trump made the remarks while responding to questions



on Comey's explosive testimony in which he accused the president of trying to stop a probe into the alleged Russian interference in the US elections last year. "No collusion, no obstruction, he's a leaker, but we want to get back to running our great country," Trump said.

"Yesterday showed no collusion, no obstruction. We are doing really well," he said.

President Trump, however, refused to say whether his private conversations with Comey were taped. AGENCIES

He said people would know about it very soon. "I'll tell you about that maybe sometime in the near future," Trump said.

"That was an excuse by the Democrats who lost an election that some people think they shouldn't have lost, because it's almost impossible for the Democrats to lose the Electoral College, as you know. You have to run up the whole East Coast and you have to win everything as a Republican, and that's just what we did," Trump said. AGENCIES

Sikh-American called 'Osama' in racist incident

NEW YORK: A Sikh-American post-doctoral fellow at New York University was called "Osama" by a teenager, in a fresh incident of racism towards members of the community. Simran Jeet Singh, a post-doctoral fellow at NYU's Center for Religion and Media and a senior religion fellow for advocacy group Sikh Coalition, recalled the encounter in an essay on NBC News. Singh also writes about how he did not remain silent at being called racial slurs and confronted the young black man. Singh said he was running along the Hudson River in the city on Thursday, heading from his office at NYU to his home. Even though he had headphones in his ears, he could still hear someone shouting at him, "Osama! Osama!" along with another inappropriate expletive. When he turned to see who was yelling, he saw a group of three young teenagers. Singh said he slowly approached the teenager who had shouted at him. As Singh approached him, the teenager said he was joking and apologised. AGENCIES

May finalises cabinet amid minority govt talks with DUP

LONDON: Embattled British Prime Minister Theresa May on Saturday began finalising her cabinet of ministers and held talks with the Democratic Unionist Party to determine the contours of the party's support for her minority government.

Many of the key cabinet posts have already been declared as unchanged from the previous government, including Philip Hammond as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Amber Rudd as home secretary, Boris Johnson as foreign secretary, David Davis as Brexit secretary and Michael Fallon as the in-charge of the ministry of defence.

May remains in 10 Downing Street with a much diminished power base after her Conservative party fell short of an overall majority in the House of Commons, the lower house of the UK Parliament, as the general election results threw up a hung Parliament yesterday.

She reportedly abandoned plans for a major reshuffle of



her cabinet to keep her senior Tory party colleagues on her side.

She is expected to meet with her newly-reassembled ministerial team over the weekend in an attempt to quell any rebellion within Tory ranks.

While May's top team has been left unchanged, she will have to fill gaps in her ministerial team after nine junior ministers lost their seats in what has

-- describing the tie-up as a government of "certainty".

"This government will guide the country through the crucial Brexit talks that begin in just 10 days and deliver on the will of the British people by taking the United Kingdom out of the European Union," she had said.

However, there have been serious doubts on the stability of such a government and May's own leadership of the Tory party.

A snap survey conducted by the Conservative Home website revealed that 60 per cent of party members believe May should quit while just 37 per cent of the 1,500 members who took part said she should stay in her post.

Boris Johnson, Amber Rudd and David Davis are among the possible replacements, should May be forced out by her own party in the coming months.

Many of the party members are also uncomfortable with the kind of deal that will have to be struck with the DUP, a socially

conservative party that takes an opposing stance on issues such as abortion and same sex marriages.

There is also anger among the party membership over the huge election losses and May's gamble to call a snap general election a full three years ahead of when it would have been officially due in 2020.

Instead of a projected landslide in her favour, May ended up throwing away the small majority that the former David Cameron-led party had won in the 2015 general election.

The Conservatives finished the election with 318 seats, eight short of the 326 needed for a majority, and the party is now dependent on the 10 DUP MPs to ensure legislation can be passed through a hostile House of Commons.

The DUP finds itself in the unique position of being king-makers and are expected to demand a host of concessions for their support to shore up a Theresa May-led shaky Tory government. AGENCIES

May's 2 closest advisers quit after election debacle

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May's two closest advisers, Nick Timothy and Fiona Hill, resigned on Saturday after taking responsibility for the poll debacle for the Conservative Party which lost its majority in the House of Commons.

Timothy and Hill, considered part of May's inner circle of confidants as her joint chiefs of staff, quit their Downing Street top jobs after coming under fire as the duo responsible for convincing May to call a snap general election with claims that she was assured a landslide victory.

According to reports, May had been given an ultimatum by her own Conservative party colleagues that the pair had to go if she wanted to avert a leadership challenge on Monday.

The duo are widely credited with running May's election campaign, which focused attention entirely on May rather than the Cabinet, a move that clearly did not pan out well as the Tories ended up losing their majority in the House of Commons and winning just 318 seats, well short of the 326 overall majority and forced to form a minority government with the support of Northern Ireland's regional Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

Timothy accepted responsibility for his role in the Conservative party manifesto, criticised by many party MPs for its policies on social care and pension, which are believed to have cost heavily in the polls.

In a statement confirming his departure, Timothy said: "Clearly, the general election result was a huge disappointment. I take responsibility for my part in this election campaign."

"In particular, I regret the decision not to include in the manifesto a ceiling as well as a floor in our proposal to help meet the increasing cost of social care," he said. AGENCIES

WORLD BRIEFS

US MAN INDICTED FOR HATE CRIME IN KANSAS BAR SHOOTING

WASHINGTON: The man accused of shooting Indian engineer Srinivas Kuchibhotla and his colleague Alok Madasani at a bar in Kansas has been indicted by a federal grand jury on hate crime and firearms charges, the media reported. The indictment on Friday accused Adam Purinton, 52, of Olathe, of shooting and killing Kuchibhotla in February because of his "actual and perceived race, colour, religion and national origin", Kansas' local KMBC 9 News reported. The indictment also accused Purinton of attempting to kill Madasani "because of his actual and perceived race, colour, religion and national origin".

LONDON BRIDGE ATTACKERS HAD 'PLANNED TO USE 7.5 TONNE LORRY'

LONDON: Had the Pakistani-origin London Bridge attacker succeeded in hiring a 7.5 tonne truck, the number of casualties in the carnage would have been much higher, the British media reported on Saturday. Ringleader Khuram Shazad Butt's efforts to hire the bigger truck failed when his payment was declined, the BBC reported. 27-year-old Butt had ganged up with two other accomplices to carry out the terror attack on June 3 that killed eight persons and injured nearly 50.

ALL IS NOT WELL BETWEEN CHINA AND PAKISTAN

BEIJING: In a rare snub to all-weather ally Pakistan, Chinese President Xi Jinping skipped a customary meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the SCO summit in Astana after the murder of two Chinese teachers in Balochistan. Sharif returned from Astana after attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit on the sidelines of which he met Presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Russia. Conspicuously absent was a meeting with Xi. Chinese state-run media highlighted Xi's meetings with Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Xi's unprecedented snub followed deep disappointment and grief among Chinese public over the slaying of the two Chinese citizens who were kidnapped last month from Quetta in Balochistan. The two were brutally murdered reportedly by Islamic State (IS) militants. The news of their murders was made public ahead of the SCO summit held on June 8-9.

Gulf countries assure welfare of Indians in Qatar amid crisis



NEW DELHI: India on Saturday said it is closely monitoring the situation in the Gulf where several countries led by Saudi Arabia have cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar and that the countries have assured continued support for the welfare and well-being of the Indians living there. India also said that the countries should resolve their differences through dialogue.

"We are closely following the emerging situation in the Gulf region in the wake of the recent decision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and some other countries to break diplomatic relations with the State of Qatar," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement. "We are of the view that all parties should resolve their differences through a process of constructive dialogue and peaceful negotiations based on well-established international principles of mutual respect, sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries," it said.

On Monday, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates

(UAE), Bahrain and Egypt cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar on allegations of supporting terrorism, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Yemen, Libya, the Maldives and Jordan also took similar steps. Indians, at 6,30,000, comprise the largest expatriate community in gas-rich Qatar which is by size a small nation. The statement said India was closely monitoring the situation in the Gulf and was also in regular contact with the regional countries. "Their authorities have assured us continued support for welfare and well-being of the resident Indian communities," it stated.

"Indian expatriates in the region are advised to contact the Indian embassy or consulate concerned should they require assistance or advise consequent to the developing situation," it added. Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Doha has also issued an advisory to expatriate Indians in the Gulf country asking them to remain updated about the developments and not to believe in rumours. AGENCIES

13 Philippine marines killed in fighting with militants

ILIGAN: Thirteen Philippine marines were killed in fierce fighting with Muslim militants who have laid siege to southern Marawi city for nearly a month in the biggest single-day loss for government forces, the military said on Saturday.

The marines were conducting a house-to-house search for militants allied with the Islamic State group who are still occupying parts of Marawi when the battle erupted on Friday, said Lt Colonel Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman for the Philippine army's 1st Infantry Division.

He said that about 30-40 militants used civilians as human shields, making it hard for troops to operate, and also positioned themselves in the city's many mosques.

Forty other marines were

The marines were conducting a house-to-house search for militants allied with the Islamic State group who are still occupying parts of Marawi when the battle erupted

wounded, he said.

The government had earlier said that the unrest had left 20 civilians, 134 militants and 39 government troops dead.

Hundreds of thousands of

people have fled the city, parts of which were reduced to rubble by fighting and government airstrikes in an attempt to dislodge the rebels.

"This temporary setback has not diminished our resolve a bit," said military spokesman Col. Edgar Arevalo. "It instead primed up our determination to continue our prudent advances to neutralise the enemy, save the innocent lives trapped in the fight, and set the conditions for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi."

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has declared martial law in the Mindanao region, the southern third of the Philippines and home to a decades-long Muslim separatist rebellion. AGENCIES

NASA deep sea expedition to prepare astronauts for Mars journey

WASHINGTON: A team of 22 persons including a university professor is set for a deep sea expedition by NASA to test simulated spacewalks, time delays in space communication and the effect of ketogenic (high-fat, low-carb) diet on astronauts who will be part of future space missions, including to Mars.

The crew from NASA's Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO) will splash down to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean on June 18 where they will spend 10 days in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary



located 10 km off the coast of Key Largo.

Living and working at the bottom of the ocean mimics the microgravity (or harsh) envi-

ronment astronauts experience in space.

For the experiment about ketogenic diet, NASA has chosen Dominic D'Agostino,

Associate Professor from the University of South Florida (USF) for his research conducted at the USF Hyperbaric Biomedical Research Laboratory (HBRL) on how extreme environments impact the human body, the university said in a statement. D'Agostino is the only member not affiliated with NASA or European Space Agency (ESA). He will be put on a ketogenic diet -- a high-fat, adequate-protein, low-carbohydrate diet -- to understand the impact of extreme environments on the human body. AGENCIES

Acid test for Captain Kohli as India face SA in do-or-die tie

LONDON: Virat Kohli will be facing the toughest battle of his nascent ODI captaincy career when defending champions India take on South Africa in a do-or-die virtual 'quarter-final' of the ICC Champions Trophy, here on Sunday.

Their confidence shaken after Sri Lanka effortlessly out-batted them in a high-scoring encounter, the Indian team and Kohli in particular will be keen to ensure that South Africa are continued to be known as "chokers".

Call it irony, if India lose the game, it will be defending champions making an exit even before the semi-final.

If the Proteas lose, then the current No.1 ranked ODI side would be ousted before the last four stage.

A defeat will have the skeptics blaming the speculated off-the-field issues for the a performance.

In such a backdrop, Kohli will be under huge pressure with margin of error being next to nil.

For AB de Villiers, it will be an opportunity to prove that self-imposed exile from five-day game has not affected his limited overs skills.

With three quality left-handers -- Quinton de Kock,



JP Duminy and David Miller -- in the South African lineup, Kohli can't afford to keep Ravichandran Ashwin in cold storage.

More so after knowing what can happen to Ravindra Jadeja when there is absolutely nothing in the strip.

Ashwin atleast has some natural variations, including the off-break which is his stock ball. The proud performer that he is, Ashwin will be smarting

after being excluded in the first two games and it can only work positively in India's favour.

However, skipper Kohli's leadership acumen and understanding of the current situation will be under scrutiny depending upon the kind of playing XI he opts for the next game.

Ashwin's entry into the playing XI looks logical but he certainly won't replace Jadeja as two spinners are likely to play

against the Proteas, who are not known to be comfortable against slow bowlers.

The other big factor is Jadeja's electric fielding inside the circle and the powerful arm from anywhere at the boundary line. Jadeja can save at least 15 runs per match which makes him an useful player in this format.

Neither can Hardik Pandya be dropped as his pyrotechnics at No 7 is just what is

needed from a batsman used as a floater in the order.

Jasprit Bumrah is another specialist bowler, who is a certainty in the playing XI, with his ability to bowl Yorkers at will at the death.

Therefore it will either be Bhuvneshwar Kumar or Umesh Yadav, who may have to make way for Ashwin.

In the second Powerplay overs during the Sri Lanka match, India had conceded over 200 runs, something Ashwin will be asked to check as a marauding AB de Villiers will be itching to score big.

With scores of 319 and 323 in the two games, the batting has a settled look.

All the top-order batsmen have got a decent hit including the opening duo of Rohit-Sharma-Shikhar Dhawan, who conjured back-to-back century partnerships.

While both openers have been in good nick, there's no denying that they have also consumed a lot of balls initially, which finally had an impact during the Lanka game.

With new Powerplay rules, any total of less than 340 can be knocked off with some positive intent in strokeplay.

Kohli is happy with the batting performance but on a

practical note, feels that they may need 20 runs of cushion.

"May be you think of phases where we could have accelerated (vs SL), but I don't see that as a major issue.

Maybe we will have to push harder now in the next few games to give us a 20-run cushion after seeing a result like this, because we're playing on the same ground as well," the skipper had said.

In fact, South Africa batting coach Neil McKenzie also agreed that fluency has been an issue for openers of all the teams.

"It's been a little bit of tough going for the openers.

The fluency has been an issue. But one needs to adapt according to situations as the conditions here demand little bit of caution. The wickets need to be kept so that one can attack in the back end," McKennie said.

On the personal front, Kohli himself would like to lead with the bat against a side that has bowlers like Morne Morkel and all-rounder Chris Morris.

Imran Tahir, whose stock ball is googly, might just test Rohit's defence as the Mumbaier had some trouble reading the wrong 'un from him during IPL.

AGENCIES

'Head'strong: Batsman's fiery 50 takes Aus to 277-9



Travis Head plays a shot during the match between England and Australia at Edgbaston in Birmingham

PIC/AP/PTI

BIRMINGHAM: Travis Head propelled Australia to a respectable 277 for nine with his fiery unbeaten 71-run knock after England's Mark Wood and Adil Rashid caused a batting collapse in a crucial Group A Champions Trophy here on Saturday.

Put into bat, Aaron Finch (68) and Steve Smith (56) blasted twin half centuries at the top, while Head scored an unbeaten fifty down the order after England decided to bowl.

Seamer Wood (4/33) and spinner Rashid (4/41) snapped four wickets each, while Ben Stokes (1/49) took one wicket at Edgbaston here.

In their must-win encounter, World Champions Australia lost opener David Warner (21) in the eighth over when he edged a Wood delivery and was caught by wicket-keeper Jos Butler.

Finch and Smith then dug their heels and ensured Australia don't suffer any more hiccups and brought up the first 50 runs in 8.5 overs. The duo rotated the strike well and picked up odd boundaries to guide Australia across the 100-mark in 18 overs.

Meanwhile, Finch completed his 50 off 47 balls in the 17th over with the help of seven fours. But he became a victim of Stokes in the 23rd over when a miscued shot was smartly taken by Eoin Morgan, rushing from mid-off. At 136-2, Moises Henriques joined Smith and the duo brought up the 150 in 25.3

overs. But the former couldn't stay longer as his miscued slog shot was holed out at mid-on by Plunkett off Rashid.

In the 31st over, Smith sent Plunkett for a boundary to reach his fifty off 68 balls with the help of five fours. One over later, Plunkett caught the Australian captain at mid-off after he failed to negotiate a Wood delivery.

Head and Glenn Maxwell (20) then shared 58 runs off 62 balls to take Australia to 239.

However, Australia suffered a collapse after that losing Maxwell, Matthew Wade (2), Mitchell Starc (0), Pat Cummins (4) and Adam Zampa (0) within 15 runs as they failed to accelerate in the end overs.

Head hit some lusty blows towards the end to prop up Australia. Meanwhile, during England's chase rain stopped play

Chasing 278 to win, England were 35-3 in 6 overs when heavens opened up, forcing the umpires to stop the proceedings here.

England require another 243 runs with 7 wickets and 44 overs remaining. Rain affected Australia's campaign at the Champions Trophy as both their previous matches were washed out, leaving them with just 2 points from as many matches.

If Australia suffer their third straight washout, Bangladesh would qualify for the semi-finals, as they have won a game.

Incomplete. AGENCIES

Maradona 'excited' to meet Sourav Ganguly

KOLKATA: Football legend Diego Maradona is excited for his second visit to Kolkata and has already started the countdown. The highlight of the Argentine's September 18-20 sojourn in the build up to the Durga Puja festival will be an exhibition match with former India captain Sourav Ganguly. "Just 100 days to go for my Kolkata visit and meet 'Prince of Kolkata, Dada'," an excited Maradona posted on his official Facebook page. According to organisers of the private trip to Kolkata, Maradona will send a pair of "autographed boot" for Ganguly to wear for this one-hour exhibition match which is likely to be held at the Aditya School of Sports in Barasat on the Mahalaya day of September 19. Colombia football legend Carlos Valderrama is likely to join Maradona in the match.

AGENCIES

Ostapenko stuns Simona Halep to win French Open



PARIS: Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko stunned third seed Simona Halep 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 on Saturday to win her maiden Grand Slam title and become the lowest-ranked champion in French Open history.

Ostapenko, 20, is the first unseeded player to lift the Roland Garros title in the Open era and the first Latvian major champion in history.

She is the youngest French Open winner since Iva Majoli in 1997 and the first player to win a debut tour-level title at a Slam since Gustavo Kuerten in Paris that same year.

For Halep, bidding to join compatriots Ilie Nastase and Virginia Ruzici as major winners, it was a second final defeat in four years at Roland Garros.

The 25-year-old would have replaced Angelique Kerber as world number one with victory, but Halep was overpowered as Ostapenko blasted 54 winners to the Romanian's 10.

Ostapenko set the tone immediately, disguising any nerves with an array of bruising groundstrokes to break Halep in the opening game.

But the Romanian delivered a swift counter-punch, hitting back straight away on the Lat-

vian's serve before holding with ease for 2-1.

More crisp shotmaking for Ostapenko nudged the 20-year-old ahead once more, but the errors flew off her racquet just as regularly and Halep pulled 4-3 in front.

Ostapenko's wildness betrayed her as she served to stay in the set at 4-5, netting a forehand to offer Halep set point and drilling long to gift the Romanian the set.

The Latvian's mood soured further when Halep escaped from 0-40 down to begin the second set, the third seed then breaking Ostapenko to compound her frustration.

Halep consolidated with a gritty hold for 3-0 before Ostapenko fought off a trio of break points to stall her rival's momentum and spark an incredible comeback.

The Latvian moved level on serve when Halep hooked a forehand wide and then earned another break to chalk up a fourth game on the trot.

The errors crept back into her game and Halep responded for 4-4, but Ostapenko promptly broke to love to leave herself in sight of a deciding set.

AGENCIES

EAST BENGAL, MOHUN BAGAN MEET AIFF BUT IMPASSE CONTINUES OVER ISL
NEW DELHI: The impasse over the induction of Mohun Bagan and East Bengal into the ISL continued after another round of talks with the AIFF didn't yield any fruitful result. "No final decision has been taken," the AIFF president Praful Patel said, while Bagan assistant general secretary Srinjoy Bose said: "It's a big decision. It will take some time." The AIFF boss had called the two Kolkata heavyweights and the IFA secretary Utpal Ganguli to resolve the impasse as Mohun Bagan and East Bengal were adamant not to pay the franchise fee to play in the ISL, and also did not want to play in the I-League if it's run in parallel with ISL.

AGENCIES

It's Nadal vs Wawrinka in French Open final clash

PARIS: Strong title contender Rafael Nadal and Swiss star Stan Wawrinka won their respective semi-finals in contrasting fashion to enter the men's singles final at the French Open tennis tournament here.

Nadal rode on his unstoppable run in his quest for his 10th success at Roland Garros as he beat promising Austrian star Dominic Thiem in straight sets in the semi-finals, reports Xinhua news agency.

Wawrinka had to work hard for the other final spot, edging out top seed Andy Murray in a five-set thriller.

Nadal managed to keep his record of not losing a set en route to the final intact after sweeping Thiem 6-3, 6-4, 6-0 in two hours and seven minutes.

The "King of Clay" showed his dominance throughout the match and sealed the win after Thiem dumped a forehand return into the net.

The Spanish star bettered his Austrian opponent in winning percentage on first and second serves, also on receiving points. He made his 10th final appearance at Roland Garros, with the nine previous all turning out into the trophy.

"I played a very good event, and today was not an exception. I started a little bit more nervous today, it was normal, but then I



AP/PTI



AP/PTI

played well," Nadal said.

The duration of the contest between the third seed Wawrinka and World No.1 Murray more than doubled that, finishing in a thrilling manner as Wawrinka won 6-7 (6), 6-3, 5-7, 7-6 (3), 6-1 after four hours and 34 minutes. "When you play a player like Murray, you know that you can dominate the

games, but he's still going to be there," Wawrinka commented. "He's still going to do incredible defence, play the right tennis at the right moment. That's why he's No. 1 in the world," he added.

Wawrinka finished a total of 87 winners, also suffering 77 unforced errors, with 36-36 for Murray.

AGENCIES

Ronaldo fires Portugal, France complicates path to Russia after losing 2-1 to Sweden



Cristiano Ronaldo in action against Latvia

PIC/AP/PTI

tiano Ronaldo led Portugal's 3-0 triumph in Latvia.

In Group B, Switzerland remain top after beating the Faroe Islands 2-0, thanks to their stars Granit Shaka (36) and Xherdan Shaqiri (59), and are three points ahead of Portugal, the reigning European champions, who beat Latvia thanks to another Ronaldo goal scoring display.

In keeping with his great season finale, the Real Madrid star was decisive with two goals (41 and 63) and an assist for Andr Silva to score the third (67).

Ronaldo has scored 18 goals in his last eleven matches and after guiding Real Madrid to the Liga-Champions League double will try to extend his trophy collection with the Con-

federations Cup from June 17 to July 2.

The surprise result of the group was the defeat of Hungary against modest Andorra (1-0), leaving the Central European side virtually outside the World Cup. Switzerland and Portugal will play the first place of the group, which qualifies directly for Russia-2018, and the second will have settle for a playoff.

In group H, Belgium took a big step towards qualifying by beating Estonia 2-0 with goals from Dries Mertens (31) and Nacer Chadli (86). France had pulled ahead through Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud after 37 minutes, but the Scandinavians levelled before the break thanks to Jimmy Durmaz (43).

And after more than three minutes of regular time Toivonen took advantage of a poor clearance from France captain Lloris with a soaring shot into the back of an empty net.

AGENCIES

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General public is hereby informed that an Unknown person was found dead at **Back Side Khampur, Radio Station, Dated 09.06.2017. Time 08:52 AM.** In this regard a **DD No. 14-A** has been lodged at **P.S. Alipur, Delhi.**

The description of the dead body is given as under **Name:** Unknown **S/o:** Unknown **R/o** Unknown **Age:** Approx 35-40 years, **Height:** 5'7", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Identification Mark:** Tattoo of "Hanuman" Printed on Right Hand **Injury marks:** Trace mark on Neck, **Wearing:** White Colour T-Shirt having "DEPT" Print in front side and Mehandi Colour Pajama having White Colour Lining Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.

SHO

P.S. Alipur, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27202290, 27202265
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In retrospect



*With top women officers leading several departments of the Delhi Police Force, an evolution in this male dominated field is becoming evident. Yet, despite this growth, is our society embracing this change wholeheartedly? Explores **Radhika Dutt** with **Zaffar Abbas***



Nupur Prasad



Aslam Khan

While hundreds of Indians watched the TV serial Udaan in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a mere source of entertainment, a young Nupur, more enthralled than others, built her dreams as she patiently traced the journey of India's first female IPS officer on her TV set. While then the uniform inspired her, today she adorns the uniform, inspiring many more who are in her periphery. Nupur Prasad, IPS, is one of the most respected officers in the Delhi Police Force today, as she executes her crucial role as the DCP of the newly formed district Shahdara. "The actress Kavita Chaudhury had really inspired me, I remember how they conducted their training, and in my training days I felt so fulfilled that yes I was finally here," says Prasad, who independently handles charge of Shahdara.

Today the Delhi Police Force sees close to 10 per cent of women across positions. Even though the numbers are still nowhere near being equal, they are promising only as a predicament of growth. Earlier, witnessing female police officers marching in crisp uniform was a matter of chance, but now gradually the sight is becoming more common. The Delhi Police Force is also initiating moves to ensure that 33 per cent seats are reserved for women in the direct recruitment process. "When I was undergoing my training I had received a call as somebody had committed suicide. When I reached the spot there were several people who had gathered, astounded to see a lady officer, wondering if she would at all be able to look at a dead body," laughs Monika Bhardwaj, IPS batch 2007, who is also currently the DCP PCR. "But now of course things are changing, people are less surprised to see women officers, and I feel so proud to say this, that so many more of us are entering the forces and people are accepting us in roles that haven't been traditionally seen as our domain," she adds.

The Nirbhaya gangrape case that took place on the ominous night of December 16, 2012, had spread chills across the entire nation and beyond. At this time of dismay, it was Chhaya Sharma, IPS batch 1999, former DCP South who had stepped in and taken charge to put these hardened criminals behind bars. On an earlier interview with *Millennium Post*, she had said, "Finding and arresting the criminals in this case had probably been the most satisfying aspect of my job. The pressure was unique, challenge was big, and it called for superhuman effort of each member of the team." Even at a time of such immense crisis, and pressure, Sharma had remained undeterred in achieving her goal by putting these barbarians behind the bars.

While many of us sit at home hoping to make a difference in the world, these ladies, proudly adorning the uniform, have gone out, taken that extra step and made that mentionable bit of difference. "I am not just a police officer I am a social worker too. Unless I give back to society I cannot be true to my

As women gradually break out of their shells and those around them further nurture their desires, our hopes of an equal society, albeit a distant dream, begin gaining some precedence

duty," said a proud Aslam Khan, DCP Traffic, Delhi Headquarters. She takes her practice of assisting the needy outside the domain of law and order. "I have always engaged in charity, as Additional DCP I had given out computers for training. Currently, I am looking for a child who I can sponsor," she added.

The journey of lady officers is often not as smooth as it would probably be for their male counterparts. However, with time as more ladies enter the forces, conceptions are evolving as our society too is moving towards brighter days. "During my time as a probationer, junior inspectors would readily salute male officers, but they would hesitate when I walked by," said a grinning Garima Bhatnagar, Joint Commissioner of Traffic Police. "Now however they do not hesitate at all. That a lady is a police officer has become less surprising for them," she added. "In the 1990s, when I began, seniors would not trust lady officers with work so readily, we had to work extra hard to prove that we could perform as well as our male counterparts, if not better in some situations," said Bhatnagar who is an IPS officer from the 1994 batch.

However, Nupur Prasad, a 2007 batch IPS officer claims otherwise, "I was always given adequate responsibility, and my seniors had a lot of trust in me, which I believe has really been a blessing. They always encouraged me to work harder and do better." From the 1990s to the late 2000s the presence of women in the police forces has become more conspicuous, which has also made others more sensitive to their presence. However we still have a long way to go. "I believe, being a woman we should encourage even more women to join the forces. Since we have been successful in adorning the uniform, it is now our duty to assist others in reaching the same heights," said Nupur Prasad. "Women are still very hesitant to join forces as they believe they have to be physically built a certain way to undergo training. But let me tell you, I was never tall or very strong, however I kept pushing myself, and that is why I am here today. Girls out there should not doubt their abilities. Just motivate yourself, and if people around you motivate you too, that's an added bonus," said Esha Pandey, DCP Special Unit of Police for Women and Children.

Women today, are active in a wide variety of roles in the forces. From the PCR to the Traffic Control rooms, to having independent charge of districts and departments, women in the police forces are making a huge difference. While the task as an officer is onerous, there is without a doubt immense adrenaline rush and prestige associated with the uniform. As the proud ladies recall their most memorable instance as a police officer – some are followed by laughter,

caught the people who were creating this nuisance. This was really a proud moment for me, as this was the first time, anybody in the islands had been successful in uncovering an online racket," said Aslam Khan, whose piercing eyes, and crisp uniform, could unnerve even the hardest criminal.

"It is commonly believed that as women we are at a disadvantaged position, however this is not so, women are able to balance out situations and they bring in a very important aspect that men often miss – empathy," added Aslam Khan. Possibly this is the reason that the Delhi Police has initiated a move to bring about a makeover in the image of police stations which are commonly perceived as largely intimidating spaces. New age officers, mostly women, are being employed as the first point of reference for those who enter police stations to file a complaint, or seek for information. Women are more soft spoken, patient, and approachable – as claimed by the Delhi Police to be the precursor for such a move. While this does lead to employment of several women, there are still certain concerns. First, the women are only the first point of reference, this does not do away with the harsh treatment that civilians face from inspectors inside police stations otherwise, and second, to assume that only women can be patient and soft-spoken reeks of strong sexism.

The profile of a hard-hitting IPS officer doesn't come easy, it comes with a cost of sacrifice. "While I am very proud of myself, I do wish I had spent more time with my children during their formative years. However, I do not regret it, it is just a flipside," echoed both Garima Bhatnagar and Nupur Prasad. "As I spend the entire day at work, the only thing I want to do as I step back home is to play with my little children," said Monika Bhardwaj, a glowing mother of one-year-old twins. "My biggest regret is that there is still a lot of mistrust among civilians for the police. I wish they would understand that we are here to help them, and we will do what we can to the best of our abilities," said Esha Pandey, another young mother balancing both her professional and personal lives with great ease. "We are all part of the same system, and we become victims of its fallacies too. I wish over time more new thoughts and ideas are accommodated so that we can move forward, and we are not stuck in the same place forever," suggested Aslam Khan.

Today, the Delhi Police Force despite being predominantly male sees female officers in top, respected positions. As women gradually break out of their shells and those around them further nurture their desires, our hopes of an equal society, albeit a distant dream, begin gaining some precedence. As Garima Bhatnagar also says, "To be in the forces is not an easy task, but it isn't impossible either. You have to be determined; with the right motivation and grit I am sure that girls today can bring about a magnitude of change."



Esha Pandey

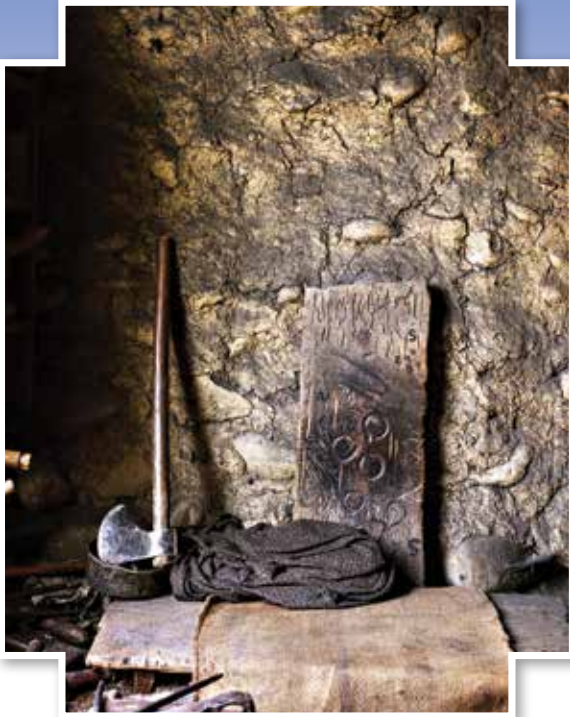
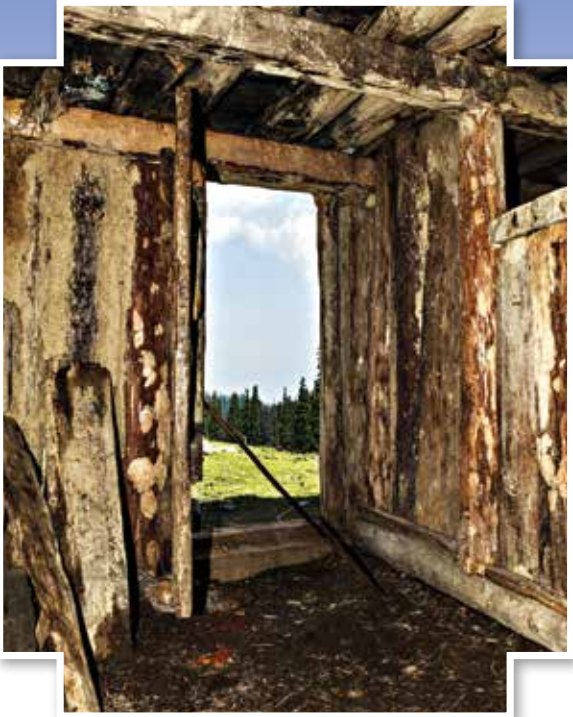


Garima Bhatnagar



Monika Bhardwaj

Beacon



BORN TO BLUSH UNSEEN

Sikka's eagle eye of experience is the armour of a superlatively sensitive mind staving off political oppression. Nature is an instrument of survival in his works, it is the chief weapon in a poetic arsenal of photography which serves as a caretaker for the individual identity, writes UMA NAIR

The New Yorker's story on Arundhati Roy's new book is accompanied by a stunning portrait of the author Roy. Standing against a backdrop of nature's tranquil trees and bushes Roy seems framed against a narrative of elegiac melancholia, a bohemian empress wearing her aura of metaphoric evolution with a rare grace and consummate femininity. The credit line reads: Bharat Sikka. The other photographs in the story focus on books in her home and give us an idea of the epicurean eye that Sikka has when he commences an assignment. He also understands the impact of still lifes and hunts for pockets of literature in Roy's home that brims over with books.

Three weeks ago Sikka finished an epic show of photographs taken over 4 years in Kashmir entitled 'Where the Flowers Still Grow' at Nature Morte in Delhi.

Nature Morte's Peter Nagy writes in his curatorial note, "The central core of 'Where the Flowers Still Grow' is comprised of portraits, predominantly young men shot alone within the colossal grandeur of an unspoiled Nature, which seems to know nothing of national borders and political rivalries."

PORTRAITS OF PATHOS

Peter's words become the edifice of an exploration. The mood is a mingling of bravura and gravitas. There are portraits



of somber looking men juxtaposed against pristine places where the hills come alive with the voice of history in the silence of the stones and boulders that dot the landscape. Astride on their hillside horses or just standing, there is a pathos in their gaze

as Sikka's frames encapsulate moments that mirror their own memories in the face of the past present scenarios. In an age of Photoshop curiosities Sikka's honesty becomes his trump card.

Although Sikka's purpose as a pho-

tographer and the subjects of his suite are serious, he mixes the naturalness of their habitat with an effective elegance. In the single image of the youth standing amidst the pebbles with the little brook running, Sikka proves he has the power to invest a dense narrative, the untouched beauty of Kashmir's rural idyll with the highest seriousness. His eagle eye of experience is the armour of a superlatively sensitive mind staving off political oppression. Nature is an instrument of survival in these works, it is the chief weapon in a poetic arsenal of photography which serves as a caretaker for the individual identity, a bulwark against the mental slavery of the vagaries of terrorism and the state.

APERTURES OF LIGHT

Sikka's images offer a few perspectives of doors and windows – the darkness is subliminal. The proximity of shooting from inner realms to outer skylight presents grades of wooden ruins as well as darker fragments of decadence laced with utilitarian agedness. His insight into the latitude of light's refractive indices is a summary of his learning.

One image of a cloth draped on a window suggests seductive allusions in the hour of silence. In a subtle way Sikka contends that the lens of erosion reduces the glare of contemporary experience, placing it in a perspective that enables the hand behind the shutter to view spaces and places without losing their history and sense of solitary angst. The images of the doorways stark and surreal also point out how the difference in the inner and outer fragments liberate the still frames from the confines of particular historical events. At the same time the use of the eroded elements fleshes out the thin bones of death and destruction, making it soft and elegant, not obvious and heavy-handed.

STILL LIVES IN A CORNER

The most stirring images are the singular still lifes – that seem to be sodden with tales of solitude and sorrow. The axe, the vessel, the bundled shawl and the wooden plank strike a surreal signature against the stone wall – it echoes the importance of the livelihood of humanity rather than utopian ideologies.

Sikka discovers in his images, traces of others and feels menaced by historical determinism, he has at the same time an acute awareness of the life of isolation. In his image of a single facet of a log cabin with different tonalities of wooden beams he stirs within us a feeling of great solidarity and compassion for the inhabitants.

This image of the log cabin is an invita-

tion akin to a stream of consciousness that brings up detritus like an empty tin can thrown away after utility. Sikka through his images defines the elusive ethos of ordinariness, and builds upon its essence of ephemeral morality while not addressing condemnation.

QUESTIONS AND ETHICS

Questions surge as we look at these sensitive portrayals, are we consistently applying ethics not only to action but to the possible, viable action of everyday life, taking human failings into account. These pictures are probing and humane in their approach, and they are embracing even as they remind us of a greater sense of contradictions. Sikka has an in depth capaciousness for abstract thought, he rejects dogmatism, in his observations and speaks not for himself but for humanity at large. He is representative; his images speak for many generations, he makes no historical and moral judgements.

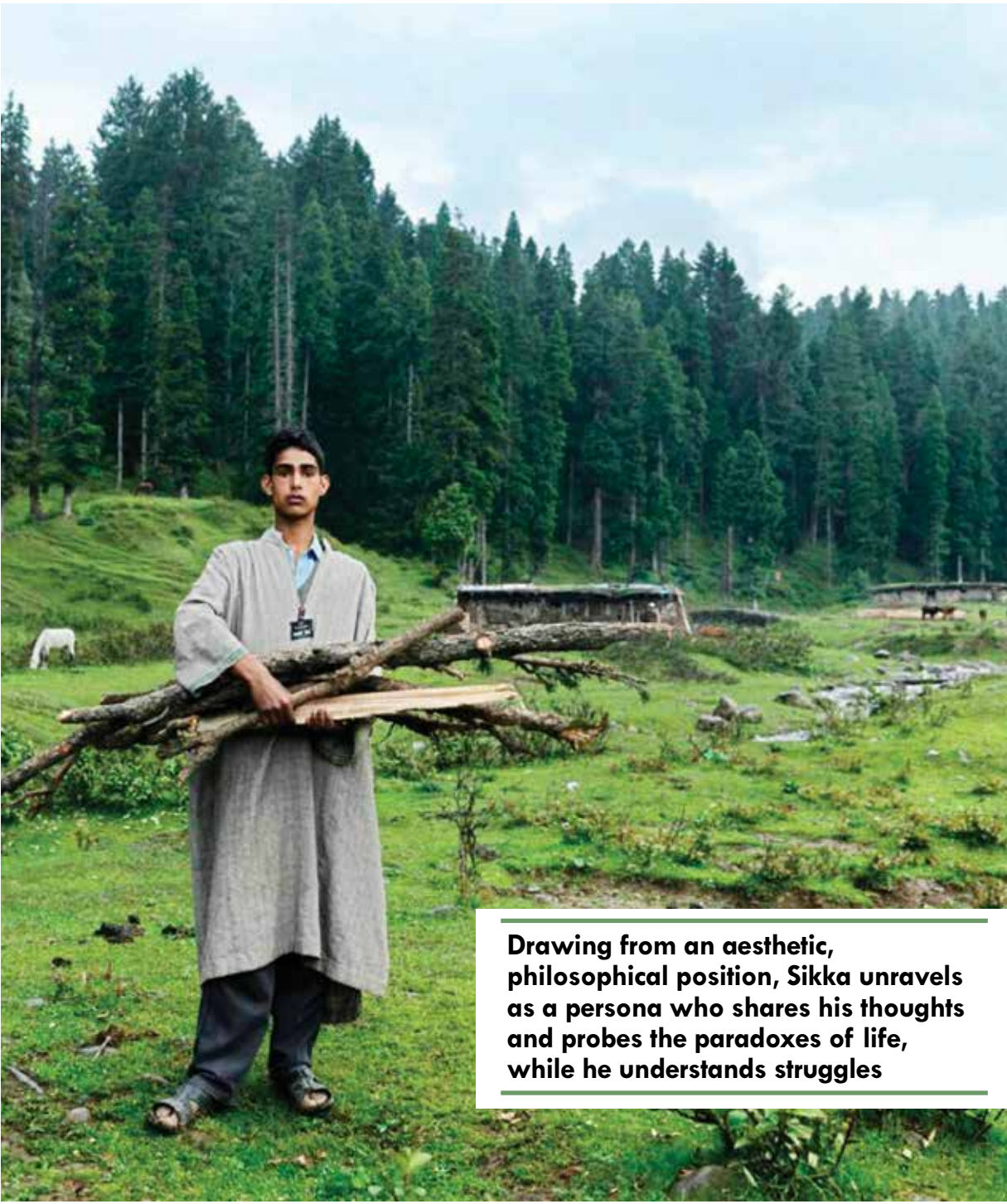
Drawing from an aesthetic, philosophical position, Sikka unravels as a persona who shares his thoughts and probes the paradoxes of life, while he understands struggles. The show is Sikka's response to Mirza Waheed's elegiac novel 'The Collaborator', and it recalls that ageless Joan Baez song: *Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing/where have all the flowers gone, long time ago...* It also brings into light the words from Agha Shahid Ali's 'I See Kashmir From New Delhi At Midnight', "Don't tell my father I have died," he says, and I follow him through blood on the road and hundreds of pairs of shoes the mourners left behind, as they ran from the funeral,



victims of the firing. From windows we hear grieving mothers and snow begins to fall on us, like ash...

What we are ultimately left with is Sikka's empathetic response to his visits to Kashmir, the residual evidence of trauma, mute witnesses where flowers were born to blush unseen, in a paradise that seems lost.

IMAGES-NATURE MORTE DELHI



Drawing from an aesthetic, philosophical position, Sikka unravels as a persona who shares his thoughts and probes the paradoxes of life, while he understands struggles

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Inland

There are things beyond marks which decide one's future. Why be okay with 'okay' when you can be extraordinary? Srishti Garg explores some options beyond the reputed universities



LOOKING BEYOND DU

With an eight per cent increase in the number of students securing 95 per cent and above in AISSCE, the cut-offs of India's one of the most reputed universities - Delhi University are destined to shoot up.

The board exam results announced recently, showed how some students scored really well and can easily get into the courses of their choice if they want to. By good score, here, we mean nothing short of 95 per cent, and then also they may not get into the most prestigious colleges to the most sought after courses. A class XII student who secured 93 per cent marks while stressing on anonymity is considering pursuing her second career option, Architecture, because of her low score instead of an Economics Honours.

There are things beyond marks which decide what your future will turn out to be. "Do anything if it connects with you. Always follow your passion," says Atishay, Radio Jockey with Red FM. Just as our fingers are unequal and meant to perform differently, every individual has their own strengths. Some are really good in studies while others excel in extracurricular activities. It's okay if your child wants to make a career in photography, travelling or writing. It's always about what they'll be good at which matters more than their marks. There are still a lot of options for you to explore.

"If you don't feel it, flee from it. Go where you are celebrated, not merely tolerated," said Paul F Davis. So, be in fields where you belong. Why be okay with 'okay', when you can be extraordinary? Here is a list of some unconventional courses you may find interesting:

PERFORMING ARTS

The world is a complicated place, divisions are abound. Performing arts can function as a unifying force between people. Performing arts majorly include dance, music and the-

atre. To have a career in these fields you need to be highly dedicated towards these art forms for which you require complete selfless dedication. You need to have an inborn talent; training and guidance can only hone these talents.

"Every person is different in this world. Learn anything about fine arts, you'll expand your horizon and have a greater understanding of this world. People are not going much into these fields due to not being motivated by their parents," says Dr Kiranmayi Bonala, Director, Sanchalana School of Dance. Indian classi-

cal dances are in itself of 9 types. Apart from that, there are hip-hop, tap dance, jazz, break, ballet, salsa among others. With such a wide variety of dance forms, there are also a wide number of dancing schools spread across India. Few of them are Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Bangalore, Vee Dance, Mumbai, Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, Mumbai, Ballet Repertoire Academy of India, Mumbai etc.

Just like dance, music can be classical, folk, jazz, pop, fusion etc - there are also a variety of opportunities in this field. Besides becoming a performer (vocal or instrumental) or a teacher, one can be a composer/songwriter, music publisher, music journalist, disc jockeys/ video jockeys, music therapist, artist manager/PR and so on in the music industry. Some prominent music schools to look for in the country are the Shankar Mahadevan Academy, Mumbai; K M Music Conservatory, Chennai; Swarnabhoomi Academy of Music, and Chennai; Ajivasan, Mumbai.

Theatre is an art of expression. It is what you do for yourself, for your creativity, for satiating your urge. Theatre is about discovering oneself. It is about releasing the feelings, insights and impulses of the human race. It's about nurturing their talent and

being able to express your mind. One can choose their suitable career in theatre from options like sound design, stage design, production, scriptwriting, lighting, acting and direction. The various theatre companies that provide formal training are Asmita Theatre Group (Delhi), Ansh: A Theatre Group by Makrand Deshpande (Mumbai), Ranga Shankara (Bangalore) - Theatre Group in Karnataka, Theatre Group by Makrand Deshpande (Mumbai), Lokdharmi (Kochi), Pierro's Troupe (Delhi). The course fees for such institutes varies from Rs 1000 to 10,000 per month.

DESIGNING



"I strongly believe that scoring very high in the boards is not necessary because it's basically a copy-paste mechanism of our education system which rules the board level school education. The real world industry is very different in terms of how it works, in terms of how it takes you as a professional and that is why institutes such as NID, IIT, NIFT has a cut-off eligibility of not more than 60 for getting admission for design courses," says, Rishabh Rhode, a NIFT graduate with a 10 years wonderful experience in this field.

"Designing as a professional career is beautiful. You have a new project every day in hand or a new take on any kind of product you are designing. The beauty is your career won't be unidirectional. After graduating you can still maybe diversify into styling or merchandising. It gives you a very different take on life, completely changes you as a person in a good way. The good institutes in India are NIFT, Pearl Academy, MIT, Pune, Symbiosis, Pune, UID, Gujarat, NID," adds Rishabh Rhode.

While a course in designing in private institutes like Pearl Academy can cost around 5 lakhs, at NIFT it is around 1 lakh per annum.

Various courses in designing are:

- Fashion designing
- Gemology
- Interior designing
- Jewellery designing
- Visual merchandising
- Product designing and much more...

RADIO JOCKEYING

People with a beautiful and strong voice can not only try their hand at singing but also make a difference through interaction. If you have the passion and confidence for communication then radio jockey is a career that would best suit you. A Radio Jockey or an RJ is a person who hosts



a talk show on radio. You need to have strong linguistic skills and should be observant and aware of your surroundings. A natural sense of humour, creativity, imagination and a grip on the audience will be an added advantage.

"I love this career. I loved this that's why I am here. There is no particular course for radio jockeying, you need to have a fire within, to continue going on," said, RJ Atishay Radio Mirchi. "Attend college on a regular basis, it helps in personality development. Never miss the opportunity to do an internship, it helps in understanding things in a better light," explained the RJ.

Top Institutes in India for Radio Jockeying include The Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad; Alis Academy of Radio and Television, Bhopal; Media and Film Institute of India, Mumbai; Xavier's Institute of Communication, Mumbai; IRJ Institute of Radio Jockeying, Chandigarh and many more. Some of the available courses for Radio Jockeying include:

- Diploma in Radio Programming and Broadcast Management (DRPM)
- Diploma in Radio Production and Radio Jockeying (DRJ)
- Post Graduation Diploma in Radio and Broadcast Management (PGDRBM)
- Certificate Course in Radio Jockeying (CRJ)

Job opportunities in this field upon completion of these 1-year courses are plenty with the coming over of private radio channels always on the lookout for fresh talent. RJs can also work as voiceover artists, or give their voices for audio recordings, or anchor live shows and events.

ANIMATION

If you love to draw and create, this field is for you. "Animation is a very vast field. It is moving one picture to another," says Rajji



Kaur an executive with Ernst and Young

You can study animation, graphics and multimedia courses either as a full-time or part-time student. Several programs are offered like certificates, diplomas, and degrees etc. While admission into full-time courses, ie diplomas and degrees is offered on the basis of entrance exams, admission into part time and short term courses are offered on first come first serve basis. There are many institutes in all major cities and towns of India, both private and government providing training in animation, graphics and multimedia.

Animation artists can use their skills in several different creative or design industries. While many studios produce motion pictures or television cartoons, others produce works to be used in advertising, software, and video games. In addition, animators can further specialise within their industry and may work on one particular feature of an overall project, such as special effects, lighting, or computer graphics modelling.

Institutes offering courses in animation are Arena Multimedia, Maya Academy of Advances Cinematic (MAAC), Zee Institute of Creative Arts, Global School of Animation etc.

Some of the courses offered are:

- Animation Film Design
- Arena International Animation Programme
- DAFM - Program in Animation Filmmaking
- D3D - Professional Program in 3D Animation and many more...

The fees structure varies from Rs. 1,25,000-5,00,000 annually, whereas the monthly courses come at a lower cost.

ADVENTURE SPORTS

If you love to travel and have an affinity towards adrenalin rushes, this is the best career option for you. A career in adventure sports is only possible if you have a

right mix of team spirit, risk-taking ability, mental toughness and fitness. With an increase in the number of travellers, the opportunities in this field for trained professionals are also increasing. There are two types of adventure sports: fun adventures and extreme adventure. The fun adventures include rock climbing, bike safari, jeep safari, trekking etc. Courses in rock climbing are usually conducted by Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi and Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling. They usually cost anything between Rs 5000-7000. Trekking experts also need to have a training in first-aid.

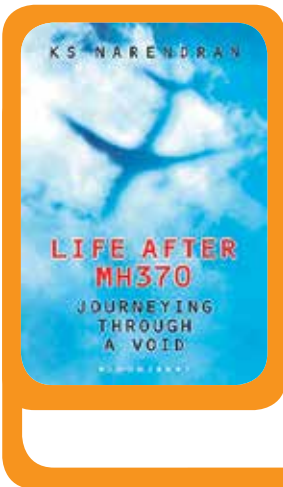
Extreme adventures include bungee jumping, river rafting, hot air ballooning, paragliding etc. To be an instructor in bungee jumping you need to do a two months course which is offered by many private institutes like Wanderlust. It costs around Rs 5000-7000. River rafting courses are offered by Uttaranchal government at mere fees of Rs 2500/month. A three-months course makes you eligible to apply for the position of a trainer. To get a license as a pilot for hot air balloons you need to have a 60-hour flying experience. These courses range from Rs 7000-10000, whereas paragliding calls for a two-months course amounting to Rs 7000.

Upon completion of these courses, you may join private adventure sports companies in Kullu, Dharamshala and other places earning a decent salary of around Rs 15,000-20,000. While bungee jumping and hot air ballooning pay as much as Rs 50,000 - 60,000.

While selecting these career options remember that you are choosing the road less travelled by, so you'll have to fight against all odds. You'll have to carve your own niche without many people coming over to rescue you. Just remember to find your true calling, then start running towards it. You'll succeed.

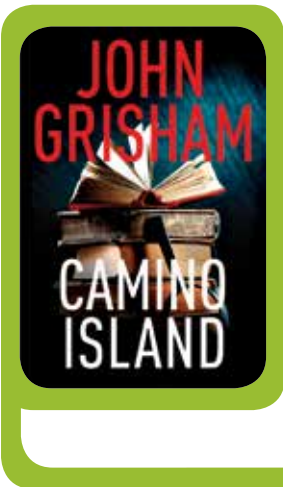


Read



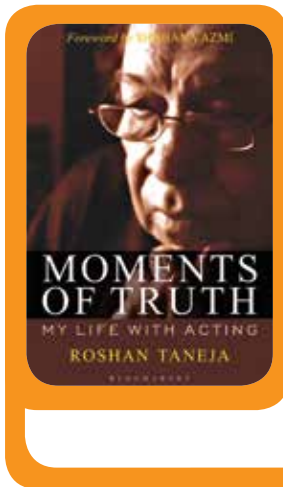
LIFE AFTER MH370
Author: KS Narendran
Publisher: Bloomsbury India
Price: ₹319

The book documents Naren's experience with loss, grief, trauma and sorrow. The struggle with 'ambiguous loss' morphs into a ceaseless search, for the scent of a cover-up, for the truth, for that explanation that satisfies and helps one move on. There is the hint of a promise in the story – of existential truths about living and dying.



CAMINO ISLAND
Author: John Grisham
Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton
Price: ₹298

A gang of thieves stage a daring heist from a secure vault deep below Princeton University's Firestone Library. Their loot is priceless, but Princeton has insured it for twenty-five million dollars. Bruce Cable owns a popular bookstore in the sleepy resort town of Santa Rosa on Camino Island in Florida.



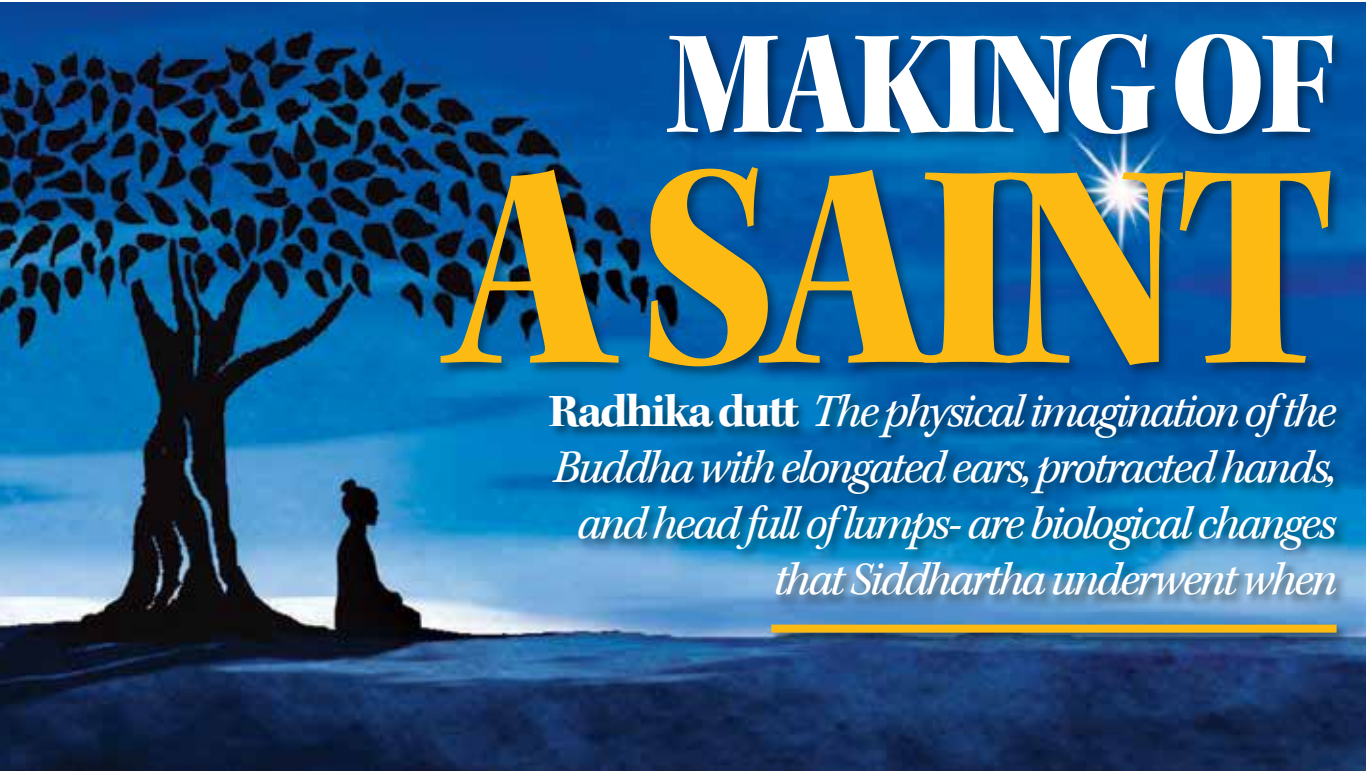
MOMENTS OF TRUTH
Author: Roshan Taneja
Publisher: Bloomsbury India
Price: ₹299

From his childhood in the borderlands of now Pakistan, to his position today as the foremost teacher of acting – guru of acting – in India, the saga of Roshan Taneja is not only the story of this remarkable man, but of India herself – vision, grit, struggle and a never ending search for perfection.



THE FULL CIRCLE
Author: Ratan Kaul
Publisher: Frog Books
Price: ₹250

From shifting trends in technology to silent disruptions in human values, 'The Full Circle' encompasses the resulting latent as well as surreal aspects of post-liberalization society in India. The book also reveals the growing conflicts faced by an NRI protagonist between assimilating the foreign culture and retaining the traditional values.



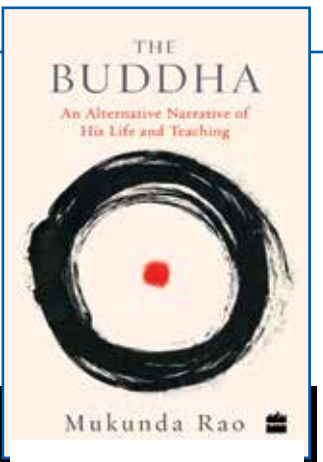
Radhika dutt *The physical imagination of the Buddha with elongated ears, protracted hands, and head full of lumps- are biological changes that Siddhartha underwent when*

In a world marked by violence, terror, war, angst, jealousy, and every other sense of aggressive attachment, the teachings of Buddha become ever more relevant as every individual journey seems to move towards doom. What has essentially been seen as cognitive, emerging from machinations of the mind is looked at in a broader perspective by Mukunda Rao in his writing, *The Buddha: An Alternative Narrative of His Life and Teaching*. Rao engages in a discourse concerning how the body of a monk evolves to accommodate enlightenment as a pantheon of living- even beyond dying.

It comes across as an evident paradox- how can the body possibly accept a state that is beyond its periphery, beyond its domain of life. Yet, through his narratives of tracing the Buddha's journey, Rao positively asserts that it is the body, above the mind that experiences enlightenment, which is essentially nestled in a state of non-experience. Paradoxical again, yet this complexity is what makes the pursuit of pure consciousness an uphill task, which is arduous in execution, yet it is still deemed precious.

The Buddha's journey, unlike other major religions had not been rooted in a search of divinity, which probably would be conceivable only by the mind. The Buddha begins his sacrosanct journey from a disillusionment that he senses towards the cycle of life- old age, disease, and death- all causes of immediate suffering compelled a young prince Siddhartha to sacrifice his royalty and head out in search for a path that would divorce him from these necessary conditions of existence.

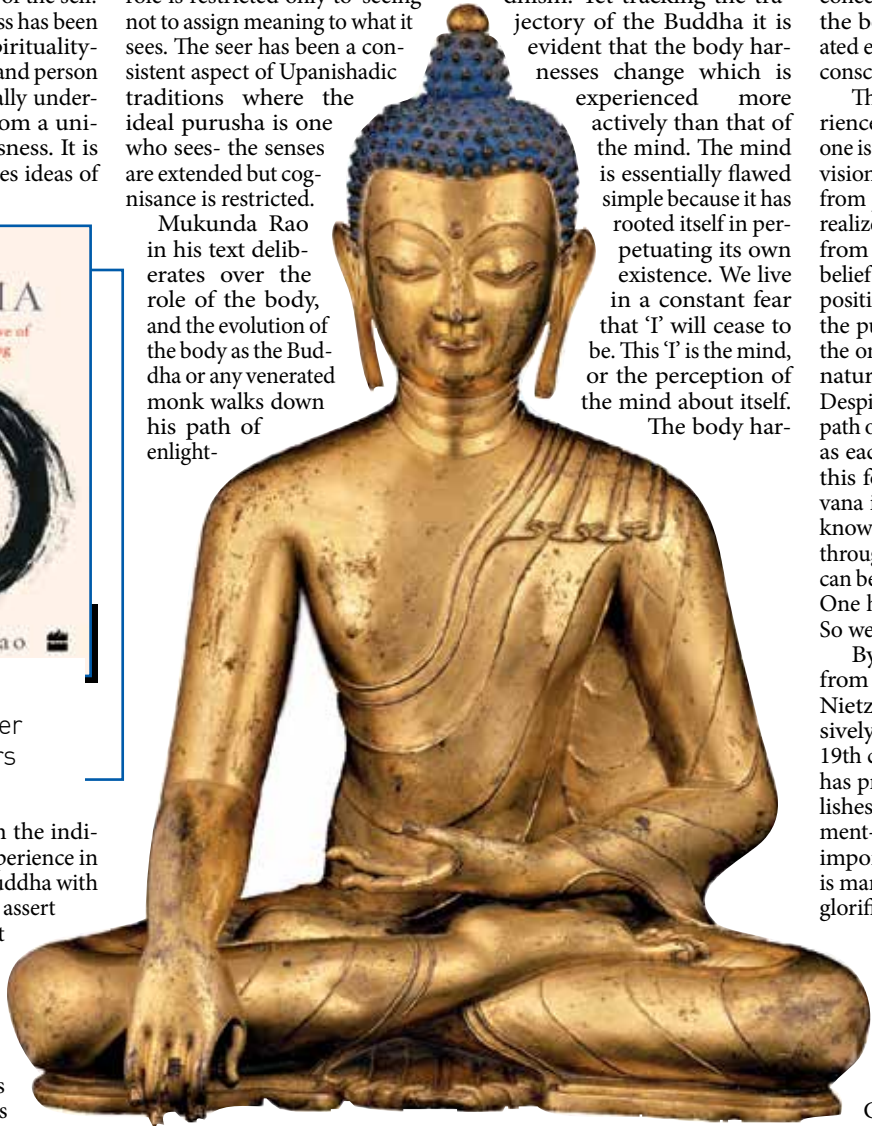
With practice, failure, further practice, and even more failure, Buddha was ultimately able to find peace within him- peace that is essentially ruptured from any idea of the self. The notion of oneness has been the central point of spirituality- where nature (prakriti) and person (purusha) are intrinsically understood as emanating from a unified body of consciousness. It is the mind which conjures ideas of



Price: ₹350
Publisher: Harper Collins Publishers

'I' that takes away from the individual what it would experience in its primordial senses. Buddha with his philosophies seeks to assert a new path- not one that takes from history- as knowledge is again rooted in a deep sense of the Self which it creates through reflections from the past. He rejects any idea that embellishes

the Self- whether knowledge or experience. The only truthfulness essentially lies at a point of non-cognisance where the individual's role is restricted only to 'seeing' not to assign meaning to what it sees. The seer has been a consistent aspect of Upanishadic traditions where the ideal purusha is one who sees- the senses are extended but cognisance is restricted. Mukunda Rao in his text deliberates over the role of the body, and the evolution of the body as the Buddha or any venerated monk walks down his path of enlight-



enment. Religions across the world have overlooked the role of the body as agentive in facilitating change- even modern day Buddhism. Yet tracking the trajectory of the Buddha it is evident that the body harnesses change which is experienced more actively than that of the mind. The mind is essentially flawed simple because it has rooted itself in perpetuating its own existence. We live in a constant fear that 'I' will cease to be. This 'I' is the mind, or the perception of the mind about itself. The body har-

nesses the primordial sense of oneness that is the reality of nature. The moment you identify yourself as 'I', is the moment where you separate yourself from everything else. The role of religion is essentially to take us back to our original state of undivided unitary consciousness, where all lives as one.

The physical imagination of the Buddha with elongated ears, protracted hands, and head full of lumps- are biological changes that Siddhartha underwent when he reached his state of enlightenment. These biological markers were the first amendments made to the body as the sense of individual self was gradually dissolved. It is not just the Buddha but as Rao outlines, using the living examples of famous sages- Pandit Gopi Krishna, The Mother, UG Krishnamurti, and Ramana Maharshi, biological experiences of enlightenment arise first as the role of the mind is essentially diminished. Therefore, as the text constantly emphasizes- the understanding of enlightenment which has so forth been seeped in the discourse of the mind has to shift gears, to realize that is essentially the body that is agentive in the process- the mind is really diminished to nothing as only in shunyata-a concept elaborately discussed- can the body experience unadulterated enlightenment- which is pure consciousness.

The goal is ultimately to experience pure consciousness where one is governed by compassion and vision- qualities that are divorced from judgment. The impetus is to realize that the mind takes us away from blissfulness by rooting our belief system in a necessary composition of 'I' the self that deceives the pure individual to experience the oneness that it shares with the natural and human world alike. Despite this robust philosophy the path of Nirvana is never described- as each individual must discover this for herself. "Ultimately, nirvana is not something that can be known but something to be lived through. It is not an experience that can be transmitted or shared either. One has to discover it for oneself. So we have to stop here."

By bringing in perspective from the Western philosophy of Nietzsche, and engaging intensively with the experiences of 19th century sages, Mukunda Rao has produced a text that re-establishes the significance of detachment- an aspect which is of crucial importance in today's world that is marked by a selfish strife for self glorification.

As we delve into a bottomless pit of greed this old Pali aphorism gains rapid precedence- "Form is not yours, give it up. Sensation, perception, the formation and consciousness are not yours. Give them up...."

Snapshots of Egypt's simmering discontent



VIKAS DATTA

Volcanic emotions contribute to, and are further generated, during turbulent times in human affairs as manifested in revolutions or other such instances of rapid change. But how dis these grow to the critical levels necessary to trigger such upheavals, say, in stagnant, repressive societies like Middle East's long-established autocracies, during the Arab Spring? And what was it like before the protests ballooned or after the promises held out by these events fizzled out unrealised?

Egyptian author Yasmine el Rashidi seeks to give us an answer in her debut novel, through the eyes and thoughts of an unnamed woman at three key stages of her life. It begins with the narrator as a school student in 1984 struggling to make sense of the flux in her life with the disappearance of her father, fast-forwards to 1998 when she is an university student studying filmmaking and can observe society at a time through a lens when the threat of jihadi terror has cropped up while people are developing aspirations and are getting restless. Her odyssey finally ends in 2014, at the end of a watershed era when hopes for a better future rose as it finally seemed within reach, were subverted and then ignominiously dashed with the country seemingly wrenched back into the past it had long been trying to escape.

Even her father's return offers no consolation as the narrator understands that while there is no guarantee of a better period soon, while the older time cannot offer any more solace after the brief flowering of better possibilities and

more freedom.

Be it an otherwise serene home where comfort has to contend with questions about unexplained absence of inmates, of a school where irrelevant history is being taught and a student's background determines how they will be treated, simple pleasures after school, the rumble-tumble of the markets where venal policemen target those who cannot fight back, the planned chaos of a government office, crowded bus rides, trying to politely send off a child vendor... the simple but evocative prose makes you feel all the uncertainty, indignation, frustration, heat and even pain, shock and despair.

Alongside there are discussions on the legacy of Gamal Abdel Nasser, presented as opinions of the narrator's favourite cousin and of an "uncle", as well of the contributions of Anwar El-Sadat, and then the long, stultifying rule of Hosni Mubarak, as well as examinations of what drew or repelled her countrymen to the Muslim Brotherhood and more. But as she mentions, in one of the book's most key passages – relevant far beyond her country and region – the burgeoning 24/7 TV channels "where montages have escalated into dramatics", and where if they are not featuring the nation's current leader, "it would be terror". One key part is when the narrator's "uncle" tells her "commonplace"

happenings that may indicate approaching tumult when she confesses her disquiet to him.

The Arab Spring's impact on political realities may have been transitory or unexpected in most cases but it did affect the people – for good or bad – and this is one of its most heart-tugging stories.



Price: ₹499
Publisher: Penguin Random House

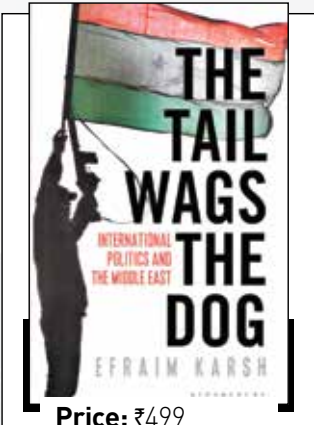
Debunking the myth

How far is it true that the West has brought the Middle East to what it is today? Developments in the past decades point an unapologetic finger to the Western powers for orchestrating chaos in the region. But prior to that lies a hushed-up history buried beneath pacts and mandates.

It was on the ruins of a deconstructed Ottoman Empire that the contemporary Middle Eastern state system began fledgling. This age of global conflict saw the fall of more powerful European empires. It is true that the Ottoman Empire was the casualty of its own catastrophic decision to join hands with Germany and enter the War it could have refrained from, and ended up on the losing side. This was the turning point in the history of the Middle Eastern region and decided the course of events that would follow. There was no Arab sense of nationalism in the region until now. This idea was pasted upon them by the mandate system.

In the immediate aftermath of World War I, the local Middle Eastern actors consolidated their positions, restructured the region, and, as expected, their bargain for power was significantly enhanced during the Cold War era when global polarisation and nuclear balance of terror constrained the manoeuvrability of power. Despite the end of the Cold War, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the United States being the "only remaining superpower", their impact on the middle east was rather negligible. As the greater powers' attention got occupied with their resources, the local actors largely retained their political and strategic manoeuvrability.

Despite the unprecedented global pre-eminence of the United States, it failed to deter Saddam Hussein from invading Kuwait or to make him withdraw peacefully from the Emirate, and was thus left with the only alternative of war. Although the United States won the war, it is an example of the influence the



Price: ₹499
Publisher: Bloomsbury

great power did not have on the Middle East, until the last resort. America's ability to wage war was hinged on Saudi Arabia's permission to use its territory as well as the support of Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf states. Hence, the precipitating factor

Abounding with little-known crucial facts, the self-perpetuating dynamics of the Middle East come chronicled under a most appropriate title, writes Kavya Dubey

behind the invasion was not US pressure but the local self-interest of the Middle Eastern power-bearers. Similarly, nor could the "super power" prevent the creation Al-Qaeda and its worldwide spread of "jihad".

Some of the Obama administration's foreign policy blunders include ignoring the surge of militant Islamism, mishandling the "Arab Spring", failing to contain Tehran's dogged quest for the Bomb – the limits to Washington's ability to influence regional dynamics. The Obama administration witnessed an exceptional extent of cluelessness and disregard for reality. Karsh explains, "the Obama administration went out of its way to deny, ignore, euphemise and whitewash anything smacking of Islamic violence, radicalism or expansionism." This led to Obama's attempt to facilitate the rise of "moderate Islamists" and to see the Muslim Brotherhood as an outlet of moderation.

Karsh puts it clearly and bluntly that Middle Easterners have always

found it easier to blame others for their misfortunes but the main culpability of the regions endemic malaise lies with the local players. Arabs have been fighting Jews, Iranians, Kurds, and fellow Arabs for decades and this has nothing to do with external intervention. A variety of indigenous factors such as religious militancy, ethnic differences, economic and territorial greed, hegemonic ambitions are the reasons behind the region's internal conflict.

A latest example of this is the crisis unfolding in Qatar now, "the tiny Gulf state" which claims the world's highest per capita income and is capable of influencing the course of Gulf and Middle East politics – much to the chagrin of Saudi Arabia. Karsh concludes with the difficult message that "violence was not imported to the Middle East as a by-product of foreign imperialism but has rather been an integral part of the region's millenarian political culture."

The tail wags the dog, but a true "spring" remains awaited.



Routes



TEXT & SELECT PHOTOS: G. BRINDHA

Asiatic lions were once hunted almost to extinction, and now only a few remain in the world. So what if we are able to view the last Asiatic lions in the wild, without even crossing our borders? I had mixed feelings of excitement, nervousness and curiosity when the offer came from Gujarat Tourism for exactly such a chance. I could not believe I was being offered this exhilarating experience to journey to the farthest end of India's western edge – to the Gir forest. We were taken by air from Chennai and to Veraval by train and thence on by road. After an hour's drive we entered into an area of thorny shrubs and our road snaked through the woods.

"We have entered the buffer zone of the forest. The lucky few will be able to see some wildlife here," announces our driver. It is 12 noon and sweltering even in winter. Finally, we reach Sasan Gir, a hamlet hemmed in by the jungle known as Gir Sanctuary, famed as the only place in the world to see Asiatic lions. Many resorts and hotels have been set up in this village. The forest office and the entry gate to the lion habitat is located here. One has to get a permit to gain entry. Our resort is idyllic, set amidst sylvan surroundings on the banks of a river, lined by shrubs, inhabited by crocs and innumerable varieties (more than 300) of birds. We were put up in large tents, which had perfectly adequate bathrooms attached. Each tent also had a wooden veranda where you could enjoy your evening non-alcoholic drink (alcohol is forbidden in Gujarat) while soaking up the weird and wonderful sounds of nature around you. The food was far from satisfactory. The maintenance is debatable. My tent does not have a proper padlock at the entrance door. The redeeming factors are the rustic ambience and AC. After feasting on Gujarati dhokla and Ragi roti we move out at 4 pm.

Wildlife sighting is possible in Gir in two ways. The first one is at Devaliya Park, which is open throughout the year, and is 10 kms from Gir. Since it is an observation centre, there is sure to be a sighting of the lions. We travel there by omnibus. To reduce the tourism hazard to wildlife and to promote nature

education, this Interpretation Zone has been created at Devalia within the sanctuary. Within its chained fences, it covers all habitat types and wildlife of Gir with its feeding-cum-living cages for the carnivores and a double-gate entry system. The gigantic main gate swings open sideways. First to be seen are the stags. Then we have the *darshan* of our royal resident. The 'king' of the forest gives a pose majestically with his 'queen'. After five minutes, the lioness shakes its head and walks away as if to say, 'Don't these rubbernecks have other business?' There is a water trough in the vicinity and a rocky cave shelter built for the lions to get shade.

The safari is not over. Antelope, bear, a shy leopard, Nilgai and fox are all on view. Most of them ignore us. After the drive we come back to the riverfront and do some bird-watching. Gir is also a bird watcher's paradise. The avian population in countless hues is eye-catching. That first night we are treated to a troupe performing an impressive fire dance before dinner. These people are Siddis, a tribe who arrived from Africa centuries ago. We hit our beds early after a light dinner.

Next day, we get up at the crack of dawn. After temperatures of about 95 F the previous afternoon, there is a chill in the air the following morning when we set out for our game drive. Our teeth chatter in the cold. It is puzzling how it can be so hot in the day and at night you shiver. Must be something to do with the extremes of a desert climate. Swaddled in layers of woollens and with a DSLR camera slung over my shoulder, we gulp down a cup of *garam chai* and proceed to board the 6 seater open gypsy to start our safari. A guide provided by the Forest Dept accompanies us. "Wildlife sightings are more frequent before sunrise," announces our team leader. Our jeep meanders through the rugged, dry terrain of the forest. We first see some Chital. There are some 46,000 Chital in the forest, providing breakfast, lunch and dinner for 500 lions.

We bumped along in our Jeep with our excellent guide pointing out a never-ending parade of wildlife



– mongoose, honey buzzards, Chital, sambar, storks, woodpeckers, wild boar, and buffalo. Other residents are jungle cats, striped hyenas, golden jackals, palm civets and honey badgers.

This was earlier the hunting grounds of the Nawabs of Junagadh. If it hadn't been for the animal-loving Nawabs, the lions would have died out. In Gujarat more than a century ago,



the Nawab was invited to hunt the last remaining few, but he had a brainstorm and suggested preserving these marvellous beasts instead. Nawab Sir Muhammad Rasul Khanji Babi declared Gir as a "protected" area in 1900. His son, Nawab Muhammad Mahabat Khan III later assisted in the conservation of the lions whose population had plummeted to only 20 through slaughter for trophy hunting and the Gir forests were set aside for protection of the lions. This makes Gir one of the oldest protected areas in India.

The census of lions takes place every five years. Special mention must be made of the 'Cat Women of Gir Forest'. During the 2010 census they counted more than 411 lions in the park. In 2015, a population of 523 lions were counted. The women who do the counting are of traditional Muslim tribes in neighboring villages. There are over 40 women 'Van Raksha Sahayaks', who seek only to protect the animals of the park. These women have worked hard to win cooperation not just from local villagers but also from Maaldharis, the semi-nomadic tribal herdsmen who live in the sanctuary. The lions are almost tame in the presence of the female guards who patrol on foot.



WORLD'S

last ASIATIC LIONS

Within its chained fences, Devaliya Park covers all habitat types and wildlife of Gir with its feeding-cum-living cages for the carnivores and a double-gate entry system



Then we continue on in search of His Majesty. Vehicles go deeper into the jungle. The guide admits that the lions are elusive 'but you will see at least one'. The predators mostly hunt at night and return home early in the morning. Suddenly, there is a commotion. The jeeps stop and take up position between the trees. After a few seconds, silence prevails. And lo and behold! We notice the lion king with his family, ambling some 100 yards ahead of us at his own pace. What a magnificent specimen he was. He is unmindful of the prying eyes and the surrounding jeeps. The lioness too gazes at the visitors indifferently. On and off she turns back and glances at her cubs. The King meandered along the track for a good 20 minutes and ignored us, intent instead on spraying every tree he came across to mark out his territory. It was wonderful to watch an animal behaving in a 'real' way despite our presence. Because the lion was padding along slowly, our guide was able to point out the differences compared to an African lion – a mane that grows only halfway round his head, and much paler fur – grey in colour when compared to the brown cousins in Africa.

The lions are closely followed by forest guards with big sticks. Their business is to take care of the injured or diseased lions. It is also their duty to see that there is no disturbance to them by outsiders. Some jeeps approach from the opposite direction also. But the lions stride towards them as if saying, "You won't be at peril so long as you don't disturb me." Is this the lion swagger? Our jeep crawls behind them. The 'king' sits under a tree with disdain, watching the proceedings. The cute cubs, looking like big kitten, play beside him.

When a lion's stomach is full, it doesn't care to hunt. Gir houses a colony of the Maldhari tribe. To protect their livestock, once in a while, a cow is offered to the lions. In turn, the lions don't disturb the villagers. But the same is not the case with tigers. Lions are honest in their dealings. Call it "dignity" explains the guide.

As the lioness deviates to another path, the ranger asks our driver to move ahead of the animal. He cautiously speeds up the vehicle and hearing the engine, the 'queen' turns her head towards us. As the jeep gets closer to Her Majesty we are a bundle of nerves and my heart misses a beat. Once the proximity is less than 5ft, the lioness opens her jaws wide with her knees slightly bent. Death seems near. As I am in the corner seat my heart comes into my throat. But within seconds, our chauffeur dexterously drives past the beast. She struts back as if saying "Fear Me." After the lioness disappears from the scene we realise we haven't turned on our cameras. This is the beauty of a lion. It will warn you and face you bravely from the front, not pounce on you from behind like a tiger. ■



mp



STORIES IN A FRAME

WINGS OF FREEDOM



Birds have always inspired humans with their ability to fly. Getting a glimpse of some such vibrant winged creatures is definitely a treat to the eye but also capturing a moment of their being through the lens is a feeling of satisfaction and success.

PICS: SHEKHAR GHOSH

SEND YOUR ORIGINAL SNAPS ALONG WITH YOUR NAME AND A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY BEHIND THEM TO MPSUNDAYPOST@GMAIL.COM. IF WE LIKE THEM, WE'LL PUBLISH THEM!



BRAIN DRAIN

SUDOKU

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WORD SEARCH

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ALLOSAURUS	HERBIVORE	SKELETON
ARTHROPODS	HERD	SKULL
BABIES	HOPPERS	SPINOSAURUS
BONES	HORN	RUS
BRACHIOSAURUS	HUNT	STEGOSAURUS
CARNIVORE	IGUANODON	RUS
CLAWS	JURASSIC	STOMP
CRAWLERS	LIZARD	TAIL CLUB
CREST	MESOZOIC	TEETH
DIG	NEST	TITANOSAURUS
DISCOVERY	PREDATOR	RUS
DOME HEAD	PREHISTORIC	STOMP
EGG	PTERANODON	TAIL CLUB
ERUPTION	PTERODACTYL	TEETH
EXTINCT	REPTILE	TITANOSAURUS
FLYERS	RIDGE	RUS
FOOTPRINT	ROAR	STOMP
FOSSILS	ROCK	TAIL CLUB
GEOLOGY	SAUROPODS	TEETH
GIANT	SCALES	TITANOSAURUS
GLIDERS	SCARY	TRACKS
		TYRANNOSAURUS
		SAURUS REX
		VELOCIRAPTOR
		VOLCANO
		WING

Finish the proverb:

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of _____.

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9	7	4	8	6	5	1	3	2
1	5	2	7	3	4	6	8	9
2	4	7	1	5	9	3	6	8
3	6	1	4	7	8	2	9	5
5	8	9	6	2	3	7	1	4
4	1	5	2	9	6	8	7	3
6	9	8	3	4	7	5	2	1
7	2	3	5	8	1	9	4	6

MISSING BAGGAGE

Rosy just got off the flight and reached the baggage area to collect her luggage. She was on a month's tour to Europe and just returned home. She was very tensed as she could not find her luggage, where she had all the things she shopped in Europe. A tensed Rosy approached the baggage in-charge and informed that she arrived from France and she could not find her baggage in the carousel. The in-charge smiled and ask Rosy to stay calm. She informed Rosy that they were professionals with expert training and they would find her luggage and hand over it to her. Rosy was relaxed. The officer in-charge asked her about the color, number of bags, brand etc. Rosy replied. Finally, the officer in-charge asked her "Has your flight arrived?" Rosy Fainted.

chuckles



SATTU COOLER



INGREDIENTS:
Sattu powder 50 grams
Sugar 15 grams
Lemon Juice 10 ml
Water 100 ml
Ice Cube 5-6
Roasted cumin powder 2-3 grams for garnishing

METHOD:
Take a vessel and pour water. Add sattu powder, sugar and fresh lemon juice in the water and stir constantly to mix the ingredients properly. Take a tall glass and pour this mixture slightly below the rim. Now add a couple of ice cubes to make the drink chilled. Garnish the drink with a pinch of roasted cumin powder. It will enhance the flavour of your soothing sattu drink.

(Courtesy: Cha bar)

MUTTON CHAP

INGREDIENTS

Mutton chap (single bone ribs)	500 – 650 gm
Onion	4 no
Garlic	2 cloves
Ginger	20 gm
Mustard oil	100 ml
Big cardamom	2 gm
Bay leaf	1 leaf
Cinnamon	1 gm
Salt	to taste
Curd	10 gm
Poppy seed	20 gm
Magaj	20 gm
Chironji	10 gm
Coconut	15 gm
Black pepper powder	5 gm
Green cardamom powder	2 pinch
Mace powder	4 gm
Black salt	to taste
Garam masala	5 gm
Metha iter	2 drops
Green chillies	4 nos
Ghee	50 ml
Mutton stock or water	as required

PREPARATION:

Clean and wash the lamb chop, keep aside. In a mixing bowl whisked the curd, keep aside. Soak, drain and make a fine paste of chironji seed, magaj seed, poppy seeds and desiccated coconut, keep aside. Chop green chillies, onion and mint leaves, keep aside



COOKING:

STEP 1:

- Heat mustard oil in a lagan till it evaporates its bitterness.
- Add chopped onion, chopped ginger, chopped garlic and chopped green chillies along with all whole spices (bay leaf, cloves, cinnamon and big cardamom) and leave it for few seconds.
- Add mutton chap and fry it gently in the oil.
- Add salt and black salt as required, cover the lagan or utensil with lid and cook it in a slow flame for 30 mins.

STEP 2:

- Open the lid and add whisked curd.
- Add prepared paste and cook it for another 10 minutes over slow flame.
- Add all the powder spices.
- Add mutton stock or water and cook upto done.
- Add ghee and two drop of metha iter to the prepared chap.

TO SERVE: -Serve mutton chap in a kebab plate.
(Courtesy: Chef de Cuisine Ashwani Kumar, The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel)

SHAHI TUKRHA



INGREDIENTS

Breads	4 slice
Milk full cream	½ lts
Sugar	1 ½ cup
Saffron	¼ gm
Cardamom powder	1 tsp
Kewra	few drops
Metha iter	a drop
Pista	1 tbsp
Almond	1 tbsp
Chironji seed	1 tbsp
Rabarhi	1 cup
Silver leaf	3 nos
Ghee to fry	

PREPARATION:-

THE BREAD

Trim the slices of bread and shape them in neat circles using a cutter. Heat ghee in a pan and fry till golden-brown and keep aside

THE DRY FRUIT

Blanch and remove the skin of almonds and pistachios and make into fine slaves.

COOKING:-

THE SUGAR SYRUP

Prepare syrup by dissolving sugar in water (approximately 1 and ½ cup). Add a drop of kewra and half tsp of cardamom powder. Pour fried breads and soak it for 3 to 4 minutes. Remove and keep aside.

THE MILK

Boil milk in a thick bottomed pan and simmer on low heat till it is

reduced to ¼th its original volume. Sprinkle a drop of metha iter essence. Add remaining cardamom powder.

Place prepared breads roundels gently in the pan and simmer on very low heat till almost all the milk is absorbed. This requires extreme care as the bread slices may crumble and keep aside

TO ASSEMBLE
Take prepared breads roundels and pour rabarhi on top and add Chironji seed. Now, lay another bread on the top of it and again pour rabarhi on top and garnish with almonds and pistachios. Add the strands of saffron and drape with silver leaves. Serve at room temperature or cold.

(Courtesy: Chef de Cuisine Ashwani Kumar, The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel)

Trending

Candid Talk



Evan Sinton (MAALA) Singer

If you weren't a musician, what would you have been?

I don't know... As long as I am able to continue to be creative in some way it's good. Otherwise I'd go crazy. I should have had a plan B but I did not...

What was your first ever stage performance like?

I never thought I was a good singer, I was terribly nervous. The first time I performed in front of an audience was in high school with a dorky little band. The audience responded well though.

What are your hobbies?

I'm into music full-time, otherwise I'm a really boring person (laughs). But I used to play tennis a little bit, and I also love watching cricket... I should definitely take up some more hobbies...

What has been the lowest point in your life?

A couple of years ago, I was in Auckland, where my car got broken into and all my music gear was stolen. I got fired from my job, so things were a little grim.

What was the highest point in your life?

Being able to travel with music and winning a music award at the 'New Zealand's Got Talent' was an incredible feeling. I am really lucky and grateful for that.

What is your idea of a deal weekend?

Probably, playing cricket and some whisky...

Favourite singer: Robert Plant

Menace of blackmail

Blackmailing is a punishable offense and one must fight it bravely to make the offenders realise their stupidity soon



Heart of the Matter

ROOPSHA DASGUPTA RAY

Is adultery a crime? What's your opinion? I'm single but curious to know.

Raniya, New Delhi
Adultery is a voluntary consensual relationship between a married individual and someone who is not his/her lawful spouse. Adultery is considered as legally wrong and is a punishable offense. The act of adultery is a crime which breaches the marriage vows and is detrimental to public morals. It is regarded as illegal in some countries and certain laws have been passed to keep a check over adultery. Although adultery is not a criminal offense, it may have legal consequences and the individual concerned may be penalized and punished especially if the case is pertaining to divorce. This is the way the adultery laws are depicted in our country. In my opinion, the involved individuals are the best judges to determine the moral and social consequences.

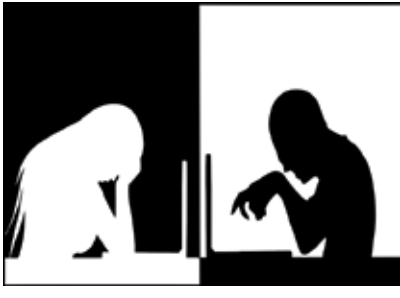
My husband is 12 years older than me. He doesn't seem to be interested in having a child! We had an arranged marriage and he loves me a lot. What to do?

Mrs. Dixit, New Delhi
The decision of having a child has to be a mutual one. You have to establish your desire and clearly state your mind. It is quite selfish on his part to be ignorant about such a vital aspect. May be you can involve the parents who in turn can help him understand the need of an offspring. Please don't lose heart and I'm sure everything will fall into place. Be confident and don't compromise on this at all. You have your right to motherhood and your husband has to understand and value your desire.

I often feel very depressed. I am afraid that slowly I might become a patient of depression!! I'm 32 and single.



Involve the ones you can trust and deal with the threatening soon. Family might be angry but they will always support you and will take care of you at all times




hopeless. If depression has you noticing only the negative, make an effort to notice the good things in life. Try to notice one thing, then try to think of one more. Consider your strengths, gifts, or blessings. Most of all, don't forget to be patient with yourself. Depression takes time to heal but you can fix it before it breaks you.

My ex boyfriend is threatening to expose our intimate mails and digital pictures. I'm feeling horribly scared. My family will disown me. What can I do?


Name unknown, Haryana
Oh dear, that's terrible! Don't you have anyone in your family or circle of friends who can help you fight this out? You perhaps would need some strong support of your family to sort this mess. Don't be scared. Blackmailing is a punishable offense and he should realise his stupidity soon.
Don't delay any further. Involve the ones you can trust and sort it soon. Family might be angry but they will always support you and will take care of you at all times. Be confident and fight this out.
(Send your questions to roopshashotm@gmail.com)



Aries (Mar 21–April 20)
New brooms sweep clean with Mars now powering through your home and family zone, encouraging you to clear out the hot spots. This week could also see you ready to pamper yourself and indulge in a few luxuries. You're unlikely to miss a bargain either. With Mercury hiking into Gemini, you'll have all the latest info on prices at your fingertips and be ready to grab the best deal.




Gemini (May 22– June 21)
As Mercury, your guide planet, enters your sign on Tuesday, you could find your natural curiosity is piqued by new ideas and opportunities. You may also be eager to look further into your finances and find ways to make your money work harder for you. But feelings can also amp up on Friday, as a Full Moon in your sector of relating encourages emotions to come to the surface.



Leo (July 23–Aug 23)
This week has a special sparkle with the Sun continuing its journey through your social sector. And Mercury's move into this same zone could encourage you to seek groups of interest or connect with like-minded others. There is also much to be gained from nurturing contacts in the business world or associated with your professional life, as they could have tips or opportunities to share with you.



Libra (Sept 24– Oct 23)
Are you ready, Libra? Are you in shape for what's going to happen? The celestial aspects are heralding a new cycle that will be filled to the brim with activities, new people, and new professional perspectives. Let's hope that you've been able to rest up lately. If you haven't, try to schedule in some afternoon naps!




Sagittarius (Nov 23–Dec 21)
A new wind is blowing in your relationships, Sagittarius, and you probably won't be too sorry about it! The planets are lining up to signal new beginnings. You will be able to take advantage of your recent reflections and test your new self-image. You likely won't be disappointed by the results. Be happy. You have every reason to be!



Aquarius (Jan 21–Feb 18)
Last month you may have been somewhat more extroverted and sociable than usual, especially regarding your emotional relationships. But beginning today, your attitude will undergo a change, Aquarius. You will probably be calmer and more reasonable. Your thoughts may begin to focus more on the future than the present. You have about a month to firm up your plans.



Taurus (April 21–May 21)
Your personal planet Venus enters your sign on Tuesday, where she feels right at home. This influence can help you feel good about life. There is also a lively influence that could see you eager to make new friends but in a way that highlights your caring, nurturing side. The focus on your home zone could also encourage you to think about getting your place in shape.



Cancer (June 22–July 22)
Mars is now moving through your sign, so your natural courage could surface. This might be a call to take a proactive approach to a lingering situation. Also, the move of Venus into your social zone is going to spice up your social life and pave the way for some lovely romantic dates. Time for reflection may also be very fruitful, to help you put key aspects of life in perspective.



Virgo (Aug 24– Sept 23)
This is a pleasant day, Virgo. Indeed, the celestial aspects are predicting that it will be rather radiant, though likely less intense than the past week or so. You probably had some new perspectives to set up in your professional life, and now you will have to get to work setting goals! You were waiting for just this moment? Perfect!



Scorpio (Oct 24–Nov 22)
Will there be change in you during the next few weeks, Scorpio? This is always the question that one asks with this changing planetary environment. It's appealing to think that you may be traveling to exotic locations or perhaps changing jobs and meeting some interesting new people. Anything is possible with these aspects. Enjoy the renewed atmosphere!



Capricorn (Dec 22– Jan 20)
You will be happy to know that today contains the seeds of change for your love life, Capricorn. Beginning today and for the next month or so, you're likely to be amazed by the turn of events in your relationships with others. The plot thickens as new people and groups emerge on your horizon. The aspect ahead is much less individualistic than usual.



Pisces (Feb 19–March 20)
As a person who loves to experiment with new ideas and discover new people, you will be delighted with the period that is now beginning. Since communication, togetherness, and sociability will rule the next few weeks, it will be a perfect time to get out and show off your gifts. You will have a ball, Pisces!

You share your birthday with



PETER HAYDEN DINKLAGE

Born on June 11, 1969, Peter Hayden Dinklage is an American actor and film producer. Dinklage, who self-identifies as a dwarf (achondroplasia), began acting as a child in a fifth-grade production of The Velveteen Rabbit. He studied acting at Bennington College, starring in a number of amateur stage productions. His film debut was in Living in Oblivion (1995) and his breakthrough came with the comedy-drama The Station Agent (2003). He has since appeared in films like 'Elf', 'Find Me Guilty', 'Underdog', 'The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian' and 'X-Men: Days of Future Past.' Since 2011, Dinklage has portrayed Tyrion Lannister in the HBO series Game of Thrones, which earned him the Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series in 2011 and 2015. Dinklage is one of the highest paid actors on television and is an animal rights activist and has been viewed as a role model for people sharing his condition, partially because of refusing roles considered degrading for dwarf actors.



Q. Will old dogs bond with new owners?

A. I have always found that adult dogs will bond with a new family, take a new name and adopt new habits quite easily. It just takes a few weeks. Of course, a dog that has always been kindly treated and has never been neglected or hurt by people will be more amenable to bonding with a new family.

One of the greatest challenges for the new dog owner can be establishing a bond with an adult dog that was abandoned and rescued. Dogs that are re-homed will sometimes fall into a vicious circle of being slow to trust people and bond with them, leading to their new owners feeling that the dog is not a good fit for the family after a few weeks and returning them. This sets up an ongoing

cycle of lack of trust, abandonment and reinforcement of the lack of trust, so if you are considering taking on a rescued dog, understand that it might take some time.

Regardless of the age or personality of your new dog or puppy, there are a lot of different ways in which you can promote bonding with them and reinforce their positive experiences with you. Spend plenty of

time with your dog, feed them treats by hand, and talk to them as much as possible so that they begin to associate your voice with kindness and positivity. Walk them regularly, give them toys, and provide for all of their needs.

Never speak harshly to your dog or punish them negatively; work on a principle of positive reinforcement only. Also, it is important to allow your dog their space, and not push yourself into their territory or force them to spend all of their time close to you. Let them come to you in their own time, and make sure that a warm welcome awaits them when they do.

Q. Can dogs be relocated on RWAs requests?

A. Under stray dog management rules 2001, it's illegal for an individual, RWA or estate management to remove or relocate dogs. The dogs have to be sterilized and vaccinated and returned to the same area. Vaccinated and sterilized dogs cannot be removed by the municipality too. The only case where one can remove the dog is if the dog has rabies.

A) Under the Govt. of India, Animal Birth Control Rules 2001, no sterilized dogs can be relocated from their area. As per five different High Court orders, sterilized dogs have to remain in their original areas. If the dog is not sterilized, the Society can simply ask an animal welfare organization to steril-

ize and vaccinate the dog. They cannot relocate them. Relocation is not permissible, as it would cause more problems such as an increase in dog bites as new dogs will move into the area that are unfamiliar with residents and therefore more likely to be hostile.

B) The Government of India has issued a circular Dy No 1237 dated 30/9/2006, specifically directing all RWAs and any other recognized citizens associations as follows:

- As per Section 11 of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, beating, kicking, over-riding, overloading, over-driving, torturing or otherwise treating any animals so as to subject it to unnecessary pain amounts to cruelty on animals. And whoever indulges in an act of cruelty to animals makes himself liable for action under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.
- There are designated agencies in Government/local self-government Organizations that are authorized to deal with stray animals. Such Organizations regularly undertake inoculations, sterilization of animals and other programmes.
- Recognized Associations may approach such institution for redressal of their grievances if any, with regard to stray animals. Un-recognized associations may also approach such bodies with their grievances, but they should not pretend to represent the residents in general.
- All problems of stray animals have to be handled within the institutional frame-



Heads & tails

Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, MP & Union Cabinet Minister, also an eminent animal rights activist and environmentalist answers Millennium Post readers queries related to animal welfare issues

work available. No association, recognized or unrecognized, shall take recourse to any action regarding stray animals on their own, either themselves or through any person employed by them like security guards.

- Where there is no recognized association, residents may take up grievances through the AWO/Office of the CWO.
- While residents and Associations are free to address institutional agencies for redressal of grievances in this matter, no resident/association will interfere with the freedom of other residents in caring and attending animals. Intimidating in any manner, those who feed and care for animals is a criminal offence. Apart from action under appropriate criminal law, such persons will render themselves liable for action.

(Send your questions to manekaanimallove@gmail.com)



Film

“The role of a comedian is to make the audience laugh, at a minimum of once every fifteen seconds”
-Lenny Bruce

Standing out with
STAND-UP
COMEDY

Having done over 250 shows in over 17 cities, Sorabh Pant, who started off as a TV writer, is now amongst India's top 10 stand-up comedians. He established 'The East India Comedy' and left it to do what he really wants – stand-up comedy

PRABHJOT SINGH GAMBHIR

On a Monday evening, you'd be surprised at the number of people that are swarming in this restaurant that I'm sitting in. And the reason for that is none other than one of India's top comedians and my interviewee for today – Sorabh Pant. Sorabh who is currently touring the world with his show "The Rant of the Pant" maintains his calm and is very polite throughout the interview as I fumble through the. After the interview, Sorabh goes on to perform a killer show with content that can make one laugh their guts out and a voice whose decibel levels can make a dead man rise up from his grave. He will also be starting his new YouTube channel, "Pant on fire comedy" soon where he will be uploading one stand-up clip each week for the next whole year; I for one am certainly looking forward to it. Here are some excerpts from the interview:

You started doing comedy about eight and a half years ago, how much do you think the scenario of comedy has changed in India over the years?

It's changed completely. I think the level of comedy has definitely gone up, which means people like me who have been doing it for eight and a half years have had to up my game.

How did you get into comedy?

I got in purely by chance; I was a writer for TV for a long time. I used to write for Vir on a show for CNBC and then one day, he said, "would you open for me?", and I was like sure. So, it was pure coincidence, I never thought this was something I could be doing.

So, you didn't see any stand-up prior to that?

I saw a lot of stand-up and consumed a ton of comedy. I'm not saying more than others, but I've been watching stand-up since I was 12, which is 23 years of watching stand-up. First guy I ever saw on stage was Johnny Lever, who was damn funny, he was hilarious. So, I was watching comedy and writing comedy for other people till that point of time but didn't do any of my own.

Who are your biggest comedic influences?

A lot of people actually, everyone in the circuit right now are a bit of an inspiration for different reasons. There are some who have set up their own market and then there are guys who are really funny. I tend to watch a lot of comedians from abroad not for any snob-bishness but just because I want my voice to be different from everyone else in India. But genuinely, whether it's all the boys from EIC or people like Zakir, Kanan, Kenny, Abish, Aditi, Vir, in the Indian scene there are more than

enough people to look up to.

Any idol from abroad?

I've realized that I actually miss Jon Stewart more than anyone else; I thought he was my comedy idol because he talks about all the news and everything that's happening around the world. And also, Bill Burr, I've always been a fan of him. There's a guy called Greg Gerdalo who I really like and Brian Reagan who just makes me laugh.

Anyone from the forefathers of comedy, like George Carlin, Richard Pryor, Mort Sahl, Lenny Bruce, basically people who set up the scene?

To be honest, I actually think, what you watch first dictates who you really like. I really admire the rest of these guys but I've never been a hardcore fan of any

'The idea is, you keep watching stand-up as much as you can, keep writing as much as you can but nothing defeats getting on stage. Try to get on stage as much as you can,' says Sorabh Pant to the aspiring stand-up comedians

of them. Steve Martin, for example, was so different from everyone back then, he was really admirable. Carlin is a guy I really admire but as a comedian he is impossible to watch. So, I literally have had to force myself to stop watching him because his content is so precise, it's almost impossible for someone like me to be that precise and confident.

Not many people know that you're also a novelist, are there any books in the making you'd want to tell us about?

The third novel is coming out in September and everyone who has read it so far has unequivocally told me it's the best thing I've written which, I don't know is an insult or a compliment.

What do you enjoy more,

stand-up or writing literary pieces?

I don't write literary pieces; even the novels I write are light-hearted. They might also be dark and in the new novel there are a lot of people dying for no reason but, I enjoy both. I think I like oscillating between the two of them. This last week I spent three days writing my novel and four days writing and doing standup.

You have now left East India Comedy (EIC) and chosen to venture out solo. Were you not finding the creative liberties to grow as an artist in the group?

I just wanted to establish myself more. To be honest, I wanted to take a little risk. I wanted to invest time in myself and do things that I always wanted to do. I am always very proud of everything we do at EIC and everything we've done so far. But yeah, I just wanted to express myself, like

Yuvraj Singh in the India-Pakistan match. You've performed across the globe, how different are the foreign audiences as compared to the ones we have back home?

People are the same inherently in most of the places and because of YouTube, the world has become smaller. You just have to think a little bit more with regards to your content because in India your references tend to be more India centric, and appealing to Indians and the advantage you have as an Indian is that Indians are everywhere, so no matter where you go, 75% of the crowd will be Indian, but there will still be 25% other people who are not Indians and I don't like to make anyone who has paid the ticket price feel excluded.

Any advice to young comics who are entering the scene?

The idea is, you keep watching stand-up as much as you can, keep writing as much as you can but nothing defeats getting on stage. When I was in Hong Kong, I did about four shows in total and beyond that



Recently, the stand-up comedian and writer took to stage in an event organised by Punch liners in the Capital. The crowd of youngsters went from LOL to ROFL as Sorabh, with his witty comments and satire talked about various things.

I did a couple of open mics. To be honest they were not the greatest open mics, there were approx. eight people watching but I still wanted to do it. The idea is to get on stage as much as you can. There has never been a situation where I've gotten on stage and felt like this was a waste of my time. It's always totally worth the time.

Comedians sometimes tend to have the same thought for a joke, in spite not having known each other. Has this ever happened to you and if yes then how do you handle the situation?

It's happened a couple of time but to be honest that's one of the reasons I don't watch much Indian comedy because I don't want anyone to ever say ki tune mera joke churaya hai (you stole my joke) because I don't need to steal jokes and I think I write more than

most people do.

Delhi sees a lot less number of open mics as compared to Mumbai and Bengaluru. What do you think is the reason for such disparity and how can this situation be improved?

I'll be perfectly honest. I don't know why the Delhi comedy scene has not exploded as much as Mumbai or Bengaluru, and it makes no sense. Mumbai, in a month will have about 75 shows and I find it shocking that Delhi, which is a place that is so politically opinioned just doesn't have enough going on in it. The comedians are hilarious, there are enough people consuming comedy, I just think the problem is that in Delhi, people tend to keep obstructing each other. To make the comedy scene grow, you need to support everyone and comedians need to help each other out.

Recently the judge of Rajasthan's high court said that peacocks don't have sex. What do you have to say when people with that level of education talk bizarre?

Well, it was his last day at work. He should have retired the first day he became a judge because of statement like this.

The fun part for me was that there were about 15 people behind him who were clapping and looking at the Judge like, Sahab aapne kya soch vichaar karke ye opinion nikal ke rakha hai (Sir, what were you thinking while making giving such opinions). By the way, my dad told me that his logic behind peacock tears impregnating a peahen originated from a whatsapp message. So, I was like dude, if judges in India believe in whatsapp forward, what hope we do have.

But again, the thing is, I have nothing against people in the legal business. Some of them are tremendous and some Supreme Court judges are doing a stellar job in holding up the country. I am happy that at least enough people called him out on how stupid it was. More often than not what happens is that people get away with statements that are even more stupid than this.

Such people are the reason why comedy industry is running. They are the fuel; they are the unleaded petrol to my punch lines.



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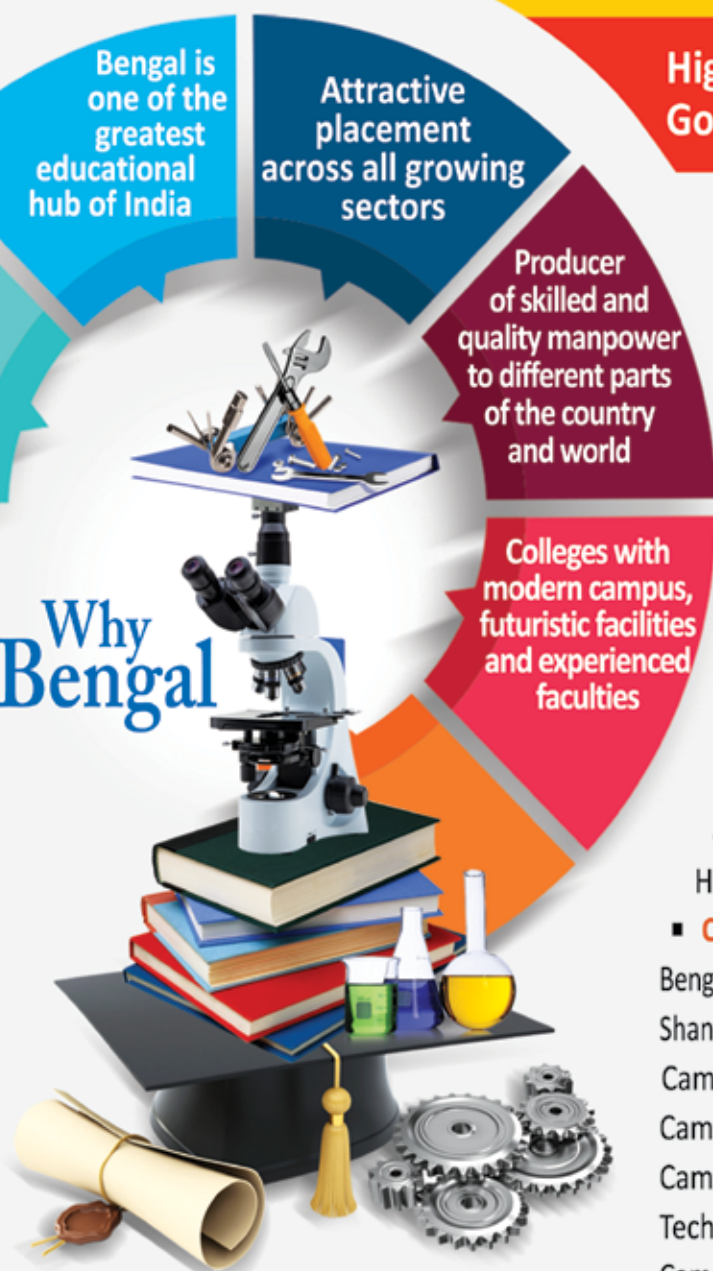
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