



WEEKENDER

See if RGV's *The Attacks of 26/11* gives an accurate dramatisation of Mumbai terror attacks **Page 8**



SPORT

A confident Team India will look to increase their lead as they take on Australia in the second Test **Page 16**

WORLD

Pope flies in helicopter to papal retreat, becomes the first pontiff in 600 years to resign **Page 10**



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SHORT TAKES

RBI to check credit card frauds

Mumbai: In order to check frauds, the RBI has asked banks to impose monetary limit for international transactions on credit and debit cards and refrain from issuing cards with global access unless specifically sought by the customer. —P12

Hyd blasts: 2 IM operatives probed

Hyderabad: As investigators struggled for a breakthrough eight days after the twin blasts, two suspected Indian Mujahideen (IM) operatives, who had allegedly receded the area of the attack, were brought here from Delhi's Tihar jail on Friday and grilled by NIA sleuths. —P7

PC to address concerns over TRC

New Delhi: The finance ministry on Friday sought to assure worried investors saying their concerns on tax residency certificate (TRC) for claiming treaty benefits will be 'suitably' addressed during discussion on Finance Bill in Parliament. —P12

SC no to SIT probe into chopper deal

Mumbai: The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a PIL seeking apex court monitored probe by a special investigation team (SIT) or CVC into the alleged kickbacks in the ₹3600 crore VVIP chopper deal. —P6

SC grants bail to Madhu Koda

New Delhi: Jailed former Jharkhand chief minister Madhu Koda and his aide Vikash Kumar Sinha were on Friday granted bail by the Supreme Court for their alleged role in a money laundering case but will remain in prison in connection with bribery and other offences. —P7

Mukul Sangma re-elected CLP leader

Shillong: Mukul Sangma, who steered Congress to help it retain power in Meghalaya, is set to become the chief minister for a second straight term after he was on Friday elected as leader of its Legislature Party. —P7

Business

Indices

Sensex: 56.98▲

Nifty: 26.65▲

Bullion

Gold/10gm ₹29,410 Silver/1Kg ₹54,610

Top Gainers

Care Projects-18.78% | Sulfion Energy-18.07%

Dollar	54.48
Pound	82.71
Euro	71.27

Weather

Sunny

High: 33.6°C

Low: 20.5°C

Rainfall: Nil

Forecast

High: 30°C

Low: 17°C

Mainly Clear Sky



(L) The wreckage of a three wheeler in front of a Bangladeshi police station in Gaibandha north in Dhaka where Jamaat-i-Islami activists killed three police personal on Thursday (R) Bangladeshi Rapid Action Battalion personnel patrol near Baitul Mukarram, the national mosque in Dhaka on Friday



Bangla violence toll rises to 42, Pranab to go ahead with visit

Dhaka ready to roll out the red carpet; Jamaat, BNP team up to force three-day shutdown

■ SEEMA GUHA
NEW DELHI

Violence continued across Bangladesh for the second day on Friday as Jamaat-i-Islami supporters repeatedly clashed with police after the day's prayers. The violence had its source in the death sentence pronounced against senior Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayeedi on Thursday by a special war crimes tribunal. At least 42 persons, including six policemen, have died since Jamaat cadres took to the streets in protest against the sentence.

The flare-up could not have come at a worse time as far as India is concerned. New Delhi is watching the situation particularly closely with Pranab Mukherjee scheduled to travel to Bangladesh on his first presidential visit abroad. His three-day state visit begins on Sunday and wraps up on Tuesday. On all three days, Bangladesh will remain shut down. The Jamaat has called a 48-hour general strike on Sunday, the day Mukherjee lands, while the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has called a hartal on Tuesday.

Considering that India has always been a factor in Bangladesh's politics (the BNP has often dubbed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League a pro-India stooge) the presidential visit could give the opposition a handle to drive the point home; more so, because India played a pivotal role during Bangladesh's war of liberation. Incidentally, Pranab

Mukherjee who has a great equation with most Bangladeshi leaders will be presented with the Bangladesh Liberation War award by President Md. Zillur Rahman. The Indian leader is going ahead with his plans to visit Bangladesh despite the situation in that country. Officials here say there is no question of postponing the landmark visit as the host government has assured India that Bangladesh is ready to roll out the red carpet for the Indian President.

New Delhi is hoping that the presidential visit will help to further cement the ties with Bangladesh. "India attaches the highest importance to its relations with Bangladesh and seeks a deeper and stronger partnership," New Delhi said in a statement announcing the visit. Delhi is hoping

that this important visit will not be mired in controversy because of the domestic political wrangling in Bangladesh.

But a senior journalist from Dhaka feels that the domestic and

Adhir, Mukul Roy to join Prez on visit

New Delhi: Traveling with the Presidential entourage to Bangladesh would be a team of parliamentarians including minister of state for railways from Bengal Adhir Chowdhury, together with Trinamool leader and former railways minister Mukul Roy. CPM's Sitaran Yechury, BJP's Chandan Mitra and Congress' Bhubaneswar Kalita are also part of the official delegation. —P4

Bangladesh civil strife stalls export

Malda: The ongoing civil strife in Bangladesh has had its effect on the adjoining border areas of India and hundreds of Bangladeshis have crossed over to Malda in the past 48 hours. They didn't hide their anxiety over the unrest in their country. Cross-border trade has come to a halt as loaded trucks were stranded at the border with drivers returning to India. —P5

international affairs are quite separate and the Indian President will be welcomed by the Awami League, the BNP as well as former president Ershad's Jatiya.

Continued on Page 7

Shinde puts his foot in his mouth, names minor rape victims

■ SUJIT CHAKRABORTY
NEW DELHI

Union home minister Sushil Kumar Shinde was at his goofing best in Rajya Sabha on Friday. The leader of the lower house "broke the law" by naming three minor rape victims in a written statement tabled in the house on a ghastly incident in which three minors were raped, killed and thrown inside a well.

His goof would have gone unnoticed, thanks to the thin attendance, but for the alert leader of the opposition Arun Jaitley.

Shinde outdid himself when he tabled a written statement, naming the three rape victims thrown into a well after being sexually abused and killed. No one apparently noted this faux pas at the time of the discussion. At the end of it, leader of the opposition Jaitley of the BJP stepped in. He was a bit generous though and said it could have been an oversight.

Shinde, on the other hand, looked lost and did not get the import of what the leader of opposition was saying. Jaitley said keeping the identities of the minor rape victims secret was a requirement of the law and it had enormous social implication.

Jaitley translated his point in Hindi for the benefit of the union home minister, just in case. But Shinde was all at sea. By now members were becoming vociferous, who even then seemed oblivious to what he had done. The crime being discussed took place in Murwadi, a village in Bhandara's Lakhani taluka. The three sisters were found in a well when informed of it by a local last month. They were aged 6, 9, and



Sushilkumar Shinde at the Rajya Sabha in New Delhi on Friday

11. Shinde's statement on this was placed on the table of the house and treated as read. The members get a copy each in advance as they enter the debating arena. Rajya Sabha deputy chairperson P J Kurien stepped in to save the day for the government and Shinde. The names would be expunged, he said, and also directed the media to refrain from naming the victims. If any media organization named them, it would be considered a breach of privilege, the deputy chairperson decreed. If the minister's faux pas was shocking, the attitude of the members was equally hurting. Not many members were present in the house when such a serious issue was slated to be taken up, especially after a national outrage at the rape of a Delhi woman in a moving bus.

Earlier, on several occasion, Shinde had come under attack for committing a gaffe. At the Congress party's recently concluded Jaipur Chintan Shivir he came under sharp attack from the BJP for making a statement on "Hindu terror" that he eventually modified to mean Saffron terror.

Continued on Page 7

IOC raises petrol prices by ₹1.40 per litre

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

Petrol price was on Friday hiked by ₹1.40 per litre, the second big increase in rates in as many weeks. A rise in international oil prices and depreciation in rupee have necessitated a ₹1.40 per litre increase in price of petrol with effect from Friday midnight, said a statement by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC).

The hike is excluding local sales tax or VAT and the actual increase in rate for consumers will be higher after including the tax incidence. The previous petrol price hike was ₹1.50 a litre excluding VAT on February 16.

The increase in price for consumers in Delhi will be ₹1.68 per litre and the new rate will be ₹70.74 a litre from Saturday as against ₹69.06 a litre currently. Petrol in Mumbai will cost ₹77.66 a litre as against ₹75.89 per litre currently.

"The price increase has been necessitated by two factors — the international gasoline (petrol) prices have increased from USD 128.57 per barrel to USD 131.00 a barrel since the last revision; and the rupee has depreciated from ₹53.43 to ₹54.15 per USD during the period," the statement said. "The trends of international oil prices and rupee-USD exchange rate shall be closely monitored and the same shall be reflected in future price changes," said IOC.

Apart from losses on sale of petrol, oil firms are suffering under-recovery (revenue loss) on sale of diesel of ₹11.26 per litre, kerosene of ₹33.43 a litre and LPG of ₹439 per cylinder. The loss on diesel has risen from ₹10.72 a litre on February 16, when its rates were increased by 45 paise excluding VAT.

IOC said it will end the fiscal with a revenue loss of ₹86,500 crore on sale of diesel, LPG and kerosene. The industry, comprising of IOC and two other state firms, will be ₹163,500 crore during current year.

Home minister says Jaitley phone was not tapped

■ RAJESH SINHA
NEW DELHI

Home minister Sushilkumar Shinde on Friday dismissed allegations of phone tapping saying the government did not authorise anyone to intercept the phone of leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley.

Pointing out that even though the case was only to obtain records, Shinde promised to get the full details of the "unauthorised" obtaining of Jaitley's call details. Facing sharp criticism by non-Congress members on the issue in Rajya Sabha, Shinde said, "This was not a case of telephone tapping. The Indian government is not tapping any member's phone."

Rejecting the statement, BJP leader M Venkaiah Naidu said "it is nothing but reporting of an SHO" as the minister has only chosen to say that investigation is going on and interrogation has

taken place. "Normally the suspicion goes to the government. How can such activity take place without the knowledge of the government or its consent. Is there anything for the government to hide? There is something fishy. There is something more than what meets the eyes. How can you be sure that phone tapping did not take place?" Naidu asked.

Ramgopal Yadav (SP) also wondered as to why a constable required the Call Data Records (CDR) of a top leader like Jaitley. "Who is behind it?" Yadav asked, adding that doubts have been expressed that CDRs of 100 leaders of both Houses have been taken out.

Shinde said the government will consider the suggestion of the SP member that it should be made mandatory to seek the permission of the Rajya Sabha chairman before the call detail records of

any member is obtained and promised to write to the telephone department in this regard.

He also made it clear that what has been detected is "not the monitoring of telephone conversations, which is ordinarily called tapping, but accessing of the CDR".

Opposition members suspected the phones of their leaders were being tapped and suspected the government's hand in it. CPI-M leader Sitaram Yechury said his name was also in the list of those whose phones were being tapped.

BJP had earlier termed the attempt to secure the CDR of Jaitley's mobile phone as a serious matter and demanded an answer from Shinde as to who ordered this unauthorised surveillance.

Shinde insisted that the government did not authorise anybody to intercept Jaitley's telephone. Continued on Page 7

7-yr-old girl student raped inside municipal school in Delhi

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

A seven-year-old girl was raped by an unidentified man inside a municipal school in the capital, prompting protests by locals who were caned-charged on Friday, police said.

The Class-II student was sexually assaulted inside the North Delhi Municipal Corporation-run primary school in Mongolpuri L Block and the incident came to light at around 9 am on Friday when her parents informed police about it.

The girl was taken to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital where a medical examination confirmed rape. The girl was later discharged from hospital.

"The victim was raped by a man inside the school campus yesterday (Thursday). Her parents approached us this morning and a case has been registered. The victim could not tell us anything about the attacker. "We are investigating the case. We are questioning the male staff, including teachers and a guard," a senior police official said.

Enraged over the incident, locals staged protests in the locality as well as near the hospital. As the protest turned violent, police used batons to disperse the crowd.

Some government-run buses and private vehicles were damaged in the incident.

Police have been deployed in large numbers to ensure no untoward situation in the locality.



FUEL FILE			
City	Previous Price	Revised Price	Increase
Delhi	69.06	70.74	1.68
Kolkata	76.59	78.34	1.75
Mumbai	75.89	77.66	1.77
Chennai	72.17	73.95	1.78
(All Rates in ₹/litre)			

Modi to deliver keynote address to Wharton forum

■ PTI
WASHINGTON

Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi will be one of the keynote speakers at the prestigious Wharton India Economic Forum to be held in Philadelphia in March.

The BJP leader would deliver key note address to the prestigious meet through video conference, the organisers announced. Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, too would address the day-long meeting on March 23.

Wharton India Economic Forum is an annual student-run India-centric conference hosted by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Since its inception 16 years ago, the meet has emerged as one of the largest and most prestigious India-focused business conferences that provides a platform for leaders to discuss the opportunities present in India and the challenges that need to be addressed.

SHORT
TAKES



Shuvo Roychoudhury
A lizard soaks in the sun while sitting on a tree at a city park

Five shanties gutted in fire

Kolkata: A fire broke out at Mahishbathan in Salt Lake on Thursday and gutted five shanties. No casualties, however, have been reported. Local residents alleged that some people have been running a factory and selling adulterated fuel, where the fire broke out. Local people alleged that the police did not take any action and requested the Bidhan-nagar Police commissionerate to take strict action against those running the factory. Prathana Dalui's shanty was burnt, leaving all ornaments and clothes bought for her upcoming wedding in ruins. Her father Hriday pleaded with local MLA Sujit Bose to look into the matter on compassionate grounds due to his daughter's wedding. —BP

APS celebrates raising day

Kolkata: The Army Postal Service (APS) Corps celebrated its 42nd Raising Day on Friday. Corps Day celebrations were held at the 2 Central Base Post Office off VIP Road, which is one of the two mail sorting hubs of the APS in India. All mails that originate from or are addressed to military formations in the eastern sector are routed through the hub. The origin of APS goes back as early as 1856 when it was first conceived as a wartime organisation, integral to expeditionary forces headed to Bushire in the Persian Gulf, and other such missions. Till 1947, APS was a part of the Indian General Service before affiliation to the Army Service Corps as its postal branch until establishing itself as an independent corps from March 1, 1972. —BP

Exam Day-V goes by peacefully

Kolkata: The fifth day of the Madhyamik examination was peaceful and incident free, said the administrator of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE), Kalyanmoy Ganguly, on Friday. He said there was absolutely no confusion about any questions asked in the Geography paper. —BP

Surya Sen Market fire: One more dies of burn injuries

■ OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

One more person, who suffered severe burns in Wednesday's fire at Surya Sen Market, succumbed to his injuries at NRS Medical College and Hospital on Friday, taking the total death toll to twenty.

Shankar Debnath, a 48-year-old resident of Nadia, was admitted to the ICU and was on ventilator with 70 per cent burn injuries. Hospital sources said that at around 8 am, his condition started deteriorating and he died at around 8.20 am. Since his admission to the hospital on Wednesday, his condition did not improve, with Debnath not even responding to medicines. "He developed other complications and died of multi-organ failure," a hospital source said. It was found that another victim, identified as Dinesh Chatterjee, who was admitted with 80 per cent burn injuries, is also in critical state. He has been



Arijit Saha
Kolkata Police officers inspect the gutted Surya Sen Market at Sealdah on Friday

kept under strict observation in the ICU after his condition also started deteriorating since Wednesday morning. Both of them received severe burn injuries in the fire that gutted the market on 35, Surya Sen Street near Seal-

dah station on February 27. The incident also left at least 10 persons seriously injured. Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has already announced compensation of ₹2 lakh for families of those who died and

₹50,000 for those who received injuries. On Friday morning, traders with shops in the market were seen pleading before the police to allow them to enter the building.

Since morning, a section of labourers engaged by the local administration was allowed to enter the market to clear the debris and demolish the fire-affected portions of the building, which could be a risk to life. On February 27, at around 1.30 am, a major fire broke out in the market building adjacent to Jagat cinema, reducing to ashes property worth crores of rupees in more than 500 godowns and other commercial spaces.

Joint commissioner of police, crime, Pallab Kanti Ghosh said: "We have lodged FIRs against four persons but there have been no arrests yet." The police are also looking for Debashish Banerjee, who reportedly encroached on a few shops in the market and let these out on rent without maintaining proper fire safety norms.

‘Negligence caused fire’

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The major fire that broke out at Surya Sen Market at Sealdah on Wednesday morning was due to human negligence, said the report submitted by the probe panel on Friday.

The probe panel comprising officials of the fire department, state civil defence department and Kolkata Police, was set up by chief minister Mamata Banerjee to determine the causes that led to the fire which claimed 20 lives.

The panel submitted the report to the state minister for fire and emergency services and civil defence Javed Khan, who forwarded the report to the chief minister at 4 pm. When Khan was asked about the findings of the probe committee, he refused to comment.

However, sources revealed that the probe committee has pointed out that the incident occurred due to human negligence and the onus has been placed on the owner of the building.

The findings say there was only one opening for entry and exit and the single-point entry and exit was blocked by inflammable articles and materials which the fire engulfed easily. This also prevented those inside from getting out. The report also mentions that the mezzanine floor, covering an area of around 3,000 sq. ft, was not only illegally occupied, but also illegally constructed.

The report also stated that there was no count of people inside the market which is located in an industrial area.

RS Nalwa, director, civil defence, disaster management, said that it was not a case of sabotage.

KMC to monitor safety management in private markets

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has decided to inspect all private markets in the city to ascertain whether proper fire safety measures are installed on the premises. The civic body has also decided to involve all the 15 boroughs and local councillors in the process to expedite the preparation of a comprehensive list of private markets that come under the KMC's jurisdiction.

According to mayor Sovan Chatterjee, the civic board has decided that the civic rules related to the issuance of trade licences would be strictly imposed by the KMC and no trader would be able to renew their licence without having a fire NOC. "We are going to strictly abide by the civic rules and if a trader fails to produce a fire NOC from the state fire and emergency services department, the trade licence will not be renewed," the mayor said.

Chatterjee said that the fire task force formed after the Stephen Court and AMRI Hospitals fires would be strengthened further to expedite the process of identi-

fying buildings that do not have sufficient fire safety arrangements. "The task force will continue its work and we will not renew any trade licence without the mandatory fire NOC," the mayor said.

The issue of lack of initiatives taken by the KMC to prevent incidents like Stephen Court and AMRI was also raised during the monthly House proceedings on Thursday held at the civic body headquarters. However, almost all political parties, including the opposition, stressed that instead of playing a political blame game, all parties should work together to ensure that such deadly incidents do not take place in the future.

Rupa Bagchi, leader of the opposition, stated during the House proceedings that the civic board should consider involving the boroughs and local councillors to prepare a list of private markets. Debabrata Majumder, the MMiC in-charge of the KMC solid waste management department, said that the plan of the fire-ravaged Surya Sen Market was passed during the Left tenure and the plan was not as per the norms stated in the KMC Building Rules.

■ SANTASREE MAJUMDER
KOLKATA

The city, which witnessed major fires like Stephen Court and AMRI, is limping along with an inadequate number of fire stations.

This bare truth has come to the fore yet again after the third big tragedy at Surya Sen Market, which claimed 19 lives on Wednesday.

"According to norms laid down by the National Disaster Management Authority under the Union home ministry, existence of at least one fire station over every 10 sq. km is a must in any densely populated city like Kolkata," said Javed Khan, minister for the departments of fire, emergency and disaster management.

Kolkata, with an area of nearly 195 sq. km, has only 12 fire stations, including the one headquartered on Mirza Ghalib Street.

The Centre's guidelines indicate that the area the metropolis covers requires at least 19 fire stations for effective monitoring and potential firefighting.

The scenario has remained the same for a long time. According to authorities in the department, the required number and specifications should have been met much earlier.

Although it is late, the fire and emergency services de-

partment is trying hard to meet the requirements.

"Getting adequate land for a fire station is tough in Kolkata. The department has already completed priority planning for the proposed fire stations and identified some of the places where the additional stations are proposed to be set up," said the officer on special duty in the department, Debapriya Biswas. Sources said that the priority was based on the requirement-driven vulnerability study by the Council for National Disaster Response Force recently in the state.

"The estimated establishment cost for a fire station with a minimum strength of two engines, is roughly between ₹10 crore to ₹12 crore. Flow of funds is not an issue at all, but finding suitable land in a congested old city is. However, we have managed to get land for some of the new stations," said Biswas.

The authorities have indicated that they have found four plots of 'ready-to-work' land in and around Kolkata. "We have got possession of land at Rajarhat, Pragati Maidan, Nonadanga and Bansdrani. The process of land transfer is due for Tangra-2, near South City, Rajabazar, Taratala, Tollygunge and Jadavpur. In addition, talks are on with the state transport department for

Markets to adopt number of safety measures

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Following the recent devastating fire at the Surya Sen Market that resulted in the death of 20 people, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation's (KMC) market department has planned a number of initiatives to ensure safety and security in both KMC and private markets in the city.

From now on, the civic authorities have decided not to allow any kind of cooking inside market premises.

Apart from this, the shop owner or his workers will no longer be able to stay back overnight in the shop or the market premises.

According to civic officials, there are a number of eateries that operate inside markets and such businesses often result in fire accidents.

Earlier, *The Bengal Post* had reported

how eateries are operating freely in the civic markets, such as Gariahat, which might result in a major fire accident in the decades-old markets. In fact, most of the people who died in the recent Surya Sen Market blaze were workers sleeping inside the market premises.

A meeting on safety and security of city markets was also held on Thursday in the chamber of municipal commissioner Khalil Ahmed, which was attended by various civic officials and a representative of CESC.

During the meeting, it was decided that two separate task forces would be formed by the civic body -- a central task force and borough-level task force.

The task forces would be asked to prepare a report of all the private and KMC markets under their jurisdiction and submit the report to the civic body af-

ter every 15 days. The report would be then forwarded to the chief minister's office.

Tarak Singh, the mayoral council member in-charge of KMC markets, said: "The proposed team would consist of representatives from civic departments such as assessment, licence, conservancy and lighting. This apart, the local councillor, local police station and CESC would be also involved in the process."

Apart from this, the civic authorities have also decided to focus on creating fire safety awareness among traders by installing hoardings in the markets' vicinities clearly stating the dos and don'ts of fire safety and prevention on the premises.

The civic authorities have also decided to provide fire training to security guards of KMC markets and representatives of market traders' associations.

‘City blaze-fighting capability inadequate’

Proposed fire stations across Kolkata



Ready for construction	Land transfer in process	Talks in progress
Rajarhat Pragati Maidan Nonadanga Bansdrani	Tangra-II South City Rajabazar Taratala Tollygunge Jadavpur Burrabazar	Kidderpore

transfer of a piece of land near Kidderpore tram depot," Biswas said.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee, according to sources in the CMO, has instructed the department

to expedite the process of setting up the proposed stations.

Khan has also indicated that the department has already placed a demand for ₹175 crore as plan outlay in the

2013-2014 fiscal.

The expected number of fire stations, indicated by the officials, is supposed to touch 129 within 2015 from the present strength of 109 across the state.

Civic body plans security clocks for job accountability

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) is geared up to prove wrong the old adage, "Time never stands still", albeit not literally.

The civic body is planning to introduce security clocks, which first came into use in the 1970s, to ensure the security staff manning civic markets across Kolkata remain accountable to their job. The idea is to ensure that the security guard of the market performs his duty properly and does not remain idle,

as is seen in most civic markets. The clocks would serve KMC's purpose as it would stop operating after a specific interval (which can be adjusted) and the security guard would be expected to wind the clock again within that period to ensure that it remains operational.

The civic body has plans to install such clocks across all civic markets and the onus would be on the security guard to keep all the clocks going. Tarak Singh, the mayoral council member in-charge of civic markets, who has planned the initiative,

said that once it is implemented, the security staff of the market would have to keep roaming around the market to make sure that the clocks remain operational and display the correct time. "We are trying to ensure that the security staff remain accountable to their job and not just kill time," the MMiC said. He added that such clocks were used during the 1970s and many organisations around the country still use the system. Singh said that the civic body is looking for companies that still manufacture such clocks.

New Town to get its own fire brigade

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

State fire and emergency services minister Javed Khan laid the foundation of a new fire station in New Town on Friday. The state fire department will commence construction of the fire station before the end of this year.

The departmental paperwork has already begun, a departmental source said. Khan said that construction would start shortly as he has asked his officials to expedite the paperwork.

The West Bengal Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation (Hidco), the state-run agency formed to develop the township, has provided the land to the department.

"We discussed the matter during our board meeting at Hidco where our engineers and officials from the fire directorate were present. Our engineers

Presently, the nearest fire station to the township is situated in Salt Lake's Sector V area

and architects went to a consultant architect to design a state-of-the-art modern fire station for New Town. The land has been earmarked in Action Area I," said a senior Hidco official.

"The fire station will have sophisticated equipment. It will be one of the model fire stations in our state," Khan said. However, this fire station would be exclusively for the New Town area initially. The jurisdiction may be widened in the future.

Presently, the nearest fire station to the township is situated in Salt Lake's Sector V area. But the state government felt the need for another one in nearby ar-

ees, especially New Town, an area covering more than 700 acres.

"We had a prior plan to set up a separate fire station for New Town. Over a lakh people will reside in that township in the near future. A separate fire station is necessary there," Khan said.

Earlier, Hidco authorities also requested the state government to set up the fire station.

"Hidco approached us to initiate it. They have allotted 15 cottahs," said Khan. According to Hidco, the land has been allocated in a prime location to help firefighters reach their destination in the least possible time.

"The modern fire station will have tall cranes and other equipment. There will be a control room and parade ground. There will be place on the first floor of the fire station from where firemen can slide down a pole in emergencies," said one of the architects.

Bollywood CALLING

Stars come together for a cause

■ PTI
LONDON

Bollywood stars gathered here to celebrate 100 years of Indian cinema and help raise nearly £150,000 in aid of the Tata Medical Centre in Kolkata. Actors Waheeda Rehman, Shabana Azmi and lyricist Javed Akhtar came together for a musical evening in aid of the not-for-profit cancer hospital based in Bengal. "What drew me to this particular cause was that 50 per cent of the care at the Tata Medical Centre is intended for the underprivileged and those who cannot afford the high costs of treatment. And, most importantly, it is the same for all classes," said Azmi.

"I am always ready to be a part of a good cause, especially for cancer. It is

I am always ready to be a part of a good cause, especially for cancer

Waheeda Rehman

important that there is greater awareness about it and maybe it is time to make films which reflect survivors as heroes," said Rehman.

The event, branded *Uff Yoo Maa!*, in reference to a classic 1960s Bollywood song, included an exhibition of vintage film posters and medleys dating back to the early years of Indian cinema performed by Zee Saregama singers. "This is our cultural heritage.

The contribution of cinema has been huge and Indian films and music are the glue, a binding force for our nation. We have some major icons in the Indian film industry. They get paid to work in films but the love and affection they receive is over and above that," said Akhtar

"And, that must be reciprocated in some way and this is a way of showing the Tatas that we appreciate their contributions towards civil society," he added. The event helped raise funds through ticket sales at £500 per head as well as an auction by Sotheby's. A film-based painting especially created for the fundraiser by celebrated Indian painter Paresh Maity was the highlight of the evening and sold for a whopping £35,000.

CM asks MLAs to maintain decorum

The speaker has requested leader of the opposition to look into the proper maintenance of parliamentary norms

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

With the last assembly session ending on a bitter note, following a clash among the MLAs, chief minister Mamata Banerjee has requested both the ruling party and the opposition to avoid such “undesirable” incidents in the upcoming budget session commencing from March 8 with the state budget scheduled to be presented on March 11.

“The chief minister has requested parliamentary affairs minister Partha Chatterjee to send this message to the MLAs of the ruling party. I have also personally requested the leader of the opposition, Surjya Kanta Mishra, to look into the proper maintenance of parliamentary norms from their end,” said speaker Biman Banerjee after the all-party meeting in the assembly on Friday.

On the rejection of an adjournment motion moved by the opposition in the last assembly session, MLAs of both



the ruling party and the opposition clashed, leaving five MLAs injured.

“I believe the next session would be peaceful and the MLAs would maintain proper behaviour inside the House,” maintained the Speaker.

Mishra, who attended the all-party meet, requested the Speaker to accept at least one adjournment motion by the opposition in the budget session.

“According to the request from the opposition, chief minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed that the government has no objection to allowing such moves. But as the budget session would be jam-packed with government business, non-government business or adjournment motions for any discussions may come on the last day of the upcoming session,” said the parliamentary affairs minister after the

meeting. With suggestions from the Trinamool Congress Legislature Party, the discussion on the speech of Governor M K Narayanan would be shifted after the budget discussion is over.

“As the possibility of the notification for the upcoming panchayat polls is high, the decision has been accepted with a consensus among the MLAs representing all parties,” said Chatterjee. The possibility of notification

for panchayat election may be published by the concerned departments after March 15 as indicated by the Speaker and Partha Chatterjee.

According to the rules under the Panchayat Act, the government cannot place any vote of account after the notification.

The decision of preponing the vote on accounts for the first quarter of 2013, budget discussion and the presen-

As the possibility of the notification for upcoming polls is high, the decision has been accepted with a consensus among the MLAs representing all parties

Partha Chatterjee, parliamentary affairs minister

there was a precedent of postponing the discussion of President’s speech following the presentation of important financial bills and government legislations.

According to the consensus at the all-party meet on Friday, the session is supposed to continue till March 21.

But the final decision would be taken by the business advisory committee, which decides the duration and business of the House.

The presentation of annual financial statements by state finance minister Amit Mitra on March 11 is followed by the appropriation bill and the vote on account within March 15.

The House may discuss the ratification of two ordinances notified by the cooperation department in between the earlier and budget sessions. The possibility of presentation of amendment on the Presidency University Bill is likely, too.

A bill to enhance the jurisdiction of the city civil court in Kolkata may also be presented.

ISC English paper-II exam postponed after paper leaks

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

On account of a paper leak in a Lucknow school on Friday, the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) rescheduled the English paper-II of the Indian School Certificate (ISC) examination 2013. The examination will now be held on March 16, said CISCE chief executive and secretary Gerry Arathoon.

“The paper leak took place in a Lucknow school where the English paper-I examination took place on Friday. One of the supervising examiners opened the wrong packet and distributed the papers of English paper-II instead of English paper-I,” said Arathoon.

The English paper-II was scheduled to be held on March 4. ISC schools have been informed about the rescheduling of the paper, Arathoon added. Some schools in the city said that students would be inconvenienced due to the rescheduling of the examination.

“Students taking the examination would be affected due to rescheduling of the paper. They were mentally prepared to take the paper on Monday. There are chances of the result being delayed due to the change in schedule and the CISCE would have to really work hard for making up for the days lost in change of date,” said Raja McGee, principal of Calcutta Boys’ School, where 103 students are taking the ISC examination this year.

However, Devi Kar, director of Modern School for Girls, said: “The students’ are prepared to handle such a situation. Only last year ICSE examination answer-scripts of students from the school were missing. So, students have learned to take it in their stride.” The ISC examination is scheduled to end on March 26.

PU students protest govt’s decision to postpone elections



Students take part in a demonstration regarding college elections at Presidency University on Friday

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Bringing back memories of anarchy on the erstwhile Presidency College campus, a section of Presidency University (PU) students on Friday cordoned off the campus for six hours, denying entry to university officials, protesting against the state government’s decision to postpone student body elections.

On Friday, a section of students blocked the university gate at around 9.30 am. While students and teachers were allowed in-

side, PU registrar Prabir Dasgupta, dean of students Debashree Roychowdhury and controller of examinations Debojyoti Konar were denied entry inside the campus. The protests continued till 3.30 pm. PU vice chancellor Malabika Sarkar, who was on her way to Bangalore on Friday morning, said that she had no knowledge of the incident. “The student election was scheduled to be held today (Friday) and about two-thirds of work for the election had been completed when the declaration for putting off polls was made. There is discontent

among students. I have informed the higher education department about today’s incident but the department seemed uninterested,” said Dasgupta, who was only allowed entry into the campus at about 1.30 pm to take his scheduled geology practical.

Students protesting on the campus claimed that the demonstration was symbolic and no classes were affected. They also demanded that the government withdraw the postponement of student elections. “We wanted to give the message that PU can function smoothly

without the university officials if the state government believes in overruling autonomy of state universities by postponing elections. We are against the interference of the government in running universities,” a demonstrating student said.

Classes were said to have been held in a few department, but teachers complained that they were inconvenienced due to the absence of university officials. According to sources, the PU controller of examinations was not allowed to receive a consignment of papers on Friday due to the protest.

Burdwan state dairy farm to be revived

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The cabinet subcommittee on industry and infrastructure on Friday approved the handover of the state dairy farm in Burdwan to Metro Dairy for its revival. “The cabinet subcommittee on industry and infrastructure, headed by chief minister Mamata Banerjee, approved the handover. Mother Dairy will control the Burdwan dairy farm on management of asset basis for its rejuvenation,” said Partha Chatterjee, state industry minister, after the cabinet subcommittee meeting.

He said that the dairy farm has remained closed for a long time; even the erstwhile Left Front government had tried to rejuvenate it in 2004.

“After coming to power, we decided to rejuvenate it and discussions were held with the Burdwan Milk Federation Union, the employees of the state dairy farm and the management of Mother Dairy. Finally, we decided to hand over the control of the state dairy farm to Mother Dairy,” said Chatterjee.

He also said a gazette notification would be issued soon allowing Mother Dairy to take over the state dairy farm. Initially, a target of producing 20,000 litres of milk per day has been set for the state dairy.

As the dairy farm remained closed for long, it needs renovation and upgrade of machines and infrastructure to make them usable and worthy of manufacturing.

The state government will extend support to Mother Dairy in reopening the state dairy farm. It will also pay Mother Dairy for the renovation and upgrade.

Mother Dairy authorities will hold discussions with the employees of the state dairy farm and employ whoever would be interested in working for them.

“We have also discussed diversification of milk for the survival of the dairy farm, but initially, the farm will focus to meet the target of producing 20,000 litres of milk per day,” said Chatterjee.

CPM launches nationwide jatha

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Borrowing a leaf from the BJP’s style of a nationwide *rath yatra*, the CPI(M) is conducting a Sangharsh Sandesh Jatha, which will traverse the length and breadth of the country.

While former chief minister and politburo member Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee flagged off the rally from the city, it will converge with three other such rallies from Kanyakumari, Mumbai and Amritsar in Delhi’s Ramila Maidan on March 19.

Apart from party general secretary Prakash Karat, who was also present in the city to attend the flag-off ceremony, CPI(M) state secretary Biman Bose presided over the inaugural meeting on Rani Rash-



Biman Bose, Prakash Karat, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Surjya Kanta Mishra at the rally

moni Road on Friday.

While Bose will accompany Karat in the *jatha*, the party’s central secretariat members, Jogendra Sharma, and central committee members, Subhasini Ali and J S Majumdar, were also present as part of the nationwide programme. The eastern leg of

the rally, which was flagged off around 10 am, will travel through Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, before culminating in Delhi on March 14. A smaller rally from Guwahati, which started on February 23 and covered the northern districts of Bengal, merged with the

city rally, along with another one from Odisha.

While addressing party cadres on Friday, Karat said the Union budget has “failed” to address the major concerns of the masses and questioned the reasons behind cutting oil subsidy and increasing tax concession for corporate

houses.

“There has been a sharp decline in petroleum subsidy, for diesel, petrol and other oil products which means they will raise the prices of petrol, diesel to international level, which will be a big burden on the masses,” he told reporters on the sidelines of the event.

Local party leaders said the *jatha*’s purpose is to highlight some of the primary issues facing the people and to present alternative policies.

“The policies followed by the Congress-led UPA at the Centre have led to continuous price rise, more sufferings for farmers, rising unemployment and massive corruption. There is no difference between the Congress and the BJP as far as their basic policies are concerned,” Karat added.

new PROSPECTS

JEE board gets new building as jubilee gift

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Education minister Bratya Basu on Friday inaugurated the foundation-laying ceremony of a new four-storied building of the West Bengal Joint Entrance Exam-



Bratya Basu unveiling the foundation stone on Friday

inations Board (WB-JEEB) in the board’s golden jubilee year.

“The WB-JEEB has been in service for many years now. It has taken the counselling

budget of ₹5 crore.” Gupta also said that approximately 1.22 lakh examinees are slated to take the entrance examination for engineering and management courses from 52 colleges across the state.

“Bengal has become a model for education in the country. The Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyaan unveiled by the ministry for human resource development recently has asked states

that do not have higher education councils to open one based on a specific model. The West Bengal State Council for Higher Education (WBSCHHE) resembles the model suggested by the ministry,” said WBSCHHE chairman Sugata Marjit.

West Bengal University of Technology vice chancellor Samir Bandyopadhyay and West Bengal School Service Commission chairman Chittaranjan Mandal were among the many dignitaries present at the ceremony.

CORRIGENDUM



KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION - CORRIGENDUM

Following tender notices which was published in this paper on 02.02.2013 under SO (S&D), last date of permission for purchase of tender paper; last date of purchase of tender paper and time & last date of receipt/opening of tender has been extended as per below mentioned schedule :

Name of Tender	Previously published dates			Amended dates		
	Last date of permission for purchase of tender paper	Last date of purchase of tender paper	Time and last date of receipt/opening of tender	Last date of permission for purchase of tender paper	Last date of purchase of tender paper	Time and last date of receipt/opening of tender
Tender for contractual operation and maintenance of 02 nos. of open Nallah De-silting machines under North Division of Sewer Cleansing department for two years.	19.02.13	22.02.13	12.00 Noon on 25.02.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 25.02.13	11.03.13	15.03.13	12.00 p.m. on 22.03.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 22.03.13
Contractual operation of 01 no. Tractor mounted Open Nallah De-silting machines for Central Division of Mechanical Sewer Cleansing department for a period of two years.	19.02.13	22.02.13	12.00 Noon on 25.02.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 25.02.13	11.03.13	15.03.13	12.00 p.m. on 22.03.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 22.03.13
Contractual operation of 02 Nos. Tractor mounted Open Nallah De-silting machines for South Division of Mechanical Sewer Cleansing department for a period of two years.	19.02.13	22.02.13	12.00 Noon on 25.02.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 25.02.13	11.03.13	15.03.13	12.00 p.m. on 22.03.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 22.03.13
Tender for contractual operation and maintenance of 14 Nos. of Manhole De-silting machines under North Division of Sewer Cleansing department for two years.	20.02.13	23.02.13	12.00 Noon on 26.02.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 26.02.13	12.03.13	16.03.13	12.00 p.m. on 25.03.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 25.03.13
Contractual operation of newly KEIP procured Manhole De-silting machines mounted on TATA ACE model 10 Nos. for Central Division of Mechanical Sewer Cleansing department for a period of two years.	20.02.13	23.02.13	12.00 Noon on 26.02.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 26.02.13	12.03.13	16.03.13	12.00 p.m. on 25.03.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 25.03.13
Contractual operation of newly KEIP procured Manhole De-silting machines mounted on TATA ACE model 06 Nos. for South Division of Mechanical Sewer Cleansing department for a period of two years.	20.02.13	23.02.13	12.00 Noon on 26.02.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 26.02.13	12.03.13	16.03.13	12.00 p.m. on 25.03.13/ 1.00 p.m. on 25.03.13

Eligibility criteria, terms and conditions, amount of EMD and cost of tender papers will remain same. (404/12-13)

SHORT
TAKES

Children playing at a brick kiln in Barasat on Friday

Examinee
commits suicide

Burwan: A Madhyamik examinee of Kuniya village under Burwan police station committed suicide on Friday. Saiful Sheikh, 17, a student of Andi High School was upset with his History paper. On Friday morning, he went to bathroom but did not come out. After an hour they broke in and found him hanging from the ceiling. —BP

Two held for
embezzling funds

Burdwan: Two chit fund employees were arrested on Wednesday for embezzling funds. Sheikh Nasir Ali was arrested from Habradanga in Dubrajpur and Ujjwalendu Das was arrested from Burdwan town. The duo admitted to the charges brought against them during interrogations. —BP

Three held with
illegal arms

Canning: Three people were arrested from Charavidya village under Basanti police station on Friday morning for possession of illegal arms. The arrested have been identified as Karim Molla, Karim Laskar and Mortaja Gazi. Three single-shotters, one improvised musket and a long-range rifle, locally known as Kargil, were seized. They were later produced in Alipore court which remanded them in 10 days' police custody. —BP

Five arrested,
arms seized

Suri: Five persons were arrested with illegal arms in the Kankartala police station area of Suri on Thursday night. Samser Sheikh, Mojibur Sheikh, Niyamul Sheikh, Sheikh Milon and Sheikh Abu Hasib were remanded in five days' police custody by a Suri court on Friday. Three muskets, four 9-mm pistols, one single-shotter and seven rounds of cartridges were seized. —BP

Three held
in cleric
murder case■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
SONARPUR

The three accused in the cleric murder case of February 18 were arrested on Thursday night. Maulana Ruhul Kuddum Lashkar, 50, was killed at Nalekhali in Canning, South 24-Parganas district, during an attempted snatching by robbers — Sentu Sardar, Nabakumar Nashkar and Madan Sardar. All three are residents of Canning and Kulti.

Police also seized two revolvers from them. Following the murder, nearly 200 houses were set ablaze. Maulana's family was given a compensation of ₹1 lakh and the fire victims were given ₹10,000 by the government.

District SP Pravin Kumar said they accepted their crime during interrogation.

India-Bangladesh
border on high alert■ OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The areas along the India-Bangladesh border in the state have been put on high alert following unrest in Bangladesh. There has been unrest in Bangladesh after a local war crimes tribunal sentenced Jamaat-e-Islami founder Delawar Hossain Sayedee to death on Thursday for his crimes during the 1971 independence war.

He was found guilty of mass killings, rape and atrocities during the nine-month war against Pakistan.

The Jamaat-e-Islami called a nationwide general strike on the day of the verdict and since then, the BSF in India issued a high alert to prevent

any suspicious movement across the border areas in Bengal.

"We have alerted all the 17 battalions under my jurisdiction to be on high alert. The concerned officers were briefed about the next course of action, which includes beefing up security and intensifying vigil in the border areas," Ravi Kumar Ponooh, BSF inspector-general, South Bengal Frontier, told The Bengal Post.

"We are closely monitoring the situation and capable enough to handle any crises. So far, we have not noticed any suspicious activities in the border areas," he said.

Meanwhile, the state government has also asked district magistrates and police

superintendents of districts along the border to intensify vigil and prevent infiltration. BSF inspector-general, North Bengal Frontier, S K Sood said: "A lot of manpower from headquarters was sent to bordering areas after an alert issued over the unrest in Bangladesh. We have heightened our security in all the 16 battalions, which fall under our jurisdiction."

He said: "We are also educating the local people to inform us in case they come across any suspicious movement or infiltration in the border areas. We are also keeping close coordination with the district administration for better results."

Apart from Dilwar, the tribunal in January has sen-

tenced former Jamaat leader Abul Kalam Azad to death on similar charges but he managed to flee Bangladesh.

He is probably hiding in Pakistan and an Interpol notice has been served against him.

Jamaat-e-Islami is the largest Islamic party in Bangladesh and denied their involvement in committing crimes against innocent people during the 1971 war. The party is a key ally of Bangladesh's main opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, led by Khaleida Zia. Sources said, so far nearly 46 people died in a clash which broke out between the Delawar's supporters and security forces in Bangladesh.

Cong, Trinamool with
Prez on Bangla tour■ OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Travelling with the Presidential entourage to Bangladesh on Sunday would be a team of parliamentarians, including minister of state for railways Adhir Chowdhury from the Congress and Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader and former railway minister Mukul Roy.

Well aware of the bitter rivalry between the Congress and the TMC in Bengal, reporters travelling with President Pranab Mukherjee are wondering if there would be fireworks between the two in Dhaka. CPI(M) politburo member Sitaram Yechury, Rajya Sabha member nominated by the BJP, Chandan Mitra, as well as Congress leader from Assam, Bhubaneswar Kalita, would also be part of



President Pranab Mukherjee

the official delegation.

The President is hoping that getting a cross-section of political leaders from various parties would help to arrive at a consensus on improving ties with Bangladesh. The fact that the land border settlement with Bangladesh, which has already been passed by the Cabinet, will be tabled in Parliament during the budget session and needs the ap-

proval of two-third of the members, is also an important consideration in getting the party representatives on board. For India, the President's visit to Bangladesh is extremely important and the government is hoping that the land border settlement would go a long way in assuaging hurt sentiments over the Teesta agreement, which could not be signed.

Toddler killed by
mother in Barasat■ BALARAM D BANIK
BARASAT

A woman allegedly killed her one-and-a-half-year old son on Thursday night at Bashirhat in North 24 Parganas.

According to police sources, Sharifa Bibi, a resident of Lalgola in Murshidabad, ran away from home with her boyfriend and her son Hriday in February. She left her elder daughter and son with her husband. However, her boyfriend, Hafizul Sheikh, was not pleased with her son staying with them.

On Thursday night, Sharifa gaged Hriday and killed him. Then she dumped him in a pond. Local people reported the incident to police. Later, the body was recovered from the pond. Bashirhat police arrested Sharifa for murder and Hafizul for abetting her. Bashirhaat SDPO Abhijit Mukherjee said: "The initial

investigations suggest the child died of suffocation. We arrested Sharifa and Hafizul Sheikh following the complaint. During interrogation, Sharifa revealed the boy had died accidentally. A probe is on." On Thursday night, Sharifa called her husband in Murshidabad and said that Hriday Sheikh had died a natural death. However, her husband Rezaul Sheikh lodged an FIR at Lalgola police station against Sharifa and Hafizul.

Sharifa was married to Rezaul Sheikh of Madhupur village in Lalgola. They had three children. However, Sharifa had an affair with Hafizul Sheikh of Bausi village. Though her family members asked her to break off the relationship, she refused. On February 6, Sharifa ran away with Hafizul and rented an apartment at Bashirhaat. She had brought her youngest son with her.

Mamata tells Kabir to
continue in office■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Humayun Kabir, the minister of state for animal resource development, who was defeated in the Assembly by-election from Rejinagar in Murshidabad on Thursday, will continue in office till further notice.

The assurance was given to Kabir by none other than chief minister Mamata Banerjee during a meeting with her at the Writers' Buildings on Friday.

"I spoke to the CM and she asked me to continue as usual. I have been asked to look after party work in Murshidabad as well as participate in administration," he said.

Kabir also presented his findings to the chief minister on the by-election and related matters. Senior Trinamool leader Mukul Roy, who was also present during the meet-

ing, made it clear that Kabir's resignation from the Cabinet was premature.

"He still has three months more to remain in office. I did not receive any information regarding any sabotage by Trinamool workers against him. Neither did he allege regarding this. It is up to the state government and the Governor to decide whether he would resign. The party will provide him adequate scope for work," Roy said.

Meanwhile, in his report to the CM, Kabir made a number of allegations against minister of state for railways, Adhir Chowdhury. "He spread money all around and even played the Hindutva card to win Rejinagar. He gave ₹ 20,000 to ₹ 50,000 to local clubs between February 16 and 22, which is a violation of the model code of conduct," Kabir told reporters at Writers'.

According to him, Adhir had applied all possible force and even approached Hindu voters, who form around 35 per cent of the total electorate, to vote in favour of Congress candidate Rabiul Alam Chowdhury.

In a booth of 1,000 voters, nearly 880 to 890 votes were cast in his favour.

Pointing out that Adhir's machinations led both the Left vote and the Hindu vote to Congress, Kabir claimed that 64.5 per cent of the voters in Rejinagar are Muslims and he was defeated by a close margin with two to 10 votes less than the winning candidate in every booth.

"Our workers are feeling threatened and Jamiruddin Sheikh, one of our workers, was killed at Kapashdanga on Thursday.

"I doubt whether I will be able to stay in Murshidabad for long," he said.

Arabul released
from Alipore jail■ OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Arabul Islam, who was arrested in connection with clashes at Bhangar in South 24 Parganas, was released from Alipore Central jail on Friday, after a city court granted him bail on Thursday. The former MLA was arrested on January 17 in connection with a case lodged at the Kolkata Leather Complex police station immediately after the attack.

At around 10.30 am, Arabul came out of the jail after spending 43 days in judicial custody and was received by a large group of celebrating supporters. He left for his home after completing the official formalities required before release. On Thursday, the chief judicial magistrate at Alipore court granted him conditional bail.

"My client has been granted bail under a bond of

₹10,000," said Arabul's legal counselor Kazi Khalekuzzaman said after his client got bail on Thursday. The judge also imposed two conditions on him, including not allowing him to enter the jurisdiction of Kolkata Leather Complex police station, where the clashes took place on January 6, unless there is any medical emergency.

The judge also ordered him to seek the court's permission before leaving Cossipore police station area near Bhangar, where Arabul lives and he will have to seek the court's permission to move out of his residential area. Arabul's bail petition, which was turned down on four earlier occasions, was granted on the fifth plea, bringing some relief to Arabul and his supporters. Khalekuzzaman said that the judge observed that there was no further reason for detaining Islam as the investigation had almost concluded.

Medical students
boycott classes■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
BEHRAMPORE

More than 100 students of the Behrampore Medical College and Hospital (BMCH) boycotted classes on Friday in protest against misbehaviour with girl students by a group of local youths.

The students later put up a poster stating their demands inside the principal's chamber. The principal has assured them of looking into the matter.

According to sources, local youths often make lewd comments against the girl students. Some of them even gamble in front of the college. The students said that incidents of thefts were on the rise in the hostel, which is very close to the college even when there are 10 security guards on the college campus.

The students
put up a
poster stating
their demands
inside the
principal's office

pus.

However, no action has yet been taken even though the students have informed the authorities time and again about such thefts. A section of the students said that they had informed the local police station.

"We will look into the students' complaints. Safety of girl students is a major issue and we will increase the number of security guards on the college campus," said Pradip Saha, the principal of BMCH.

Fire review by
Asansol mayor,
Shop owners
gherao■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
ASANSOL

The shop owners at Asansol market gheraoed Asansol mayor Tapas Banerjee when he visited the place on Friday to look into the fire-fighting arrangements.

Later, Asansol Dakshin police reached the spot and brought the situation under control.

On Friday, fire tenders were brought to the market for a rehearsal. However, one of the fire tenders got stuck in a lane of the market. When the municipal corporation workers tried to break a shop's tin shed, the shop owners were infuriated and gheraoed the mayor.

They alleged that the corporation takes notice only after a fire is reported and demanded them to break all the illegal shops in each lane of the market. They also said that the corporation workers came to the market during business hours which created confusion among the traders which hampered their business for an hour. From the market, the mayor went to a multistoried building at Apka Garden in Asansol. There he found that the building had not adhered to any fire-fighting norms. A gas cylinder was found beside an open wire near the power supply room. The mayor said that corporation would make people aware about fire-fighting.

Fire brigade officer-in-charge Salim Javed said that the fire-fighting arrangements in most multistoried were very poor. "We will conduct raids along with the mayor so that no untoward incidents take place in the town," he said.

TMC activists' houses set
ablaze, 3 CPM men held■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
DIAMOND HARBOUR

CPI(M) activists allegedly set fire to the houses of six Trinamool Congress (TMC) workers at Sikirhat village under Mandir Bazaar police station on Friday. They also allegedly assaulted a TMC leader and hit her husband on the head with a bamboo stick.

Three CPI(M) activists have been arrested in this connection.

TMC MLA Joydeb Halder said that the zilla parishad had decided to renovate a road but CPI(M) Mandir Bazaar zonal committee member Swapan Sardar had constructed a fence on the road. Despite several requests

he allegedly did not remove it.

On Thursday, a panchayat member removed a part of the fence under instructions from the local panchayat.

Irked by the incident Sardar picked up a quarrel with Lulu Paik, husband of TMC leader Shukla Paik but was soon pacified by the local people.

Around 10 am on Friday, Sardar came back with a few CPI(M) activists and created trouble at the Paik residence. Later, he along with 20 CPI(M) activists looted Lulu's shop and hit him on the head with a bamboo stick when he protested.

Lulu's wife was assaulted when she tried to rescue her husband.

Thereafter the CPI(M) ac-

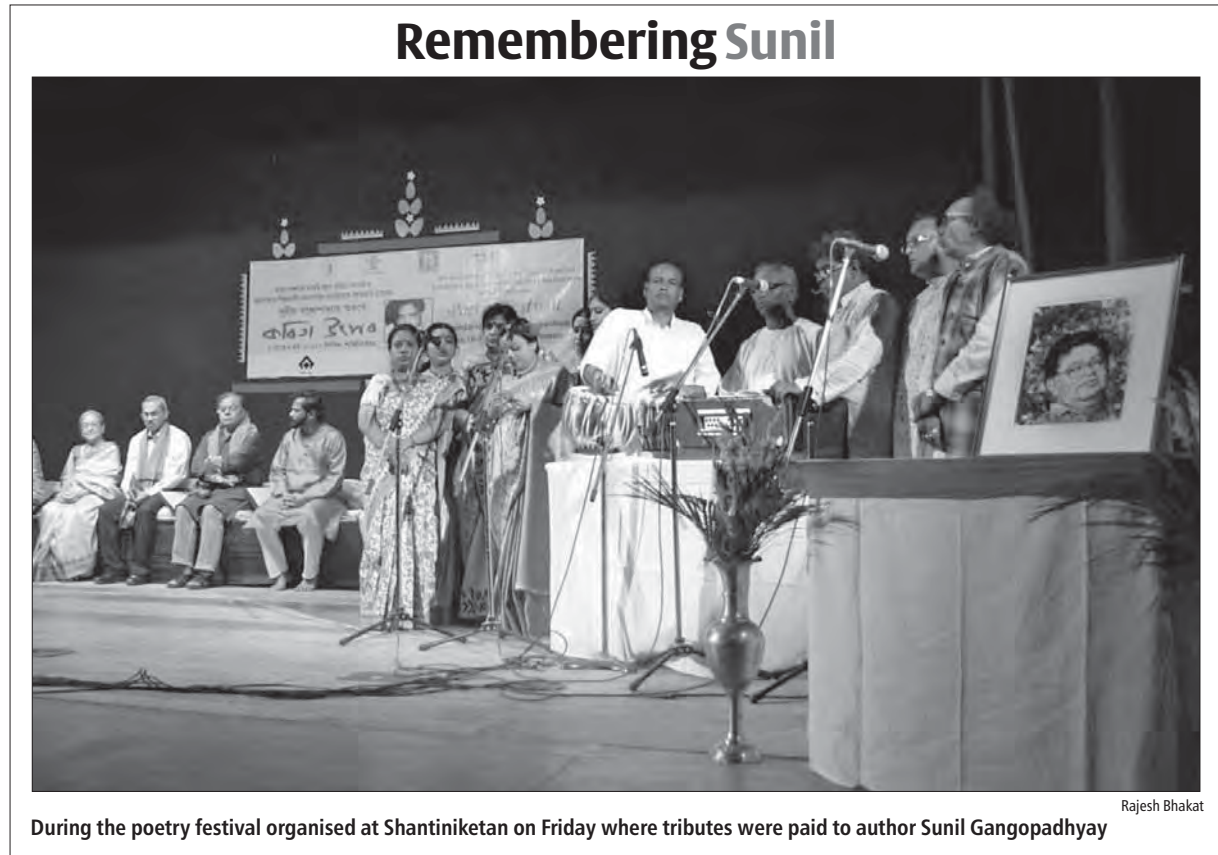
tivists set fire to houses of six TMC activists including the Paik residence.

Lalu was later taken to Naiyarat block primary health centre from where he was shifted to Diamond Harbour subdivisional hospital.

An FIR was lodged against 25 CPI(M) activists on the basis of which police arrested Swapan Sardar, Anup Sardar and Deb Kumar Sardar.

Local CPI(M) leader Animesh Naskar said that a rural court was discussing the road renovation issue when a few TMC activists set a house on fire and put the blame on Swapan and others CPI(M) activists.

A police picket has been posted in the area following the trouble.



During the poetry festival organised at Shantiniketan on Friday where tributes were paid to author Sunil Gangopadhyay

Swami Nirmuktanandaji
passes away at Belur Math■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
BELUR

Belurmath went into mourning after Ramakrishna Math and Mission senior monk Swami Nirmuktanandaji, popularly known as Upen Maharaj, passed away on Friday morning at around 8 am. He was 103-year-old and breathed his last at Arogyabhavan of Belur Math. He was healthy and alert in his last moments, said the math office.

Ramakrishna Math and Mission general secretary Swami Suhitanandaji said Swami Nirmuktanandaji received his mantradiksha (spiritual initiation) at Belurmath from Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj (popularly

He received his
mantradiksha
at Belur Math
from Swami
Shivanandaji
Maharaj, a direct
disciple of Sri
Ramakrishna in
1928

known as Mahapurush Maharaj), a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in 1928. After few years, he joined the Ramakrishna order in 1931 as a Brahmachari at Ramakrishna Mission home of service at Varanasi.

He then received his Sanyasa vows from Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, the sixth president of Ramakrishna Math and Ramkrishna Mission in 1943. He also got the rare opportunity of serving Akhandanandaji Maharaj, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna at Sargachi Ashram from 1934 to 1936.

He also served at the following branches of Ramakrishna Mission in various capacities at Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Jamtara in Bihar, Contai in Bengal, Kankhal in Uttarakhand and Deoghar in Jharkhand. He was leading a retired life at Belurmath since 1973. He was a scholar and a deeply spiritual monk and was loved and respected by all.

Bangladeshis seek asylum in India, cross-border trade stalled

■ MANAS ROY
MALDA

The ongoing civil strife in neighbouring Bangladesh has had its effect on the adjoining border areas of India and hundreds of Bangladeshis have crossed over to Malda in the past 48 hours.

Although their formal excuse is availing of medical treatment, they did not hide their anxiety over the unrest in their country. Meanwhile, cross-border trade has come to a halt as loaded trucks were stranded at the border with drivers returning to India.

Following the agitation of Jamaat-e-Islami against the

court ordering the hanging of Jamaat leader Dilwar Hosseini, Bangladesh is seeing regular bloodshed and violence. Already a number of people have died in clashes there. Scared people have begun to cross the border in a bid to find safe refuge.

Mohammad Alauddin, an Awami League leader and a union board member of Natore, was found coming through the Mahadipur border on Friday.

Accompanied by wife Nasima, Alauddin said: "The entire nation is on fire. In a number of places, roads were cut, households torched and Awami supporters attacked."

Risha, a second-year student of business management, crossed the border at Mahadipur on her way to a relative's house in Murshidabad district. "Shibganj Rural Electricity Centre under Nawabganj district was set on fire last night; the flames are yet to be doused. We are scared to stay there," she said.

However, Risha, like many others, chose to refer to medical treatment as her official reason of visit. "I do not know when I shall be able to return home," she said.

"An undeclared strike is already on. Jamaat has called a strike on Sunday and Monday. We fear more violence will

spread on those days," said Abdus Salam of Chapai Nawabganj. Bajlur Haque and Latika Akhtar, a couple of Bagha in Rajsahi, said: "We had to take the paths through fields and forests as the main road has been cut in different places. Worse, houses and cars were torched."

Although the inflow of Bangladeshis through the Mahadipur border is a regular phenomenon, the number has suddenly doubled, as observed by the BSF. Besides, infiltration through the porous border is also on the rise. Two days ago, 29 such infiltrators, including children and women, were intercepted by the BSF at the Hili border in South Dinajpur district.

Meanwhile, export has been dealt a severe blow due to the recent tension in Bangladesh. At least 400 Indian trucks, carrying fruits, stonechips and other items, were stranded at Panama Port in the Sona Masjid area of Bangladesh. None of the trucks could be unloaded following the virtual curfew there. As a result, the drivers and helpers of the trucks have started returning to India leaving their vehicles behind.

"As Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) has secured the area, we were not attacked. But the area outside the port



Pankaj Ghosh
Bangladeshi nationals wait to cross over to India through the Mahadipur border in Malda on Friday

Students demand death sentence for killer rapist

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
ALIPURDUAR

Some 2,000 students of Sonapur B K Girls' High School in Alipurduar Block-I of Jalpaiguri district and their guardians on Friday took part in a rally demanding death sentence for Albert Toppo, accused of raping and murdering Renuka Toppo, a Class VII student of the school.

The agitators have submitted a written demand to the pradhan of Mathuragram panchayat and even requested the state government to facilitate the same.

The students took out a rally from their school and travelled about four kilometre through Chilapata Road to reach the local panchayat office. After they submitted their demand to the pradhan, the draft was sent to the state government through the block development officer (BDO) of Alipurduar Block-I.



Ashim Dutta
Students of B K Girls' High School take out a procession in Alipurduar on Friday

It is learnt that Albert, a neighbour of Renuka, had taken the victim for a ride through the tea gardens on his bicycle on Tuesday. Renuka's family

members looked for her everywhere but failed to find the girl.

Finally, she was found hanging in the nude from a tree in a tea garden on Wednesday morning. Preliminary observation clearly revealed that the girl had been raped.

Albert had been absconding

BSF personnel clash with villagers helping Madhyamik examinees

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
RAIGANJ

Tension spread when BSF personnel tried to prevent local people who were trying to help Madhyamik examinees adopt unfair means in Kikribari High School under Biprit gram panchayat in Goalpokhar block of North Dinajpur district on Friday.

The district administration is trying hard to prevent cheating in these areas and so, they have employed BSF jawans at every examination venue.

According to sources in North Dinajpur district administration, after Friday's geography examination started, some local people tried to supply answers to the examinees of Kikribari High School, but the BSF tried to stop them. An altercation between BSF jawans and local people ensued, which turned violent soon after.

The BSF started lathicharging the masses to clear the school premises. The local people, too, attacked the BSF men with lathi and other weapons. The BSF finally tackled the situation.

The subdivisional officer (SDO) of Islampur, Smaranjit Sengupta, rushed to the spot and had to face the agitation of the public. He was also heckled by the masses.

Subimal Paul, the subdivisional police officer (SDPO) of Islampur, said: "Eight BSF jawans and the Islampur SDO were injured in the clash. But there is no news of firing by the BSF. A huge police force reached the spot and brought the situation under control. But sadly, the SDO sustained injuries to his eyes. Now, the situation is under control. A police picket has been set up in that area."

Meanwhile, to prevent cheating in the Madhyamik examination, North Dinajpur police have installed CCTV cameras at schools where such incidents are known to take place.

The police have identified several schools in nine blocks of the district where these cameras would be installed to record activities of unauthorised persons lurking on the premises.

There have been reports of mass cheating in some schools of the five police station areas of Islampur subdivision — Goalpokhar, Karandighi, Chakulia, Chopra and Islampur.

Police have already arrested some persons in this connection from Islampur subdivision. A primary teacher of Goalpokhar, Hyder Ali, was also arrested on charges of helping examinees adopt unfair means.

Jenkins falls from grace: Drinking in staff room

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
COOCH BEHAR

A few teachers of the 151-year-old Jenkins School, a government high school in Cooch Behar, have been accused of consuming alcohol in the school staff room on Thursday night.

Chhatra Parishad (CP) members caught the teachers in the act immediately after they received the information.

Later, they called the police and handed over two teachers and one non-teaching staff while the others managed to flee.

The three accused were released from the police station on Friday morning. Leader of

the Trinamool Congress-led teachers' union, Bijan Saha, was among those arrested.

CP members alleged that on Thursday, a few teachers and non-teaching staff of Jenkins School organised a picnic on the premises in the evening. They even drank alcohol in the staff room. When the matter was noticed by CP members, they came with ex-students and caught them red-handed.

The parents of the students met with the assistant headmaster of the school, Ranjit Kumar Bajpai, and demanded strong punishment for the accused teachers and staff. They also met district magistrate Mohan Gandhi, who is also the president of the

school committee, with the same demand.

Nepal Mitra, spokesperson of the Jenkins School Guardian Committee, said: "This is a very serious issue. What values will the students learn if the teachers put forth such examples? We demand strong punishment of the accused and the district magistrate also assured us the matter would be investigated."

Debobrata Chaki, an ex-student of Jenkins School, said: "Jenkins School is one of the best schools in the state and I am proud to be an ex-student of this school. But, such an incident will malign the name of the school."

"The administration should take steps to stop such

HC orders recounting of votes, Trinamool fails to change verdict of civic election

Siliguri: The Trinamool Congress had alleged during the 2009 Siliguri Municipal Corporation election that their candidate, Ajanta Biswas, had won in ward 20. But the Election Commission had declared that the seat was won by CPI(M) candidate Maya Paswan. Following this, the Trinamool Congress had filed a case in Calcutta High Court challenging this. The high court finally gave its verdict on Wednesday and ordered a recounting of votes. The votes were recounted on Friday in the presence of the additional district judge of Siliguri and the revised results proved that Paswan indeed had won in ward 20 of the municipal corporation. —BP



Subhendu Bhattacharjee
Some teachers of Jenkins School, Cooch Behar, were found drinking in the staff room on Thursday night

Dist will have thalassaemia care unit soon

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
RAIGANJ

The state government has planned to open a thalassaemia care unit in Raiganj District Hospital in North Dinajpur.

The objective is to provide blood to thalassaemia patients on a regular basis and create awareness among people about the disease, said chairman of the standing committee on health of the assembly, Rudranath Bhattacharjee. There are more than 100 thalassaemia patients in different blocks of North Dinajpur. Most of the time they have to move from pillar to post to get blood.

On the other hand, Raiganj District Hospital does not have modern facilities to identify thalassaemia symptoms in newborns whose mothers suffer from the disease.

Raiganj District Hospital superintendent Arabinda Tantri said: "Around 20 thalassaemia patients visit our hospital for blood every week. After the thalassaemia unit is set up, patients can avail of other facilities."

Shopkeepers of Nehru Road yet to shift to new location

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
DARJEELING

Shopkeepers at Nehru Road have not yet shifted to the new address near Chowrasta despite being directed by the municipality to do so. This is because the new structure can accommodate only 51 shops while the number of shops in contention is 110.

"We have asked the shop-

keepers to shift to the new structure built below the Sunflower Hotel near Chowrasta. But they have not done so yet. About 110 shops had been dismantled and at present, the structures that have come up can only accommodate 51 and we have asked them to decide among themselves as to who would start their shops now," said Sukh Bahadur Biswakarma, the

vice-chairman of Darjeeling Municipality.

"Also, the owners of 82 shops are members of one union while the rest have not joined any union. We have requested the 28 shops to follow suit as well," said Biswakarma.

The municipality has also suggested to the shopkeepers that they use the new structures rotation wise. But

the latter have yet to respond.

On the instructions of the municipality here, the shopkeepers had dismantled their shops themselves on August 27 and 28 last year. The civic body had actually decided to remove 41 shops initially on the pretext that a concrete two-storey building would come up there with a parking lot for a private nursing home above it. But later, all

the shops on Nehru Road were dismantled for some strange reason.

The civic body later said that the shopkeepers would be provided permanent structures near the road leading to the Sunflower Hotel as well as on C R Das Road. The one on C R Das Road is yet to be completed with the civic body maintaining that it would take some more time.

118th raising day of army Bengal HQ

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The Bengal area headquarters celebrated its 118th raising day on Friday. General Officer Commanding (GOC), Lieutenant-General A K Choudhary, conveyed greetings to all ranks, civilian staff and their families on the occasion.

The GOC also laid a wreath at Vijay Smarak inside Fort William, in remembrance of all the soldiers who laid down their lives for the country. He also addressed the gathering at a special sainik sammelan.

The Bengal area headquarters was raised as Bengal Command at Fort William on March 1, 1895 by Lieutenant General Sir W K Ellis. Over the

years the headquarters had various designations till it became the headquarters of the Bengal area in May 1963. The HQ moved to its present location at 246, AJC Bose Road in September 1995.

Bengal area has a chequered history having participated with distinction in World War II, besides the army operations in the eastern theatre in 1962 and 1971. It was upgraded when Lt Gen Choudhary took charge as the first three-star GOC in October last year.

Besides its operational war time task, the headquarters also supports logistical requirements of formations and units of Eastern Command, both in war and peace times. It is also the local military authority, acting as a link between the state government and the army besides being the custodian of the Maidan area and all army land around the city.

It also provides assistance to the state government in case of calamities, disasters or when required across the state and its bordering districts of Bihar.



BP
Lieutenant-General Dalbir Singh, the GOC-in-C of the Indian Army's Eastern Command, greets students from Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh at Fort William on Friday

ALERT !

ALERT !!

ALERT !!!

Electrification of Up and Dn Line over Pandabeswar-Sainthia Section

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines & premises situated on the completed sections of the under noted section of the Eastern Railway that the **25000 volts, 50 Hz, AC overhead traction wires have been energized on the specified date against the section.** On & from the same date the overhead traction line shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said overhead line.

(Km./Chainage)					
Sl. No.	Section	From		To	
		Loc. No.	Chainage	Loc. No.	Chainage
Pandabeswar-Sainthia Section including all Yards & Sidings between Pandabeswar-Sainthia section.					
1.	Pandabeswar (Excl.) - Sainthia (Excl.) Section : Up Line	21/21	21/568.00	70/19	70/400.00
2.	Pandabeswar (Excl.) - Sainthia (Excl.) Section : Dn Line	21/22	21/568.00	70/20	70/400.00

Chief Project Manager, Railway Electrification, Bhubaneswar

EASTERN RAILWAY

SHORT
TAKES

Devotees hold a protest demanding cleaning of Yamuna River at Sangam, in Allahabad, on Friday

Man gets 7 years in jail for rape

Dehradun: A court in Pauri sentenced a man to seven years in prison for raping a mentally challenged girl over a year ago. Pauri district and sessions judge Kumkum Rani sentenced Mukesh, alias, Mukki to seven years' imprisonment on Thursday after he pleaded guilty of raping the 20-year-old victim on January 14 last year. A fine of Rs 10,000 was also imposed on the convict, public prosecutor K P Dangwal said. —PTI

New TB drugs being tested

New Delhi: Research institutes in the country are undertaking trials to test new drugs to treat tuberculosis, including the drug-resistant variety, health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Friday. Indian research institutions are undertaking trials to test drugs, including Bedaquiline, Delamanid and PA-824, to treat both drug sensitive and resistant TB, Azad said replying to a question by MP H K Dua during a Rajya Sabha session. —IANS

SC to hear plea on TV show

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday decided to hear on March 6 a petition seeking stay on telecast of a TV show, *Crime Patrol Dastak*, based on teachers recruitment scam in which former Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala and 54 others were convicted. The petition in this regard was mentioned before a bench headed by Chief Justice Altamas Kabir which said it will hear the matter concerning balancing the right of freedom of speech and expression and the rights of the accused. —PTI

Landslide cuts off Bhaderwah valley

Bhaderwah: Bhaderwah valley was cut off from the rest of the state due to a major landslide in Chakrana on Friday, blocking the Doda-Bhaderwah road and leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded. The landslide was triggered after rains in the area, around 18 kms from the district head-quarter of Doda, at about 1 pm, officials said. Over 200 vehicles were stranded on both sides of the road due to the incident. District authorities have started clearing the blocked stretch, they said. —PTI

49 jumbos killed on railway tracks

New Delhi: As many as 49 elephants have been killed on railway tracks since 2010, including five in January this year, the Rajya Sabha was on Friday informed. In a written reply, railway minister Pawan Kumar Bansal said his ministry is holding regular meetings with the environment ministry to take remedial measures for controlling elephant casualties. —PTI

J&K House adjourned after furore over Afzal issue

■ PTI
JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir assembly was on Friday rocked by repeated disruptions which ultimately led to the House being adjourned for the day as various parties demanded that Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru's mortal remains be handed over to his family.

Cutting across party lines, members of the House from the ruling National Conference as well as opposition PDP and CPI(M) had moved adjournment motions seeking discussion on the situation in the aftermath of Guru's execution and handing over of his mortal remains to his family. Led by the leader of the opposition Mehbooba Mufti, PDP legislators flashed plac-



Security personnel stand guard at a bridge during a strike called by separatist groups to press for their demand of return of the body of Afzal Guru to his family, in Srinagar, on Thursday

ards and demanded suspension of the business of the House to discuss the issue, with CPI(M) member M Y Tarigami, too joining in urging the Speaker Mubarak Gul

to accept their demand. But when the Speaker tried to pacify them saying that a discussion would be held in due course, PDP members raised slogans like 'Guru ki body ko

wapas karoo, wapas karoo' (Return Guru's body).

"If there is a serious issue, (then) you have to suspend the normal business and discuss (it). But I fail to under-

stand the attitude of this government (since Thursday)," Mehbooba Mufti later told reporters here. The protests continued for over 15 minutes, forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House for 45 minutes.

As the House reassembled after the adjournment, the Speaker said that he had received adjournment motions of five members of NC besides those from PDP and CPI(M) and that he would take a view on them.

However, PDP members continued their protest even as the Speaker started discussion on the Governor's address.

With noisy scenes continuing in the House, the Speaker adjourned the House for a second time around 12 pm and later for the day.

SC dismisses PIL for SIT probe into chopper deal

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a PIL seeking apex-court monitored probe by a special investigation team (SIT) or CVC into the alleged kickbacks in the ₹3600 crore VVIP chopper deal.

"It is not a correct forum," a bench comprising justices Aftab Alam and Ranjana Prakash said while dismissing the PIL filed by an advocate. The PIL filed by M L Sharma had sought an SIT or Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) probe under the supervision of the apex court without involving CBI which, it had alleged, was under government's control.

It had also asked for a direction to the defence min-

istry to scrap the contract with Italian company Finmeccanica for the supply of 12 AW101 helicopters.

Finmeccanica's subsidiary AgustaWestland manufactures the choppers, three of which have been delivered to India to ferry VIPs. The petition had alleged that despite information available since 2011, no FIR was lodged against Indian citizens allegedly involved in the deal.

The PIL was filed after defence minister A K Antony had ordered a CBI probe into the allegations of payment of bribes to clinch the deal. Giuseppe Orsi, who was the head of Finmeccanica, was arrested last month on charges of tax fraud and corruption, including alleged pay-offs in the chopper deal.

Birthday Wishes



DMK chief M Karunanidhi attend his son and party treasurer M K Stalin's 60th birthday celebrations, in Chennai, on Friday.

2G: Swan Telecom was not RTL 'front company', says witness

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

A prosecution witness on Friday told a Delhi court that Swan Telecom Private Limited, whose promoter Shahid Usman Balwa and others are facing trial in the 2G spectrum case, was not a "front company" of Reliance Telecom Limited (RTL).

The statement assumes significance as CBI, in its charge sheet filed against former telecom minister A Raja, three top executives of Reliance ADAG, RTL and others, had alleged that RTL had used Swan Telecom, an ineligible firm, as its front company to get 2G licenses and the costly radio waves.

"It is correct that RCom/RTL never intended to hold more than 9.99 per cent equity in Swan Capital/Telecom (P) Limited. It is correct that Swan Telecom (P) Limited was neither an alter ego nor a front company of Reliance Telecom/Reliance Communications/RCom group," Ha-



A Raja

sit Shukla, president of Reliance Communications (P) Limited, told special CBI judge O P Saini during his cross examination.

The CBI had alleged that the accused had "structured" the holding of Swan Telecom in a manner that only 9.9 per

cent equity was held by RTL and rest 90.1 per cent was shown to be held by Tiger Traders Private Limited, although the entire company was held by Reliance ADAG through the funds raised from RTL.

Group MD of RADAG Gautam Doshi, group president Surendra Pipara and senior vice-president Hari Nair, along with RTL, were chargesheeted by the CBI for entering into a criminal conspiracy to cheat the government by getting licenses in an illegal manner.

Shukla, during the recording of statement in the court earlier, had identified the signature of Reliance ADAG chairman Anil Ambani on the documents attached to the account opening form of AAA Consultancy Services Co. (P) Limited which is allegedly an "associate" company of RADAG.

During the cross-examination which concluded on Friday, Shukla was shown an an-

nual report of RTL for 2006-07 and he said that it contains a list of its subsidiary/associate companies and Swan Telecom (P) Limited "does not appear either as subsidiary or associate."

Besides Raja and Balwa, DMK MP Kanimozhi, former telecom secretary Siddharth Behura, Raja's erstwhile private secretary R K Chandolia, Swan Telecom promoter Vinod Goenka, Unitech Limited MD Sanjay Chandra and three top executives of Reliance ADAG are facing trial in the case.

Directors of Kusegaon Fruits and Vegetables Private Limited Asif Balwa and Rajiv Agarwal, Kalaigarnar TV director Sharad Kumar and Bollywood producer Karim Morani are also accused in the case. Besides these 14 accused persons, three telecom firms - Swan Telecom Private Limited, Reliance Telecom Limited and Unitech Wireless (Tamil Nadu) Limited, are also facing trial in the case.

Coal scam: CBI takes note of info leak complaint

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

The CBI has taken cognisance of a complaint alleging that information about its planned searches in connection with the coal scam was leaked beforehand to companies in September last year.

The complaint in this regard was made to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) by Lucknow-based IPS officer and activist Amitabh Thakur. Sources said the agency has taken cognisance of the complaint. The CBI may soon start probe into the allegations. Three days after the registration of the case and search operation in connection with the coal mine allocation scam, a complaint in this regard was made to the CVC by Thakur.

After nearly five months of the complaint, the agency has now demanded material available with Thakur to substantiate the allegations for "urgent necessary action." Soon after registering five FIRs in the alleged irregularities in allocation of captive

BJP calls for parity through changes in Contract Labour Act

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday demanded amendments in the Contract Labour Act to bring parity in entitlements of contract and regular employees.

"Contract labour has become a commodity today. They are being discriminated against," senior BJP leader Prakash Javadekar said in the Rajya Sabha while moving a private members' resolution.

Contending that four crore-odd contract workers employed today are deprived of provident fund and ESIC benefits, he said such form of labour has become more pronounced these days and workers engaged on contractual basis are even found in defence establishments.

"If a regular worker is drawing ₹10,000 as salary, a contractual worker doing the same job, should also be entitled to the same pay," he said.

Referring to the recent general strike, he said the government should realise the "plight" of the working class who joined the protest demanding their rights.

He said if ₹15,000 crore was lost because of the strike, government should also realise that the working class has incurred losses due to inflation.

On pension, he said the share towards pension contribution by the government employer and workers should be equal at 8.33 per cent. He also suggested timely settlement of wage-related issues and implementation of M S Swaminathan's recommendation on farming. Participating in the debate, D Bandopadhyay (AITC) backed the resolution on improving the condition of working class saying the situation is "horrendous" because much is talked about

5 per cent of organised labour class and not the rest 95 per cent unorganised. Labours are always looked down upon by employers as hindrance in a neo-liberalised economy, he added.

Chaudhary Munabbar Saleem (SP) said more than 43 crore people are earning ₹22-28 a day and their financial situation is extremely bad. Hence, revolutionary steps are required to ensure dignity of life.

D P Tripathi (NCP) stressed on the need to bring unorganised sector labourers out of their pitiable conditions, while Brinendra Baishya (AGP) narrated the pitiable conditions of the tea garden workers in Assam and pitched for rooting out middlemen who supply labour to the unorganised sector and deprive the workforce of their due.

M Rama Jois (BJP) said unemployment is rampant in the country and pitched for policy measures for ensuring adequate jobs besides revision in wages factoring in price rise.

Also, he observed that there is growing tendency in employers to hire workers on contract basis to avoid providing facilities like leave and regular increment that are given to full-time employees.

Avinash Rai Khanna (BJP) highlighted "uncertainty" being faced by the labour class in the absence of permanent jobs, while Purshottam Khobabbhai Rupala (BJP) suggested steps to provide identity card to unorganised working class.

Bharatsinh Prabhasingh Parmar (BJP) said benefit of development should reach the lower strata of society, while his party colleague Nand Kumar Sai said the root of Naxalite problems could be found in unemployment which prompts them to take up guns.

Indian-origin writer wins British physics journalism prize

■ IANS
WASHINGTON

Anil Ananthaswamy, a London-based Indian origin writer, has won the inaugural Physics Journalism Prize sponsored by the Institute of Physics (IOP) and the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC).

The prize is designed to inspire the next generation of physicists by encouraging journalists to grapple with often complex topics and help spread excitement about the subject, according to an IOP release forwarded by the American Astronomical Society.

Ananthaswamy, a consultant at *New Scientist* Magazine and author of *The Edge of Physics*, has won the prize for his article *Hip Hip Array*, which focuses on the Square Kilometre Array, an international project to design and build the largest radio telescope ever conceived. "Anil Ananthaswamy is being awarded the prize for writing a feature which brings one of the world's most exciting astronomical endeavours to life - the Square Kilometre Array," said IOP president Sir Peter Knight.

The Physics Journalism Award offers the prize of an expenses-paid trip to Japan, to visit world-leading facilities carrying out research at the frontiers of physics.

On winning, Ananthaswamy commented: "Writing about physics, especially about the work being done in remote, difficult and sometimes hostile environments, is a special pleasure. Winning an award for doing what I love to do is just an icing on the cake. I truly appreciate the recognition."

Mark Henderson, head of communications at the Wellcome Trust and former science editor at *The Times*, said: "Anil Ananthaswamy has an eye for illustrative detail of which the best travel writers would be proud."

The bard from Bengal has found a growing readership among the youth and students

Tagore works to be translated into Urdu

■ IANS
NEW DELHI

A century after Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature, his works have found translation into almost every major language spoken in the world; his works remain relevant, and translations continue.

One such project seeks to translate 10 of Tagore's works from Bengali to Urdu. Tagore won the Nobel Prize for his anthology of poems *Gitanjali* in 1913. At a three-day seminar that opened on Friday at Jamia Millia Islamia, 'Rabindranath Tagore in the Twenty First Century', speakers dwelt on the relevance of Tagore to minority linguistic groups - especially Urdu-speaking communities. The bard from Bengal, whose 150th birth centenary was observed

in 2011, has found a growing readership among the youth and students.

The seminar is part of a two-year project, 'Tagore Research and Translation Scheme', granted by the ministry of culture to translate and publish 10 of Tagore's most important works for Urdu readers.

Delivering the keynote address, Jawahar Sircar, CEO of Prasar Bharati, said: "For an upper caste Hindu who could have made a mistake (using hostile or derogatory references) about Pakistan and the Urdu-speaking Muslims, he did not make a single one". Sircar said Tagore endeared himself as a "secular literary icon" to millions of people in Bangladesh post-liberation, and became the national poet of the country with his anthem - *Amar Sonar Bangla*... that was later adopted as

that country's national anthem.

Sircar said in the 1950s, the Bengali-speaking people in erstwhile East Pakistan came into conflict over language and cultural matters with Urdu-speaking people. "In this conflict of interest, former Pakistan president Ayub Khan 'saheb' went through the entire literature of Tagore to see if there were any paragraphs which had something bad to say about Pakistan or the Urdu-speaking communities".

Sircar said Ayub Khan scanned Tagore's works for something that he could use against Bengali, but found nothing. "Not a single line could be found that could be used against him (Tagore). The spirit enshrined was one of brotherhood. There was empathy and sympathy with the peasantry and the Muslims. Tagore stood out because he

had spoken about the emancipation of women as well," Sircar said.

"The message of his writing about the socially marginalised and the oppressed was: Why do you take it?" Sircar said. The bureaucrat, who understands Urdu, said Bengali and Urdu were two of the sweetest languages in the country.

Explaining the aim and importance of the 'Tagore Research and Translation Scheme', Sircar said the project was a commemorative initiative to mark the poet's 150th birth anniversary, 2011-2012. "We got an opportunity to translate several of Tagore's works in Urdu. I met Najeed Jung and pounced upon him because I knew there was a repository of scholars at Jamia Millia. We met Pranab Mukherjee (then finance minister) and it was approved in five minutes," Sircar recalled.



Rabindranath Tagore

SHORT
TAKES



PTI
Actor Soha Ali Khan arrives at a hotel to take part in the ongoing North East Fest, in Guwahati, on Friday

Panel to review
mine boundries

Bhubaneswar: Agreeing to the demands made by some mining lease holders the justice M B Shah Commission of Enquiry on Friday said it would set up a committee to re-examine boundaries of some mines in Odisha. Some lease holders had recently questioned the demarcation carried out to find out if there was any mining outside of their boundary area. They alleged the findings were inaccurate as the authorities used different geographical systems. —BP

Foundation for
Sikkim secretariat

Gangtok: Governor Balmiki Prasad Singh on Friday laid the foundation of the new secretariat building at Tashihiling. Chief minister Pawan Chamling was present on the occasion. The building had suffered damage during the September 18, 2011, earthquake rendering it unsafe. —BP

Ponty firm worker
commits suicide

Gurgaon: A personal security officer working with a firm owned by slain liquor baron Ponty Chadha committed suicide at his home in Sanjay Gram Colony, police said on Friday. Rakesh Yadav shot himself dead on February 27 using his licensed pistol after an argument with his wife over his habit of consuming alcohol, they said. —PTI

HC stays trial
against Owaisi

Bangalore: The Karnataka HC on Friday stayed for three weeks proceedings against Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen legislator Akbaruddin Owaisi in a lower court here in connection with a complaint filed against him for his alleged hate speech. —PTI

Sikkim gets first
woman chief secy

Gangtok: Rinchen Ongmu has become Sikkim's first woman chief secretary. Ongmu, IAS 1979 batch of Sikkim cadre, took over the charge on Friday. —BP

Rajnath mum on Hindutva, talks development at meet

■ RAJESH SINHA
NEW DELHI

Governance and performance were the dominant themes in the opening address of BJP president Rajnath Singh at the beginning of the BJP national executive meet here on Friday.

The party's national council — over the next two days — will endorse Singh's election as party chief and discuss the party's strategy against the United Progressive Alliance government on the issues of price rise, corruption and internal security as well as discuss the preparations for assembly polls later this year and the Lok Sabha polls scheduled in 2014.

The speech by the newly appointed president that set the tone for the deliberations significantly made no mention of any "Hindutva" element. It rather focused on the myriad failings of the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre and contrasting it with the performance of the BJP or the NDA governments in states.

Recalling that it was at the same venue where the BJP national executive had met after the defeat in 2009 elections, Singh said the mood in the people of the country was



PTI
BJP president Rajnath Singh with party leaders L K Advani, Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj and Nitin Gadkari at the party's national executive, in New Delhi, on Friday

now favourable for the BJP and it should get ready to return to power in 2014.

In talking about the performance of BJP-ruled states, he mentioned Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi several times, complimenting him for becoming the first BJP chief minister to have

won three times in a row.

Briefing journalists about the meet, party's chief spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad said everybody appreciated Modi's feat.

Quoting Singh, Prasad said the UPA government had failed on all fronts — economy, controlling inflation, se-

curity, foreign policy and general governance. The corruption, mismanagement and crisis of governance has seriously dented its credibility across the world.

Noting that the GDP growth in the last quarter has come down to 4.8% and agricultural growth at 1.1%, Singh

said this would cause the entire economy to slow down.

"This would put off not only foreign investors but even domestic players would hesitate in making any investment," said Singh.

Taking a leaf from the argument put forth by Left parties, Singh said while the government was cutting subsidies and making petrol and diesel dearer and fuelling price rise, it was giving doles to the rich corporate houses: it was trying to do away with ₹1.5 lakh crore of fuel subsidy but had given a benefit of ₹5.73 lakh crore to corporate houses.

He said even finance minister P Chidambaram had appreciated the performance of Chhattisgarh government in implementing PDS and that of Madhya Pradesh government for raising agricultural growth to 18%.

Singh said that in fact the present growth rate of 5% was actually due to the over 10% growth in the BJP and the NDA-ruled states, otherwise it would be even less.

The BJP-ruled states, he said, were in fact getting international recognition for their performance, citing the instance of European Union's overtures to Narendra Modi and Gujarat.

NIA grills two IM operatives in twin blasts case

■ PTI
HYDERABAD

As investigators struggled for a breakthrough eight days after the twin blasts, two suspected Indian Mujahideen (IM) operatives, who had allegedly reced the area of the attack, were brought here from Delhi's Tihar jail on Friday and grilled by NIA sleuths.

No arrests have been made in connection with the February 21 terror attack in which two powerful IED went off in the crowded Dilsukhnagar area, leaving 16 dead and injuring 117.

Syed Maqbool and Imran Khan, currently lodged in Tihar Jail following their arrest by Delhi Police in the 2012 Pune blasts, were brought to Hyderabad after a Delhi court on Thursday granted the National Investigation Agency (NIA) five-day custody of the two men for interrogation.

The NIA had told the court it would take the two men to Hyderabad and question them for more clues about the blasts, as the ongoing probe pointed to the banned Indian IM module being behind it.

The NIA had alleged that Maqbool and Khan had in July last year reced the Dilsukhnagar area. "The duo are in



PTI
M S Bitta, chairman of the All India Anti-Terrorist Front, visits the site of blast at Dilsukhnagar, in Hyderabad, on Friday

NIA custody and are being questioned here," sources said without elaborating.

According to the NIA, the blasts took place on the alleged instructions of IM's Pakistan-based founder Riyaz Bhatkal and the duo's interrogation will help in unearthing the exact plan plotted by him.

Andhra Pradesh DGP V Dinsh Reddy on Thursday said sketches of suspects were being prepared, and he was hoping for a breakthrough.

Dispose mercy pleas in three months: Parliament panel

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

Amid demands of death for rapists, a parliamentary panel on Friday suggested that the President should not consider clemency pleas in rape and murder cases and said mercy petitions should be disposed of within three months and reasons for granting clemency should be made public.

In its report tabled in the Rajya Sabha, the standing committee on home also recommended publicising the names of sex offenders after conviction. It has supported the government's view that in cases the rape victim either dies or is left in a vegetative state, the rapist be given death sentence. However, following differences it did not recommend reducing the age of juveniles.

The committee in its report on the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2012 said: "Application for clemency should not be considered in rape and murder cases."

Committee chairman M Venkaiah Naidu said the panel had wanted to know the reasons behind former President (Pratibha Patil) commuting death sentence of four convicts of rape and murder cases. But the home ministry refused to share the details citing privilege in discussions between the home minister and the President. "Hence the suggestion to make reasons public," he said. He also said the delays in

COMMITTEE PROPOSALS

- Publicise names of sex offenders
- Recommends rapist be given death sentence
- Application for clemency should not be considered in rape and murder cases
- Delays in clearing mercy petitions being used by convicts to demand commuting death sentence to life imprisonment in courts



clearing mercy petitions was being used by convicts to demand commuting their death sentence to life imprisonment in courts. "The attention of the committee was drawn to the issue of clemency given by the President of India. The committee noted that some persons convicted for rape and murder were given clemency by the President," the report said. Article 72 gives power to the President to grant pardons, and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases.

Money laundering case: SC bail to Koda

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

Jailed former Jharkhand chief minister Madhu Koda and his aide, Vikash Kumar Sinha, were on Friday granted bail by the Supreme Court for their alleged role in a money laundering case but will remain in prison in connection with bribery and other offences.

A Bench of justices H L Datu and Ranjan Gogoi said the trial court hearing their case in Ranchi will fix the conditions for grant of bail. However, Koda will remain in jail as he has not been granted bail in two other cases of alleged income tax evasion and bribery in the Rajiv Gandhi electrification project in Palamu and Dumka districts in Jharkhand.

The former CM was earlier granted bail by the Jharkhand High Court in a disproportionate assets case and a bribery case relating to forest clearance. Koda has been lodged in Birsamunda Central Jail in Ranchi where he has been confined since November 2009 for his alleged role in corruption and other cases.

Seeking bail, he had submitted that the Enforcement Directorate had made a statement in the trial court that the probe in the case was complete. Koda had approached the apex court after his bail plea was rejected by the HC.

He had also got bail earlier in a case of alleged violation of model code of conduct.

Mukul set to be Meghalaya CM again

■ PTI
SHILLONG

Mukul Sangma, who steered the Congress to retain power in Meghalaya, on Friday met Governor R S Mooshahary to formally stake claim to form the government and will be sworn as the 23rd chief minister of the state on March 5.

"Tentative day that has been indicated is on Tuesday," Sangma, set to become chief minister for a second straight term, said after meeting Mooshahary. Though the Congress fell two seats short of an absolute majority winning 29, Sangma has been given support by eight Independents and 2 NCP MLAs and is com-



“Mukul Sangma has been elected unanimously as the leader of the CLP

D D Lapang,
Congress chief in Meghalaya

fortably placed to form the government with the strength of the party and its supporters going up to 39 in the 60-member House.

On the support extended by the NCP and independents, he said, "We will discuss with them to know their minds and their expectations. We intend to share the responsi-

bility in serving the people."

Earlier in the day, Sangma was elected the leader of the Congress Legislature Party, MPCC chief and former chief minister D D Lapang, who chaired the CLP meeting said: "Mukul Sangma has been elected unanimously as the leader of the CLP and the Congress high command has

approved of this."

Union minister of overseas Indian affairs and senior Congress leader Vayalar Ravi, who was here to oversee the government formation along with AICC general secretary in charge of Meghalaya Mukul Wasnik and Sanjay Bhapna, said he was confident that Sangma would be the CM for a full five-year term.

Sangma said: "We have made a humble beginning in addressing the core issue of backwardness and poverty... We have reflected our intention of addressing the core issue of unemployment problem — addressing the root cause of the problem which often leads to militancy," he said.

Leaders Meet



PTI
Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi along with Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan and state Congress president Manikrao Thakre at Tikal Bhavan, in Mumbai, on Friday. This is Rahul's first visit to the city after taking over the party post

Pranab to go ahead with visit

"No, I can't say that the Indian President's visit is ill-timed," senior journalist Fazal Kamal, contacted by phone from New Delhi, said. "The violence is due to domestic issues while the President's visit is to do with a foreign country. I think BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia will welcome the President. There should not be any problems," Kamal said. "In fact the capital city has not been affected by violence and certainly the places the Indian President will visit are not affected. In fact the security people will have less of a headache, thanks to the strikes called."

Pranab Mukherjee who will be accompanied by his wife will also travel out of Dhaka to Bhadrabala in Narail district, Shilaidaha in Kushtia district and Mirzapur.

Since Sheikh Hasina's Awami League was swept back to power with an overwhelming majority in 2008, the move to get justice for the victims of the 1971 Liberation War has been on top of the government's agenda. Awami League loyalists had waited long for those responsible for the hate crimes to be brought to book.

In the last three weeks there have been angry protests by anti-Jamaat youth demanding the execution of Islamist leaders sentenced by the tribunal. News of the death sentence on Sayeedi was met with jubilation by some.

Shinde puts his foot in his mouth, names rape victims

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Later, he was forced to issue a clarification just ahead of the ongoing budget session of Parliament.

He had committed another gaffe earlier by addressing Lashkar-e-Taiba mastermind Hafiz Saeed as "Shri Hafiz Seed" and faced criticism from various quarters. Similarly, in August, last year, his comment against actor-turned politician Jaya Bachchan of the Samajwadi Party during a debate on Assam violence that it was not a subject of film, had evoked strong condemnation from the opposition.

After an uproar in the Rajya Sabha, the home minister was forced to take back his own

words and apologized to MP Jaya Bachchan describing her as "my sister."

Shinde did another gaffe during largescale protests over Delhi gangrape incident. The protestors wanted the home minister to come out of his North Block chamber and talk to them on the gang-rape issue.

Shinde stated, "It is very easy to ask the Home Minister to go to India Gate and talk to the protestors. Tomorrow if any other party's demonstration goes on why should not the home minister go there. Tomorrow Congress and BJP will demonstrate, tomorrow Maoists will come here to demonstrate with weapons, Home Minister will be asked to meet the Maoists. It is not acceptable."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"While there is a law for intercepting telephone, there is no such thing for Call Data Records (CDR)," Shinde said. As Opposition members sought to know at whose behest the call details of the leader of the opposition were gathered by detective agencies and who were paying for it, he promised to go in full details of the incident but refused to commit a time line for completion of the "serious investigation".

Shinde informed the House that interrogation of constable Arvind Kumar Dabas has revealed that he has provided call details of various people on 10-15 occasions in the

past. Opposition members wanted the home minister to disclose the names.

Naidu expressed concern saying, "They are keeping a watch on the Parliamentary system. Home Minister must share with the House the information he has. This cannot be treated in a casual manner." Shinde, however, made it clear that in the case being investigated by the Delhi Police, an unauthorized attempt was made to access the CDR, the details of numbers called and received and duration of the conversation.

"This was not a case of telephone tapping," he said, adding, "the Indian government is not tapping any member's phone if at all permission is

given. The Union home secretary is the competent authority to allow phone tapping under the Indian Telegraph Act." The home minister said the government has taken the issue very seriously.

"Enquiry is on. We will go into full details. Leader of opposition is not an ordinary man. We will get to its bottom. Such investigations are serious investigations. Police have to go into details. We will do it as early as possible. Please do not insist on time limit," he said.

V Maitreyan (AIADMK) said, "We get less information from the home minister. The television put up in the Central Hall gives more information." He said there are two kinds of phone tapping — one carried out

by the government and the other, which is outsourced to companies — and wanted to know from the home minister it was in which category.

Maitreyan wanted to know as to how many opposition members' phone numbers have been authorised to be tapped by the home minister. Naidu alleged that the government is "notorious" for misusing investigating agencies and insisted that "the main question is at whose behest it (the unauthorised obtaining of CDR of leader of opposition) was carried out".

Non-UPA members across party lines demanded to know names of those behind phone tapping and all those whose phones had been tapped.

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The Bengal Post

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“A budget tells us what we can’t afford, but it doesn’t keep us from buying it.”
—William Feather
(1889-1981)

Inspid budgeting

It was argued in this space that the Budget 2013-14, to some, may seem 'responsible' for the simple reason that it has done little for anybody. In view of the discussion that has followed the budget, it seems some astute analysts are willing to concede even less. Former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, for instance, on a television channel, explained that the absence of noise in parliament during the budget presentation was due to the budget's insipidity. There is little to be gained by attacking Mr Sinha's opinion as partisan (he is a senior BJP leader); it has to be accepted that this is not a budget of grand vision and imagination. At best, it is a sincere attempt to stave off the threats of a possible downgrade by global rating agencies ahead of the next general election and, at worst, an exercise of ad hoc-ism.

The Sensex, BSE's benchmark equity index, lost 460 points from the day's high and the prices of 10-year government bonds dropped and yields rose. To the credit of Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram, the fiscal deficit for 2012-13 is being kept at 5.2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and that of fiscal 2014 at 4.8 per cent of GDP, in accordance with his commitments made to foreign investors during his road shows ahead of the budget. It could be a credible target, for even if he falls short of revenue collection, he will be able to contain fiscal deficit at this level, with a cushion being kept in the form of a close to 30 per cent growth in Plan expenditure. Common sense says, against the backdrop of an around 13.5 per cent nominal GDP growth, a budget that aims at fiscal consolidation does not need to aspire for such a high growth in Plan expenditure, but it is being done to create a space for achieving the fiscal deficit target. As a last resort, the government can always curb Plan expenditure — something which it has done this year — to meet the target.

Mr Chidambaram started his budget speech with the right note — flagging the government's concerns over the high fiscal deficit and the even higher current account deficit — but the budget has not done anything concrete to address these concerns. It also does not offer much to lift the sagging economy. In fact, there are only a couple of growth drivers in the budget, and both of a modest scale: one, higher tax benefit for first-time home buyers and, two, investment allowance for companies investing ₹100 crore or more. Barring these two, most other budget proposals have addressed the issues of women, youth, tribals, minority communities, farmers and spending on health, education, and other welfare schemes — politically sensitive and in synchrony with a typical election year budget, even though there is no high-impact poll promise like the farm loan waiver of 2008. Overall, the budget has attempted to cobble up a string of short-term measures with an overarching theme of containing the fiscal deficit. It could have been done differently by pushing for reforms. But that could have been too much to expect from a budget presented a year ahead of polls.

Budget
Cobbled up
a string of
short-term
measures with
an eye to
containing
fiscal deficit

When the state chooses a religion

ULF LAESSING

The drive
of Sudan's
president to
adopt an Islamic
constitution is
being mani-
fested in his
government's
attempts to curb
the religious
freedom of other
communities

When Pastor Kamis went to visit his small church in the Sudanese capital just before Christmas last year, he found a pile of rubble and the remains of a single blue wall. Hours earlier, authorities had sent in a bulldozer and workers backed by police to demolish the Africa Inland church, which used to lie in a slum suburb of Khartoum. The structure was one of several small churches that the government has knocked down over the past few months, shocking Christians who worry they will not be able to practice their faith in majority-Muslim Sudan now that the country's south - where most follow Christianity or traditional animist beliefs - has seceded.

"The government says the land was owned by some businessman, but I think they destroyed our church because they want to target Christians," said Kamis, a native of South Sudan, which split away in July 2011.

Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir has said he wants to adopt a '100 per cent' Islamic constitution now that the South has split off. The government says the new constitution will guarantee religious freedom, but many Christians are wary. They say authorities started a crackdown in December and it has been getting worse. Last week, security agents raided the library of the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church, founded by missionaries in central Khartoum more than a hundred years ago, seizing all books to check on their content, church sources told Reuters. "They took hundreds of books and the entire archive, not just religious literature," said a church source, who like most others interviewed for this article asked for anonymity or to be identified by only their first and last name for fear of arrest.

Several church-affiliated institutions such as orphanages or schools have also been closed and a number of foreigners working for them have been deported, according to the Geneva-based World Council of Churches, a global ecumenical church body. "Christians in the north are compromised because they are no longer respected. They cannot even celebrate

Christmas anymore," said Daniel Deng Bul, the Juba-based archbishop and primate of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, which covers both Sudans and is part of the Anglican community.

Most southerners have moved south since the birth of their country but some 350,000 are estimated to remain in Khartoum. Some Christians also live in the Nuba Mountains, a region bordering South Sudan. Although Muslims have dominated Sudan for centuries, Christian roots go back to the fifth century. Missionaries were active in the 1800s, mainly from the Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic, Africa Inland and Coptic churches. Without accurate census information, it is not yet clear what the current breakdown is. Some tribes also practise animist beliefs.

Hardline Islamists

Officials strongly deny any discrimination against Christians. "All religions can practise their faith in total freedom," said Rabie Abdelati, a senior official in Bashir's National Congress Party. "There are no restrictions at all." Authorities say Kamis' church was bulldozed only after it lost a legal case against a businessman who claimed the land. "The church was erected on land owned by a citizen



Pastors help South Sudanese worshippers after attending Sunday prayers in Baraka Parish church on the outskirts of Khartoum

who filed a complaint," said an official at the government land protection unit, which removes illegal buildings. He asked not to be named. "In November 2011 we took the decision to remove the church which has no permit to use the land. We gave the church several warnings." But church officials ask why only the church, built around 2000, was demolished and not the buildings right next to it in the densely inhabited district. Less than one kilometre away in the same area lie the remnants of the St. John church of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, which authorities also tore down. Officials pointed to a missing license in that case, too. Christians concede that some churches were built without formal paperwork but say that was because permits or licences to build proved so difficult to obtain, and authorities signalled they would tolerate them. The situation was exacerbated after secession when South Sudanese became foreigners, requiring them to get new building permits for existing churches which authorities didn't grant. For archbishop Bul, the license argument is just an excuse to clamp down. "You cannot get a license and then they ask you where is the license? So how do I get the license - from God?" Bul said. Bashir has been facing pressure from religious hardliners

who feel his government has given up the values of his 1989 Islamist coup. He has been also facing small street protests in Khartoum and other cities against galloping inflation. Mobs stormed several churches in Khartoum last year, in one case burning Bibles in public. Activists say the government did little to prevent the attacks. "Authorities did not investigate properly or prosecute those responsible," said Jehanne Henry, a Sudan researcher at New York-based Human Rights Watch. "We have seen clear signs of rising intolerance for religious and ethnic diversity since the separation of South Sudan."

In September, a crowd attacked the US, British and German embassies to protest against a film which mocked Islam's Prophet Mohammad. The peaceful demonstration permitted by the government was hijacked by Islamists who first attacked the embassies and then turned the march into an anti-government protest after two people were killed in clashes with riot police. Since that incident, officials have tried to appease Islamists, worried about their ability to mobilise the crowds. In December, Sudan's tightly-controlled press began printing accusations that foreign missionaries were planning to convert Muslims, a crime punishable by death in Sudan.

A group of foreigners - some church sources say more than 100 people - were deported when newspapers reported a Muslim girl had been baptised. Some of the deported were only loosely affiliated with churches, such as expatriates giving English lessons to children in their free time.

In Limbo

Many churches and affiliated schools have transferred their ownership from South Sudanese pastors, who have been in legal limbo since they become foreigners after secession, to people from the Nuba Mountains, who are citizens. Sudan and South Sudan agreed in September to give citizens in both countries the right to live, work and own property wherever they chose to settle, but the pact has not been implemented because border and resource disputes have soured relations. Transferring ownership has not necessarily resolved the issue. Security agents closed a community centre operating on church land which included a Nuba language school and an English school run by a Nuba teacher.

The Nuba are already viewed with suspicion by officials in Sudan because many sided with the South during decades of civil war and have now joined a rebellion in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states on the border with

South Sudan. Khartoum says its arch foe South Sudan is supporting the insurgency. "We are supposed to be citizens with equal rights but in the eyes of the government we are a foreign entity which seeks to destroy Sudan," said one Christian of an evangelical church from the Nuba mountains. Despair and anxiety is palpable in many of Khartoum's churches, most of which date back to the British colonial era which ended in 1955. Church leaders say they plan to fight any repressive steps. A delegation submitted a letter to the government addressed to Bashir on Monday asking for the confiscated books, many of which are not available in state libraries, to be returned, a church source said.

In a Sunday service in a tiny mud brick building now used as church next to the bulldozed building, one preacher, who asked to be identified only by his family name Said, tried to convey a message of strength to the few worshippers who have continued coming out since the demolition. "The government destroyed our church but we don't have to be afraid," he said, addressing a crowd of just 11 adults and four children seated on plastic chairs. "God will always protect us," Said said, chanting 'Hallelujah' while flies flew around in the stuffy room. — Reuters

Resurrection of a forgotten giant of the Italian Renaissance

If there is a greater thrill than discovering a lost work by an old master it is perhaps discovering a lost old master instead. This is essentially what the National Gallery in London is presenting with its new exhibition of the work of Federico Barocci, 'Barocci: Brilliance and Grace'. In his lifetime Barocci was the most celebrated artist of the generation that immediately followed the High Renaissance deities of Michelangelo, Leonardo, Titian and Raphael. His patrons included Pope Pius VI, the Emperor Rudolf, the Duke of Urbino and even a saint, Filippo Neri. While his work strongly influenced later artists such as Rubens and Bernini it is little known today outside Italy, and specifically his home region of Le Marche and the hilltop city of Urbino. Of his 80 finished paintings Urbino alone has more than Britain, France, Spain and America combined, and many of his altarpieces remain in the churches for which they were painted.

Geographical isolation is, however, only one reason why Barocci has slipped from sight. Apart from a few portraits and a single late painting of Aeneas fleeing Troy, his pictures are exclusively religious, which did not endear him to Protestant taste. Nor could his distinctive style — fondant colour harmonies and an emotional sweetness — outshine the shadowy dramas of Caravaggio and his adherents. So while Barocci holds an important place in art history as the missing link between the strained distortions of Mannerism and the dynamism of the baroque, he has left little impression on the public consciousness. The National Gallery's exhibition, which contains some 20 paintings and 65 drawings, pastel studies and oil sketches, sets out to return him to notice.

Barocci deserves it. His birthplace, Urbino, was also that of



Federico Barocci, a student of Michelangelo, painted a version of The Last Supper containing thirty one heads for the Urbino Cathedral in Italy

Raphael, the beau ideal to whom all painters aspired. Raphael had died some 15 years before Barocci was born in 1535, but the noble tenderness of his style remained a formative influence. So too did his family's profession as scientific instrument makers. The painter's father specialised in astrolabes and clocks, and their motions are echoed in Barocci's compositions, with figures placed around the pictures like the numerals on a dial. He also studied the works of Correggio and Titian, absorbing some of the former's sentimentality and the latter's colour. In Rome, where he went to further his career, he met

Michelangelo and probably had access to some of his drawings. His example meant that Barocci began to reconcile the two Renaissance artistic opposites of disegno (design) and colorito (colour).

According to Bellori, Barocci's first biographer, Michelangelo first noticed the young painter when he alone among a group of students hung back, while the others rushed to gain the great man's attention. The encouragement Michelangelo gave him was one reason behind his fellow painters' jealousy, which, apparently, came to a murderous head in 1565 when they invited him to a picnic and

poisoned his salad. Whether or not the poisoning was real, Barocci suffered stomach problems for the rest of his life — although he lived another 47 years. The discomfort was such that he vomited after every meal, slept fitfully and was plagued by nightmares, and could paint for only two hours a day.

It also led to him returning to Urbino for its pure air, just as his reputation was beginning to grow in the intense atmosphere of the Holy City. The Council of Trent, which had been convened in response to the threat posed by Protestantism, had ended only two years previously and the

counter-Reformation, with its purgative restatement of Catholic first principles, was underway. In art it took the form of paintings designed to tell a clear and direct story intended to move the viewer to contemplation and penance. It was a remit that suited the pious and moral Barocci perfectly. Apart from brief trips to Perugia, Arezzo and Florence, Barocci remained in Urbino for the rest of his life, pleading ill-health to escape the blandishments of Philip II of Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II, who both invited him to join their respective courts. His stomach complaint was also partly responsible

for the development of a highly unusual working practice.

Painting three-metre tall altarpieces was too physically demanding for a man who was permanently nauseous, so Barocci minimised his time in front of the canvas by meticulous preparation. Some 2,000 of his drawings exist, which is a sign of both the quality of his draughtsmanship and their importance in his method. He was, for all the theatricality of his compositions, a naturalist at heart. Like Leonardo he would spot people in the street with striking features and draw them — every finished figure is the result of numerous studies and refined and re-refined poses. He wouldn't put anything in his pictures that he hadn't studied first.

According to Bellori, Barocci would ask his studio assistants to adopt the poses he had chosen for his figures, and then ask them if they were comfortable. If they weren't he encouraged them to find an easier posture. The idea was to find the 'most natural and least affected movements of the figure'. Once achieved, Barocci would sketch each figure and make a full compositional study. He would then fashion corresponding wax figures 'so beautiful that they seemed to be by the hand of the very best sculptor' before painting an oil sketch to test the balance between his colours. From this he would make a full-scale cartoon so that he could transfer the design to the canvas. The painstaking effort that went into each picture before he even put brush to canvas meant not only that his painting time was relatively short but that his brushwork has the appearance of spontaneity: he knew every inch of his painting before he painted it. There are no filler passages in Barocci. Such a degree of planning was unprecedented. The beauty of his drawings and pas-

tels (he was an early practitioner of that difficult medium), and the way he would repeat them with the slightest changes, reveal a perfectionist with OCD tendencies.

The Last Supper he painted for Urbino Cathedral, 1590-99, contains 31 heads, and there exist studies for every one of them. While there are 50 separate studies for the Deposition in Perugia Cathedral, 1568-9. In their elegance his drawings, particularly those in coloured chalk, prefigure those of Watteau, another artist who loved the profil perdu — the turned cheek.

It is colour, however, that marks him apart. Barocci was a lay member of the Capuchin mendicant preaching order, and he believed that worshippers responded most deeply to colour and sentiment. No figure in his paintings wears just one colour, but always two or three to seduce the viewer into entering the scene. He was what might be called a spiritual sensualist who delighted in displaying the peerlessness of silk or lilac shadows on Christ's shroud. Colour for him was musical: when the Duke of Urbino once asked him what he was doing he pointed to a painting in progress and responded, "I am composing a tune."

He was also that rare thing, a good painter of babies, and also liked to include animals in his pictures. He was not, however, always sweetness personified himself. He was depressive, and his short temper was feared to the extent that the Duke once refused to pass on a letter from the Pope suggesting some alterations in a composition for fear of a Barocci explosion. For all the incidental beauties of his work, this exhibition, which includes paintings that have never before left Le Marche, shows that in Barocci sentiment and power are not incompatible. Appropriately though, for this most devout of artists, the exhibition is also a resurrection. — The Guardian



“WHY on earth are you going to Kumbha?” ... “Are you trying to wash away your sins?” ... “Are you crazy?” Fortified by such encouraging words, my husband and I boarded the Kalka Mail from Howrah on the evening of 4th February. Reading about the *Kumbha Mela* on the internet (yes, it was written about more by the foreign media than our own newspapers and channels), I couldn't resist the temptation of witnessing “the greatest human congregation on earth”. If Catherine Zeta Jones and Richard Gere could talk about visiting the *Kumbha* from the other side of the earth, why couldn't we make this short journey to witness the mother of all fairs? For me, the sheer number of expected visitors was the attraction. As for my husband, I tempted him with the once-in-144-years chance of cleansing his soul. It worked!

The legend behind *Kumbha Mela* is that, after churning the ocean for the nectar of immortality (amrita), a fight ensued between the gods and demons for possession of the pitcher containing this nectar. The fight lasted for 12 days and nights (equivalent to 12 human years). Finally, *Lord Vishnu*, disguised as *Mohini*, flew away with the pitcher, in the process spilling four drops of amrita at 4 places – Nasik, Ujjain, Haridwar and Prayag. The *Kumbha* takes place every 3 years, rotating between these 4 places. The *Ardha Kumbha* occurs every 6 years, either at Haridwar or Allahabad. The *Purna Kumbha* takes place only at Allahabad every 12 years at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. 2013 is witnessing the *Maha Kumbha* which takes place only at Allahabad every 144 years! With 10 crore expected visitors, this is being billed as the greatest human congregation on earth.

On the morning of the 5th, as the train crossed the Yamuna just prior to entering Allahabad station, we could see tents perched on both sides of the river. Worried about reaching a station teeming with people, we were pleasantly surprised, and relieved, to get off onto a platform with the usual crowd to be expected at any railway platform of a major junction in India. Without having to jostle, we were able to arrange for an auto to take us to our destination – *CTN Kumbha Camp*, Arail Village. The distance of 10 kms was covered in about 30 minutes without encountering any major traffic jam. When we reached Arail, there was a problem of locating the camp. With no specific address, we had to call the camp and ask them to pick us up from the *Someshwar Nath Temple*. The road from this temple to the camp was a culture shock to the *Loreto-ite* in me. It wound through a village replete with cows, buffaloes and cow dung. But once we entered the camp, it was a different world. There were numerous white tents set up in rows in a huge enclosure. Inside each tent were beds, a steel trunk with a lock to keep valuables in, and a spacious washroom. Chairs and a table were laid out in front of each tent. The wooden furniture had an authentic old-world look. There were electric lights, with the bulbs placed inside lanterns. The décor was ethnic with a real camp feeling, yet with all the amenities of a star hotel, wi-fi access and hot water thrown in. Most of the guests were foreigners. One was a Professor from Denmark with 6 students. Her area of research was Indian religious studies. She put us to shame with her far superior knowledge of Hinduism and Sanskrit!

After lunch the camp shuttle service dropped us off at the river bank from where we crossed a pontoon bridge to the other side of the river where the main fair was being held. The army has constructed 18 such temporary bridges over which even vehicles ply. It took us about 15 minutes to cross this bridge by foot. The fair itself covered about 70 sq. km. with rows and rows of camps set up by different *akharas*. Each camp was occupied by the sadhus of that particular *akhara*. At the entrance to each camp was a stage with a large area for the audience. Different programmes were being held in the different camps. *Bhajans*, spiritual discourses and plays (what we in Bengal would call *yatras*) predominated. The theme of most of the plays was the exploits of *Lord Hanuman*. There were actors dressed in full regalia with singers, narrators and music hands. The plays were vibrantly colourful and full of action, the movements robust. Songs abounded as did the theatrical roll of drums. The audience (us included) lapped it up. Equally popular were the *bhajans* performed by the sadhus. With *khanjani* in hand, and supported by powerful sound systems, the singers whipped up the audience to a frenzy of dance com-

prising mainly of clapping of hands, circling around and gyrating. It was fascinating to watch reticent women from rural hinterlands shedding all inhibition and letting themselves go with frenzied dance. There was a madness flowing through the crowds – a madness giving rise to unfathomable joy and rooted in unexplained belief. It was a madness that cannot be described in trite words – it can only be felt.

The camps of the *Naga sadhus* had a different solemn ambience. There was no music, dance, discourse or *bhajans*. Instead there was a deep comfortable silence. The *sadhus* were wrapped up in themselves, oblivious to the audience. Some were even hostile and I almost got pushed away by one while taking photographs. Others were more open to interaction and visitors, particularly foreigners, sat around them, often in silence. Some of them had one of their hands raised above their heads – part of their *sadhana* we learnt. Most of them just sat around, smoking their pot quietly. One *naga sadhu*, totally bereft of clothes, suddenly went up to a passing *sadhu* in ochre robes and paid obeisance at his feet. It was a scene to cherish. In one corner of the camp were all the spears of the sadhus, covered in garlands and piled up in a circle. What struck me strongly about the *Naga sadhus* was their tremendous dignity and the expression of complete aloofness.

And ofcourse there was the *sadhu* draped in what looked like tiger skin zooming around on a motorbike. There were many ochre clad *sadhus* driving around in cars. Not to forget the *sadhu* we saw at the station fighting with a co-passenger and saying, “you don't know what I'm capable of”. There were the opulent high-flying Babas playing to the galleries. But let us not judge the genuine by the fake. These were the exceptions, not the rule.

Our final stop for the day was the bathing ghat where we took water in a can for those back at home. Tired, but deeply satisfied, we trudged back across the pontoon bridge and went back to the camp in their car. After a hot bath and dinner, we retired for the night wrapped in urban comforts, with the golden glow of the sky in the direction of the fair and the waft of music throughout the night reminding us of the flow of joy continuing uninterrupted across the river.

Next morning was *ekadasi*, an auspicious date for bathing at the *sangam*. In typical Bengali fashion, we went for the bath after fortifying ourselves with breakfast. This was unlike visitors from other provinces at the camp who went forth on empty stomachs to take the holy dip in the river first. From Arail Ghat, we chartered a boat to take us to the middle of the confluence for the bath. My husband performed puja at the sangam (there was a *purohit* there with all the paraphernalia) following which we got into the water from a platform where the boat was moored. At the confluence itself, conveniently, the water was about knee deep. The ice-cold water was sheer torture. I almost cried as I stood in knee deep water, getting frozen to the bones. But I am a water person, and can never resist the temptation of getting into water, no matter where. After the first plunge, which required all my will-power, it was exhilarating and I continued to enjoy myself till my husband forced me to get up. The boatman dropped us off at the other side of the river and once again we walked through the fair, soaking in the ambience. A long walk later, we returned to the camp and then back to the station where we once again boarded the down Kalka Mail for Howrah.

I wrote at length about the sadhus and the camps. What impressed me even more were the devotees. People from remote corners of the country had come to the fair – with what effort and at what cost. For us it was just 3 days taken out from our daily routine and some money spent. For these people it was a matter of many

days (journey time included) during which there would be no earning for many of them. They were visiting the fair with their entire family carrying their whole household (utensils etc.) on their heads. They were also carrying bales of straw. Whenever tired, they would just lay out the straw on the floor and sleep. Whenever hungry, they would light a fire with wood and cow dung and cook a meal (mostly chappaties and one subji). And then again they would pack everything and be on the move. (And yet the fair ground was so clean with no litter, courtesy the arrangements made by the government). What kept them going? Unalloyed belief. Thank God education and politics have not succeeded in destroying Hinduism.

A visit to one of the world's greatest voluntary congregation and one can fill the soul with a holy dip into the faith of a faceless nation... writes Tanima Ray



The holy congregation at Allahabad



Pictures by Rajib De

WORLD WINDOW



South Korean President Park Geun-hye, cheers with a national flag to celebrate the March First Independence Movement Day, in Seoul, South Korea on Friday.

Bombings in Iraq kill eight

Diwaniyah: Two car bombs at a sheep market, killed at least eight people and wounded dozens more on Friday, security and medical officials said. Brigadier general Abdul Jalil al-Assadi, the police chief of Diwaniyah province, said the car bombs went off at about 7:30 am in the market. — AFP

China upgrades launcher rocket

Beijing: China has upgraded its rockets for an upcoming lunar mission, keeping up with its plan to emerge as a major power in space technology rivaling the US and Russia. China has developed a modified model of the Long March-3B carrier rocket, which will launch the Chang'e-3 moon orbiter later this year, said Liang Xiaohong, deputy director of the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology. — PTI

DNA barcodes to detect meat's variety

Johannesburg: Worried after Horsegate? Check the barcode! Researchers have suggested that using a new DNA based barcode can identify the kind of meat served on your plate. Results from a new study show that the labelling of game meat in South Africa is very poor with different species being substituted almost 80 per cent of the time. Horsegate was the names given to the 2013 meat scare in the UK, in which horsemeat was found in prepared frozen meat products that were said to contain beef. — PTI

Scientists capture birth of giant planet

London: Astronomers have captured the first direct images of a forming planet still embedded in a thick disc of gas and dust surrounding a young star, just 335 light-years from Earth. Using European Southern Observatory's very large telescope in Chile, an international team of scientists studied the disc of gas and dust that surrounds the young star HD 100546. "For the first time scientists will be able to study the planet formation process and the interaction of a forming planet and its natal environment empirically at a very early stage," said lead researcher Sascha Quanz from ETH Zurich in Switzerland. — PTI

FB, Google to design research games

London: Scientists from a British cancer charity are teaming up with technology gurus from the likes of Amazon, Facebook and Google to design and develop a mobile game aimed at speeding the search for new cancer drugs. The project, led by the charity Cancer Research UK, should mean that anyone with a smart phone and five minutes to spare will be able to investigate vital scientific data at the same time as playing a mobile game. — REUTERS

Two new shark species found

Melbourne: Scientists have discovered two new shark species in Australia, previously found only in waters of Indonesia, Japan and New Zealand. The discovery may offer new insights into the understanding of the species' habitat. Shark biologist Ryan Kempster, of The University of Western Australia's Oceans Institute, said the mystery sharks were a male just under a metre long and a pregnant female about 1.2 metres long. — PTI

'3 dead as Malaysia ends Sabah row'

Manila: Three persons including two police officers were killed on Friday as Malaysian security forces ended a stand-off with Filipino gunmen over a territorial dispute in Sabah, the Philippine government said. Dozens of followers of the little-known sultan of Sulu had been facing off with Malaysian police for the past two weeks, after they sailed from their homes in the southern Philippines to stake a territorial claim in Malaysian Borneo. — PTI

US asks SC to overturn ban on gay marriage

■ PTI
WASHINGTON

Making its strongest declaration in support of gay rights, US President Barack Obama's administration has asked the Supreme Court to overturn California's same-sex marriage ban and turn a skeptical eye on similar prohibitions across the country. "Throughout history, we have seen the unjust consequences of decisions and policies rooted in discrimination," Attorney General Eric Holder said.

"The issues before the Supreme Court in this case and the defence of Marriage Act case are not just important to the tens of thousands Americans who are being denied equal benefits and rights under our laws, but to our nation as a whole," he said in a statement. However the Obama Administration fell short of declaring its support for a constitutional right to gay marriage that would immediately apply in all 50 states, as



was being urged by many.

In its submission before the Supreme Court, the Obama administration said by depriving same sex couples of the right to marry denies them the dignity respect and stature accorded similarly situated opposite

Equal protection under the law is a bedrock of our constitution. I look forward to the day when all Californians are granted their full civil rights and can marry the person they love

Kamala Harris,
California's Indian-American Attorney General

sex couples under the State Law.

Separately, the California's Indian-American Attorney General Kamala Harris, also filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the United States Supreme Court arguing that Proposition 8 is

unconstitutional and the initiative's sponsors do not have the right to claim to represent the interests of California by defending the law in federal court.

"Equal protection under the law is a bedrock of our constitution and fulfills our nation's binding principle that all people are created equal and should live free of discrimination," she said.

"I look forward to the day when all Californians are granted their full civil rights and can marry the person they love," she added. In August 2010, a federal district court invalidated Proposition 8 on the grounds that it violated the equal protection guarantee of the fourteenth amendment of the United States

Constitution by taking away the right of same-sex couples to marry, without a sufficient governmental interest. Governor Jerry Brown and Attorney General Harris both refused to defend Proposition 8 on the basis that the law is unconstitutional.

Pak issues licences for prohibited weapons

■ PTI
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's interior ministry has issued over 69,000 licences for prohibited bore weapons, including Kalashnikovs and sub-machine guns, on the recommendation of members of parliament over the past five years. On an average, every member of the national assembly made recommendations for 200 licences for prohibited bore weapons.

Prohibited bore arms include automatic weapons like AK-47s and sub-machine guns that can normally used only by security personnel. Interior Minister Rehman Malik provided figures for the licences in a written reply presented in the National Assembly on Thursday. He informed the house that the interior ministry issued 11,776 licences in 2008, 27,551 in 2009, 5,789 in 2010, 8,369 in 2011 and 15,988 in 2012.

After the passage of 18th constitutional amendment, provincial governments too can issue licences for prohibited bore arms to members of provincial assemblies. Earlier, only the Prime Minister could grant permission to bear automatic weapons. The findings of an enquiry ordered by former PM Yousuf Raza Gilani into the issuance of prohibited bore arms licences against fake documents are still awaited.

In late 2009, the Federal Investigation Agency found fake bank receipts, forged signatures and fictitious stamps had been used by middle-ranking and junior officers at the Interior Ministry to issue the licences.

Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline work to start on March 11

■ PTI
ISLAMABAD

Unfazed by the threat of US sanctions, Pakistan and Iran will start work on the \$7.5 billion gas pipeline on March 11. The groundbreaking will be performed by the Presidents of the two countries at the Pakistan-Iran border and agreements for opening two more border crossings at Gabd and Pasi and for setting up an oil refinery in Gwadar will be signed after the ceremony.

The ceremony will be held at Gabd zero point on the border from where the Pakistani section of the pipeline will start, an official of the Pakistan embassy in Tehran was quoted as saying by *Dawn*. President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday returned to Pakistan after a two-day visit to Iran for finalising the pipeline deal and sorting out financing and technical issues.

"We have successfully completed all negotiations," an official said. The two sides have set up a joint contracting company to build the pipeline in the next 15 months and foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar told *The News daily*: "Pakistan has to

do what it deems fit and what is in its national interest. Lack of economic growth has also seen peace stalled in the region." Khar said any other government would have done what the Pakistan People's Party-led coalition has done. "Pakistan continues to suffer from huge energy deficiency and this directly affects our industry and GDP growth. Gas is the cheapest commodity to generate electricity," she said. "We need to look at all possible sources of energy, including the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. The Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline will meet only half the shortfall of energy needs of Pakistan and not our full demand." The pipeline is likely to bring Pakistan-US ties under renewed stress as Washington has been staunchly opposing the project.

"It's in their best interests to avoid any sanctionable activity, and we think that we provide and are providing...a better way to meet their energy needs in some of the assistance we're providing," US state department spokesman Patrick Ventrell said on Wednesday

Pope flies by helicopter to papal retreat

■ PTI
VATICAN CITY

Pope Benedict XVI left the Vatican for the last time as pontiff on Friday, flying by helicopter to the Vatican's vacation retreat hours before becoming the first pontiff in 600 years to resign. As his closest aide wept by his side, Benedict bade farewell to Vatican officials gathered in the San Damaso courtyard of the Apostolic Palace, a corps of Swiss Guards standing by at attention. Benedict then trav-

elled by car to the helipad on the top of the hill of the Vatican gardens and boarded a helicopter along with his secretary, Monsignor Georg Gaenswein, for the 15-minute trip to Castel Gandolfo. Bells tolled as they took off and circled St. Peter's Square, where well-wishers held up signs saying "Thank You." Before leaving, Benedict held his final audience with his cardinals and pledged his "unconditional reverence and obedience" to his successor, a poignant and powerful mes-

sage to close out his eight-year pontificate which officially ends at 8 pm on Friday. In an unexpected address inside the Vatican's frescoed Clementine Hall, the pope appeared to be trying to defuse concerns about his future role and the possible conflicts arising from the peculiar situation of having both a reigning pope and a retired one. "Among you is also the future pope, whom I today promise my unconditional reverence and obedience," Benedict told the cardinals.

New Beginning



Pope Benedict XVI is greeted by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, dean of the College of Cardinals, as he leaves the Vatican to board a helicopter where he will depart to the pontiff's summer residence of Castel Gandolfo, on Thursday

Second THOUGHT



Christopher Columbus

Phoenicians discovered America before Columbus

■ PTI
WASHINGTON

Christopher Columbus, credited with the discovery of Americas, may not have been the first to set foot on the continent, says a British explorer, claiming that Phoenicians actually beat him by 2,000 years. Columbus, the poster boy Renaissance explorer found

fame and fortune by sailing from the 'Old World' to the 'New', crossing the great unknown waters between Spain and the Caribbean in 1492. In an ambitious voyage that could challenge maritime history, former Royal Navy officer Philip Beale hopes to sail a replica Phoenician boat 10,000 kilometres across the Atlantic. Beale aims

to demonstrate that the Phoenicians - a Semitic civilisation that prospered between 1500BC and 300BC on the Mediterranean coast - sailed to the Americas first, *CNN* reported. "It is one of the greatest voyages of mankind and if anyone could have done it (before Columbus) it was the Phoenicians," said Beale. "Of all the ancient civilisa-

tions they were the greatest seafarers - Lebanon had cedar trees perfect for building strong boats, they were the first to use iron nails, and they had knowledge of the subject of astrology and currents," he said. The prospect of sailing a 50-ton wooden vessel identical to those built 2,600 years ago across the Atlantic might appear foolhardy.

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BENGALI ENGLISH HINDI

7.00: Aaj Sakaler Amontrone (Live)
9.00: Shakaler Chirantani
11.00: Aaj Sakaler Amontrone (Repeat)
14.30: Telefilm
17.30: Bikelar Chirantani
18.30: Cinemagic
19.30: Aamar Rabindranath
20.30: Tolly Uncut Live
21.30: Event

18.00: Bhasha
18.30: Ishti Kutum
19.00: Bodhu Kon
Alo Laaglo Chokhe
19.30: @bhalobhasha.com
20.00: Maa
20.30: Tapur Tupur
21.00: Aanchal
21.30: Jal Nupur
22.00: Care Kori Na
22.30: Sakhi
23.00: Tapur Tupur
23.30: Ishti Kutum

8.30: Ranga Mathae Chiruni
9.00: Shubha Bibaha
9.30: Swayangsiddha
10.00: Ashar Alo
10.30: Ranga Mathae Chiruni
11.00: Shubha Bibaha
11.30: Satin Kanta
12.00: Sholoyana
12.30: Sadhok Bamakhypa
13.00: Movie
16.00: Shubha Bibaha

8.00: Mobile Baba
10.00: CID Kolkata Bureau
10.58: Super Hit Songs
11.30: Aaghat
14.00: Shikshar Antorale
14.53: Mukhoshar Arale
16.00: Adaalat

11.00: Sampurna
12.00: Rashi
12.30: Agni Pariksha
13.00: Keya Patar

15.30: Cine Akash
16.00: Akash Barta
16.30: Exam Tips
17.30: Bhalo Theko
18.30: Radhuni
19.00: Aaj Bangla
19.45: Cricket Class
20.00: Akash Barta
20.30: Garmagaram

15.30: Cine Akash
16.00: Akash Barta
16.30: Exam Tips
17.30: Bhalo Theko
18.30: Radhuni
19.00: Aaj Bangla
19.45: Cricket Class
20.00: Akash Barta
20.30: Garmagaram

7.00: Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai
7.30: Veera: Ek Veer Ki Ardaas
8.00: Superstar Preview
8.30: Saath Nibhaana Saathiya
11.00: Veera: Ek Veer Ki Ardaas
13.30: Saraswatichandra
16.00: Nach Baliye (5)
19.00: Saath Nibhaana Saathiya
20.00: Arjun
21.00: Nach Baliye (5)

7.00: Enjoying Every Day Life
7.25: Ek Nazar
7.30: Benny Hinn

7.55: Jhalak
8.00: Teleshopping
9.00: Qubool Hai
11.30: Sapne Suhane Ladakpan Ke
14.30: India's Best Dramebaaz
17.30: Laadla
21.00: India's Best Dramebaaz
22.30: Fear Files
23.30: Kahani Ab Tak : Sapne Suhane Ladkpan Ke

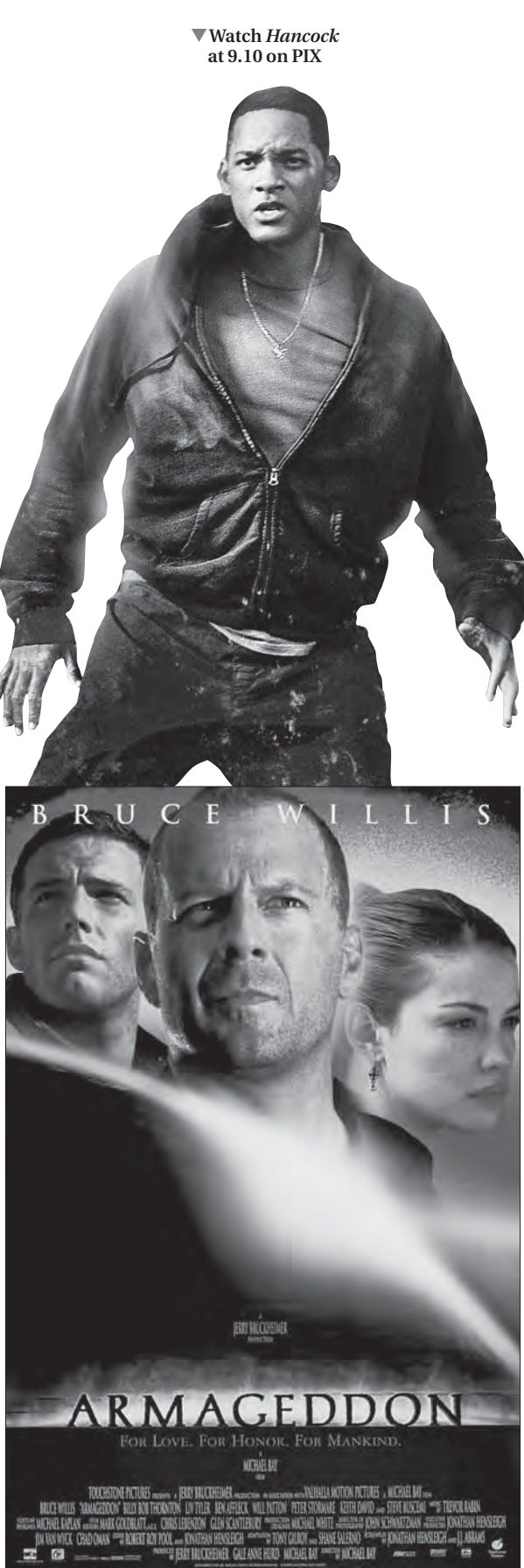
5.00: Bhakti
6.00: Teleshopping
6.30: Bhakti
7.00: Sky Star

8.00: Comedy Circus Ke Ajoobe
9.15: C.I.D
12.30: Bade Achhe Lagte Hain
14.30: Dil Ki Nazar Se Khoobsurat
15.00: Crime Patrol: Dastak (4)
16.30: Student of the Year
19.30: Adaalat
20.30: Comedy Circus Ke Ajoobe
22.00: C.I.D
23.00: Crime Patrol: Dastak (4)

11.00: Nautanki: The Comedy Theatre
12.00: TBC
19.30: Sasural Simar Ka
20.00: Balika Vadhu - Kacchi Umar Ke Pakke Rishte
20.30: Madhubala - Ek Ishq Ek Junoon
21.00: Nautanki: The Comedy Theatre

18.00: Laughter Station
20.30: Kismat Konnection
22.00: Laughter Station

6.00: Teleshopping
8.00: Hum Ne Li Hai...Shapath
10.00: Savitri
12.30: Devon Ke Dev... Mahadev
21.00: Hum Ne Li Hai...Shapath
22.00: Savdhan India - India Fights Back : Delhi
23.00: Hum Ne Li Hai...Shapath



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NEWS

7.00: Good Morning Bangla
9.00: Doshor

9.30: Enter 10
10.00: Doshor Khabor
12.00: Doshor Bangla
13.30: Speed News
15.30: Enter 10
18.00: Kolkata Canvas
19.00: Panel Discussion
21.00: 9Tar Reporter
22.30: Khelar Duniya

7.30: Newzpaper Headlines
14.30: Annya Durga Live
16.30: Box Office
19.00: Newz (Zilla)
19.30: Public Bolche
20.00: Sports Time
22.00: Duniyar Khabar

7.30: Entertainment Special
8.00: News NDTV India
17.30: Googly
17.52: Gustaki Maaf
18.00: News NDTV India
18.30: Cell Guru
18.55: News NDTV India
19.00: Special
19.30: News NDTV India
20.00: Muqabla

12.00: Click
12.30: BBC World News
12.40: Weekend World
13.00: The Bottom Line
13.30: BBC World News
13.40: Football Focus
14.00: Horizons
14.30: BBC World News
14.40: UK Report
15.00: Panorama
15.30: BBC World News
15.40: Health Check

6.00: IBN7 Sunrise
7.00: Bullet News
7.30: Aapka Shahar Aapki Khabar
10.00: Abhi Abhi
10.30: Serial Jaisa Koi Nahin
17.30: Dil Se : Adnan Sami
18.00: 2 Ghante
18.30: Muqabala
19.00: Speed News
19.30: Rajeev Masand Ki Pasand
20.00: Mudda
21.00: Danke Ki Chot Par
21.30: Teekhi Baat: Prabhu Ke Saath : Praful Patel
22.00: Speed News

10.00: Abhi Abhi
10.30: Serial Jaisa Koi Nahin
17.30: Dil Se : Adnan Sami
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19.30: Rajeev Masand Ki Pasand
20.00: Mudda
21.00: Danke Ki Chot Par
21.30: Teekhi Baat: Prabhu Ke Saath : Praful Patel
22.00: Speed News

SPORT

16.00: Australia Tour of India
2013 H/Is : 1st Test Day 2
16.30: Bpl Express : Arsenal vs. Aston Villa
17.30: Premier League Preview
18.00: KFC Twenty20 Big Bash League 2012/13 H/Is
18.30: Ranji Trophy 2012/13 H/Is : Semi Final: Match 6 Day 2
19.00: Premier League Preview
19.30: Scorecast Saturday
20.00: Primetime Premier League
20.25: Barclays Premier League 2012/13 : Manchester United vs. Norwich City
22.30: Primetime Premier League
22.55: Barclays Premier League 2012/13 : Wigan Athletic vs. Liverpool

17.00: Telebrand
17.30: Dial S for Sports
18.30: Chillli Factor
19.00: Copa Libertadores 2013 H/Is
19.30: Roland-Garros 2012 H/Is : Tournament
20.30: Aakash Global Advertising Winning Post
21.00: Bundesliga : E. Frankfurt vs. Borussia M' gladbach
23.00: Copa Libertadores 2013 H/Is
23.30: PGA Tour 2013 : The Honda Classic

16.30: Cricket Extra : Post Show
17.00: Australia Tour of India 2013 H/Is : 1st Test
17.30: Ranji Trophy 2012/13 H/Is : Match 6 Day 3
18.00: ICC Cricket 360
18.30: Australia Tour of India 2013 H/Is : 1st Test
19.00: Australia Tour of India 2013 H/Is : 2nd Test Day 1
19.30: Toyota University Cricket Championship 2013 : Western Wizards vs. Eastern Eagles
22.30: Hockey India League 2013 H/Is

12.30: ATP 500 Series
2013 : Semi Final 1st: Abierto Mexicano Telcel, Acapulco
15.00: ATP 500 Series 2013 : Semi Final 2nd: Abierto Mexicano Telcel, Acapulco
17.30: WWE: Superstars
18.30: WWE: Smackdown
20.30: ATP 500 Series 2013
23.30: WWE: Superstars

16.30: Cricket Extra : Post Show
17.00: Australia Tour of India 2013 H/Is : 1st Test
17.30: Ranji Trophy 2012/13 H/Is : Match 6 Day 3
18.00: ICC Cricket 360
18.30: Australia Tour of India 2013 H/Is : 1st Test
19.00: Australia Tour of India 2013 H/Is : 2nd Test Day 1
19.30: Toyota University Cricket Championship 2013 : Western Wizards vs. Eastern Eagles
22.30: Hockey India League 2013 H/Is

12.30: ATP 500 Series
2013 : Semi Final 1st: Abierto Mexicano Telcel, Acapulco
15.00: ATP 500 Series 2013 : Semi Final 2nd: Abierto Mexicano Telcel, Acapulco
17.30: WWE: Superstars
18.30: WWE: Smackdown
20.30: ATP 500 Series 2013
23.30: WWE: Superstars

KIDS SPECIAL

▼ Watch Ben 10 at 7.00 on Cartoon Network



7.00: Ben 10
8.00: Scooby-Doo! and the Legend of the Vampire
9.30: Tom and Jerry: A Nutcracker Tale
11.00: Gon
12.00: Toonpur Ka Superrhero
13.30: Henry special: Chee Yaar!
14.30: Tom and Jerry: A Nutcracker Tale

8.00: Shinchon
10.30: Doraemon: Nobita and the Steel Troops
12.30: Shinchon: Golden Sword
21.30: Genie Family
22.30: Telebrands

7.30: Postman Pat: Special Delivery
ServiceSeries 1, Treehouse
7.50: Tilly and FriendsTiptoe's Mystery
8.00: Diddap Hats
8.05: Mike the Knight Buried Treasure
8.15: Octonauts Creature Reports, The Jelly fish Bloom
8.20: Timmy Time Series 1, Timmy Brings a Smile
8.30: Pingu Series 5, Pingu and the Paper Plane
8.35: ZingZillas Series 1, Zak's Rubbish Day
9.00: The Koala BrothersSeries 1, Ned the Policeman
9.10: Rastamouse Series 2, Didier du Rag
9.20: Nuzzlele and Scratch: Frock and Roll Train Guard
9.45: Something Special Series 6, Park
10.05: Show Me Show Me Series 2, Double Deckers and Dinosaurs
10.30: Postman Pat: Special Delivery ServiceSeries 1, A Surprise

20.00: Animax Musix
20.30: Hayate the Combat Butler
23.00: Animax Musix
23.30: Cardfight!! Vanguard

Movies In Town

English ●Jack The Giant Slayer 3D: Fame South City 11:20am, 4:25pm, 8:55pm Fame Hiland Park 9:00am, 3:50pm, 8:20pm, 10:35pm Inox Forum 9:00am 12:5pm 8:40pm Inox Salt Lake 9:00am 4:35pm 9:40pm Inox Swabhum 9:30am 3:00pm 10:20pm Inox Rajarhat 9:10am 2:30pm 7:25pm
●Silver Linings Playbook: Fame South City 8:30pm(G) Inox Forum 6.10pm Inox Salt Lake 11.45am
●Zero Dark Thirty: Fame South City 12:40pm(G) Inox Forum 5.10pm
●A Good Day To Die Hard: Fame South City 11.10am Inox Forum 11.20am
●Lincoln: Fame South City 11.35am

Hindi ●Kai Po Che: Fame South City 9:05am, 10:10am(G), 11:40am, 2:15pm, 3:40pm(G), 4:50pm, 7:25pm, 10:00pm, 11:00pm(G) Fame Hiland Park 10:00am, 11:30am, 2:05pm, 4:40pm, 5:30pm, 7:15pm, 8:05pm, 9:50pm Inox Forum 9:20am 11:00am 11:55am 2:40pm 5:15pm 7:50pm 8:55pm 10:20pm 11:30pm Inox Salt Lake 9:45am 11:25pm 2:00pm 3:00pm 5:35pm 7:00pm 8:10pm 10:45pm Inox Swabhum 10:00am 11:55am 2:40pm 4:30pm 5:15pm 7:50pm 9:50pm 10:40pm Inox Rajarhat 9:40am 11:20am 12:15pm 2:50pm 4:20pm 5:25pm 8:00pm 10:35pm
●Me Aur Main: Fame South City 9:00am, 3:30pm, 6:40pm, 10:55pm(G) Fame Hiland Park 9:05am, 11:15am, 3:15pm, 6:05pm, 10:40pm Inox Forum 8:40am 1:30pm 3:50pm 6:40pm 10:45pm Inox Salt Lake 9:00am 11:20am 2:10pm 6:30pm 9:45pm Inox Swabhum 9:40am 11:50am 3:20pm 5:40pm 8:00pm Inox Rajarhat 9:00am 11:45am 2:00pm 6:50pm 9:20pm
●The Attacks of 26/11: Fame South City 9:00am, 1:10pm, 6:10pm(G), 10:45pm Fame Hiland Park 9:15am, 11:40am, 5:00pm, 9:45pm Inox Forum 9:10am 2:40pm 8:15pm 11:05pm Inox Salt Lake 12:30pm 4:00pm 8:50pm 11:15pm Inox Swabhum 9:30am 2:05pm 7:50pm 10:20pm Inox Rajarhat 9:15am 2:05pm 7:30pm 10:05pm
●Special 26: Fame South City 7.55 pm Fame Hiland Park 2.05 pm Inox Forum 3.50 pm Inox Salt Lake 9:00am 4:30pm Inox Swabhum 12.30 pm Inox Rajarhat 4:35pm 9:50pm
●ABCD 3D: Inox Swabhum 11.50am Inox Rajarhat 11.35am

Bengali ●Damadol: Fame Hiland Park 12.30pm
●Abarto: Fame South City 5.40pm Fame Hiland Park 1.30pm, 7.25pm Inox Salt Lake 1:40pm 7:20pm Inox Swabhum 5.25pm Inox Rajarhat 5.00pm
(G) For the Gold class auditorium at Fame, South City Mall

Helpline

Hospital/Nursing Home
Amri(Dhakuria): 24612526/2626
Amri (Saltlake): 23357710
Amri Clinic

(Southern Avenue): 24644594/95/4948
Andanolk: 23592931
Apollo Clinegles:- 23202122/23203040,
Emergency: 1066
Apollo Clinic: 24815741/42,
222837407/08/09
Assembly Of God Church: 22294676,22294853, 22294892
Aurobindo Seva Kendra: 24733601
BC Roy Hospital For Children: 23528101/9740
Belle Vue: 22472321/6925/7437
Bhagirathi Neotia Women & Child Care: 22815000
BM Birla Heart Research Center: 24567777/7890/70019,24567890
245678004
Calcutta Medical College And Hospital: 224149012
Fortis Hospitals: 66284023
Emergency: 105711
Howrah General Hospital: 22604738-39/5695/2813
ILS Hospitals Salt Lake: 42065600/ 9830400441
Kothari Medical Center: 24567049-52
Ruby General Hospital: 224260914
Woodlands Hospital: 24567057
Columbia Asia: 033-39898969

Oxygen
BOC: 9831277777
Sarin Brothers-Bd

Market, Salt Lake: 23373091

Blood
Central Blood Bank: 23510619
Lifecare Medical Services: 22444940
Haemophilia Society:

2416 3739
Bhoruka Blood Bank: 22339619/8092

Ambulance
Amri: 65500000/
23202147
/23202122
Apollo Clinegles

Hospital: 1066
Arambagh General Hospital: 953211255095
Asia Rescue Medical Services: 9831008900/9830365276/393
Asvini Nagar Ch. & Welfare Society: 24112323/28673030
Bandhab Sangha: 26624682
Barasat Citizen Forum: 25525595
Basudebpur Five Star Club: 26797315
Bharat Relief Society: 22342670/22359952
BM Birla Heart Research Center: 24567777
Calcutta Medical Research Institute Critical Care Ambulance: 9836490247
Care And Cure Nursing Home: 95343-2568374
Curewell Mobile Clinic: 22942202/0760
Dakshin Behala Auto Sangha Dhanwantary Ambulance Services (Shambhunath Pandit Street): 24547941/9830584845
(Diamond Harbour Road): 24495168/9331254856
Mahabodhi Society Ambulance

Service: 22415214
St John Ambulance-Tollygunge Centre: 24761935
KMC Control Room: 2286/1212/4

Pathology Labs
MP Birla Eye Clinic: 22817780
Medinova: 24661780
/0708/3651

Nightingale: 22827255
/7669/7263
Roy&Tribedi: 22268789/6643
Tropical Laboratory: 26675580
Wockhardt Medical Centre: 24754320

Latenight Chemists
Dhanwantary: 24495594
Chemist Corner (Behala): 24780334
JBandeep(Hazra): 24550926
Nandan Medical Hall(Salt-Lake): 23581732/9617
Nursing Bureau Swasti: 247448881
Sanjivani: 23607881/8785
Saha Nursing Center: 24838830
Mobile Cardiac Unit Dreamland Nursing Home: 25553216
Divine Nursing Home: 23502761
Rameshwara Nursing Home: 23374247
Marwari Relief Society – Indian Association

Eye Bank
International Eye Bank: 23585758
Howrah Lions Eye Bank: 26602015
Susrut Eye Hospital: 23580201
Anandalok Netralaya: 23592931

Disha(Prova) Eye Bank: 25933737
Medical College: 22413853

Electricity
CESC Fault Reporting Center: Central/South 1912, North 23500928,
North Suburban: 25537581,
Howrah Suburban: 2668161/62,
Serampore: 26524585,
West Suburban: 23591896
WBSEB Emergency: 23591896

Railways
Howrah Station (Old Complex): 1310/1331/1332, 26387412
/35422581,
24780334
(New Complex): 26382217
Sealdah: 23503535/3537
Reservation Enquiry: 138
Recorded Information: 1331/1332

Passport Office
2554893, 2554762, 2254084

Airlines
International Air India: 22822356/6012/9831
Aeroflot: 22823765/9861
Air France: 22882161/1169
Gulf Air: 22477783
Kuwait Airways: 22474495
Royal Brunei: 22292092
/4464/7112/7105/2092
Biman Bangladesh: 22292843/2844, 22497309, 25118787

British Airways: 9831377470
Druk Air: 22402419, 22805365, 22470050
KLM: 22403151/1636, 25118329/8330
Lufthansa: 22299365/69
Qatar Airways: 22298363/8370, 22208371
Qantas: 22470718, 22400930, 22807777
Royal Jordanian: 24745091/94
Royal Nepal: 22888534/8549
Singapore Airlines: 22809898
Thai Airways: 22801630/35
Domestic
Air India Helpline Number: 1407 (Toll Free Helpline), From Landlines: 16001801407,
Enquiry (Manual) Airport: 25119637
Enquiry (Manual) Airlines House: 22114433
Tele Check In Airport: 25119633/25118564
Jet Airways: 22922277
/2237/2214/2813
Air Sahara: 22822786/8969/9075
Airport Enquiry: International: 25118787,
Domestic: 25118787
Hearse Services
Hindu Sakar Samiti
93, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Burrabazar,
Kolkata - 700007 — 2413849
Brahmo Social Service Organisation
D 42, Lake Garden Station, Charuchandra Place East, Tollygunge,
Kolkata - 700033 — 24229375
Shri Kashi Vishwanath Seva Samity
42, AC Market, Burtolla Street, Burrabazar,
Kolkata - 700007 — 22694113

Fire
Fire Emergency No.101
Control room: 22440101

Police
Lalbazar Control Room: 22143230/3024
PBX: 22505000
Jorabagan: 22184094, 22700428
Butolla: 25557599, 25535579
Burrabazaar: 22687554, 22683802
Posta: 22595606, 5536
Jorashanko: 22697279
Taxi refusal: 22155000 (extrn. 5096)

Colleges
Jadavpur University: 24735508
Shyamaprasad College: 24555242
South City College: 24406689
Ballygunge Science College: 24753680
Lady Brabourne College: 22448120
Jogmaya Devi College: 22555242

Car Problem
Automobile Association Of Eastern India: 24755131/3,
Breakdown Services: 24755131, 24768810
Women's Hostels
City Working Women's Hostel : 65/C Ramakant Bose Street,
Shabari Ladies Hostel: 40, Mg Road

Animals
Compassionate Crusaders: 24647030, 22104365
Wildlife Control Room: 30958798

Knowledge

7.00: Dual Survival
8.00: One Car Too Far
9.00: Discover India
10.00: Man Woman Wild (2)
11.00: Year in the Wild
12.00: Food Factory
12.30: Destroyed in Seconds
13.00: History of the World
14.00: Man vs. Wild (1)
15.00: Freaky Eaters (2)
15.30: Feast India
16.00: You Have Been Warned
17.00: My Shocking Story
18.00: Life in Cold Blood
19.00: Man Vs. Wild (4)



Info Edge acquires MakeSense for ₹8 crore

Info Edge has acquired MakeSense Technologies for about ₹8 crore. As part of the acquisition, the team of MakeSense will join InfoEdge — BP



TCS settles lawsuit by former employees for \$29.75 m

Tata Consultancy Services has settled a law suit on violation of the rights of its non-US citizen workers in the US, without admitting any wrong doing — PTI

SHORT TAKES



On the 83rd birthday of Rama Prasad Goenka, chairman emeritus of the RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group and chairman of CESC, the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management has conferred on him the "Distinguished Management Fellowship"

CBEC officers to take action

Kolkata: Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) superintendents who are agitating for discriminated payments and promotion have resolved to submit mass resignation on April 30, if the government does not pay heed to their demand. —BP

Sebi diktat for IDR conversion

Mumbai: Sebi came out with a detailed framework for conversion of Indian depository receipts into equity shares, as part of efforts to attract more foreign companies to get listed on domestic bourses. —PTI

UBI increases deposit rates

Kolkata: United Bank of India (UBI) has increased interest rate of interest on domestic term deposits below ₹5 crore. —BP

PepsiCo signs up Unmukt Chand

New Delhi: PepsiCo has roped in India's U-19 captain Unmukt Chand as its brand ambassador. Chand will feature in the company's ad campaign along with cricketers MS Dhoni, Virat Kohli and Suresh Raina. —PTI

RBI asks banks to cap global card payments

■ PTI
MUMBAI

In order to check frauds, the RBI has asked banks to impose monetary limit for international transactions on credit and debit cards and refrain from issuing cards with global access unless specifically sought by the customer.

The Reserve Bank said that a monetary limit of \$500 be imposed by issuing bank on all global cards which has not been used in the past. "All the active magstripe international cards issued by banks should have threshold limit for international usage. The threshold should be determined by the banks based on the risk profile of the customer and accepted by the customer by June 30," it said.

Till the time of completion of the



process a threshold limit not exceeding \$500 may be put in place for all debit cards and all credit cards that have not been used for international transactions in the past, it said.

The notification has been issued following cyber attacks, which according to RBI has become "more unpredictable and electronic payment systems be-

coming vulnerable to new types of misuse, it is imperative that banks introduce certain minimum checks and balances to minimise the impact of such attacks and to arrest or minimise the damage."

Besides introducing additional security features in the card, the bank would also be required to put in place a real time fraud monitoring system and a mechanism to ensure that cards can be blocked through an SMS by the cardholder. These initiatives, RBI said are needed to ensure that transactions effected through such channels are safe and secure and not easily amenable to fraudulent usage. The announcement come in the backdrop of a slew of card frauds that has taken place in the recent past leading to unauthorised withdrawal of sums by unscrupulous agents.

Ratan Tata meets Ajit Singh

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

Ratan Tata, chairman emeritus of Tata Sons, on Friday met civil aviation minister Ajit Singh here, days after Malaysian carrier Air Asia announced it had sought government's nod to launch a new airline under a joint venture with Tata Group and an Indian investor.

Though there was no official word on what transpired at the meeting this afternoon, it is understood that the plans for the launch of the airline came up during the discussions. The meeting came days after the Malaysian budget carrier's CEO Tony Fernandes said the new airline may take to the sky by this year-end with 3-4 Airbus A-320 and his company would make an initial investment of between \$30-50 million.

Besides AirAsia Investment and Tata Sons, the other investor in the joint venture is Arun Bhatia of Telestra Tradeplace. An application

has already been moved by Air Asia's investment arm, AirAsia Investment Limited (AAIL) before the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) to seek approval for acquiring 49 per cent equity in the airline company. Of the remaining stake, Tata Sons is likely to pick up 30 per cent and one of Bhatia's companies, Hindustan Aerosystems, 21 per cent.

After the FIPB approval, the joint venture company would make an application to the aviation regulator DGCA for the Air Operators Permit to carry out flying operations. Fernandes recently said the new airline would be based in Chennai and in the initial phase concentrate on destinations in South India where Air Asia already operates. It would also focus on providing connectivity to Tier-II and III cities.

Asked by when the new airline would start operations, Fernandes had said "it is in the hands of the Indian regulator ... it may start by the fourth quarter" of this year.

ONGC plans capex of ₹35,050 cr in next fisc

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) plans to invest over ₹35,049 crore next fiscal in exploration and production of oil and gas -- four per cent increase over capital expenditure in 2012-13.

ONGC to invest ₹35,049.23 crore in 2013-14 as compared to revised capital expenditure of ₹33,577 crore in the current fiscal, according to the 2013-14 General Budget documents.

The nation's largest explorer had originally proposed to invest ₹33,065.31 crore in 2012-13 which it during the course of the year revised it to ₹33,577 crore.

All of expenditure proposed next fiscal will be funded by ONGC from its internal resources.

State refiner Indian Oil Corp (IOC) has scaled up its capex for next fiscal to ₹11,276.76 crore as against a spending of ₹10,000 crore in the current year.

Next year's spending includes ₹9,434 crore on its core refining and marketing business and ₹689 crore in oil and gas exploration. The remaining ₹1,153.76 crore would be spent on petrochemicals business.

FM assures on tax residency certificate

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

The finance ministry on Friday sought to assure worried investors saying their concerns on tax residency certificate (TRC) for claiming treaty benefits will be 'suitably' addressed during discussion on Finance Bill in Parliament.

"Since a concern has been expressed about the language of sub-section (5) of Section 90 (of I-T Act), this concern will be addressed suitably when the Finance Bill is taken up for consideration," the ministry said in a statement.

Concerns are being expressed that the provision regarding the TRC would make it difficult for investors routing their funds from low-tax countries like Mauritius, Cyprus and Singapore to avail the benefits of double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA).

The ministry said nothing new has been done with regards to TRC and finance minister P Chidambaram would clarify the government's position during debate on the Finance Bill.

The Finance Bill 2013 proposed to "amend Sections 90 and 90A in order to provide that submission of a tax residency certificate is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for claiming benefits under the agreements referred to in sections 90 and 90A".

As per this, a person holding TRC will also have to be the beneficial owner to claim benefits under DTAA "as TRC is necessary, but not sufficient condition for availing benefits".

Ground Reality



UB Group chairman and Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Mallya at Parliament House, in New Delhi, on Friday during the ongoing Budget Session

NMDC to spend ₹3k cr on steel plant in 2013-14

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

State-owned iron ore producer NMDC will spend around ₹3,000 crore next fiscal on its maiden steel venture at Chhattisgarh's Nagarnar, which has planned capacity of 3 million tonne.

According to Budget documents, the top iron ore producer has kept capital expenditure target of ₹4,084 crore for 2013-14. Of this, nearly 75 per cent will be spent on the Chhattisgarh steel plant. "We have placed orders over ₹12,000 crore and all the contractors are working. The plant will be commissioned on time in mid-2015," NMDC's director (finance) S Thiagarajan said. NMDC is funding the entire investment for the project, estimated at ₹15,525 crore, through internal resources. The plant will initially produce HR-coils (hot rolled coils) and the company will have a separate marketing division for selling the steel products.

The plant will get iron ore from company's existing mines at nearby Bailadila, while the coking coal is planned to be imported. Besides, it also has plans to set up a 500 MW power plant to meet the electricity requirements of the steel plant.

'Restarting growth should be priority'

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The Union Budget 2013 does not chart the way of achieving growth rate projected between 6.1-6.7 per cent in fiscal 2013-14 as revealed by the Economic Survey, said Dipankar Chatterjee, former chairman, CII-ER and former president Calcutta Stock Exchange on Friday.

Also, with economic growth slipping to 4.5 per cent in the October-December period of the current financial year 2012-13 reported on Thursday, the government should look at various measures to improve the economy's outlook going forward. "From five per cent to 6.5 per cent is around 30 per cent jump in growth rate. It is achievable but the government has to walk in a certain path", said

Chatterjee, on the sidelines of a Union Budget 2013 seminar organised by the Direct Taxes Professionals' Association (DTPA) and Association of Corporate Advisors & Executives (ACAE), in Kolkata.

"A 4.5 per cent growth is like pre-liberalisation growth. Restarting growth should be nation's top priority," he said.

Hit by poor performance of farm, mining and manufacturing sector, economic growth in the third quarter slipped to decade's lowest quarterly growth, said Jinesh S Vanzara, president, ACAE.

The Economic Survey of 2012-13 tabled in Parliament on Wednesday has predicted a growth rate of 6.1-6.7 per cent for the next fiscal.

Talking about the Budget, Chatterjee said though general anti-avoidance rules (Gaar) have been de-

ferred to 2016, "it should not come at all as it is one of the depressing factors for the country," Chatterjee said.

"Companies like Vodafone, Nokia among others have expressed that they are not confident in India any more seeing the punitive tax regime. 'What have we done to reassure them?', Chatterjee questioned.

Pramod Himmatsinghka, president, DTPA praised the government's divestment target of around ₹55,000 crore in the next fiscal. "The housing sector received a big boost from his Budget," said Himmatsinghka.

Rajiv Kaul, Pulak Saha, Suman Mukherjee, NK Poddar were other professionals who deliberated their expert views on the Budget. More than 800 professionals attended the seminar.

Learned Look



(L-R) Jinesh S Vanzara, president, Association of Corporate Advisors & Executives (ACAE), Rajiv Kaul, chairman, Nicco Corporation, and Dipankar Chatterjee, former chairman, CII-ER and former president Calcutta Stock Exchange, during a seminar on the Union Budget, in Kolkata on Friday

cover DRIVE

New India Assurance eyes ₹600-cr profit

■ PTI
BHUBANESWAR

With impressive turnaround, the largest general insurer New India Assurance has targeted net profit of ₹600 crore this fiscal and planned expansion of its foreign operations in a big way in 2013-14.

"The company is expected to make a net profit of about ₹600 crore during 2012-13 recording a big jump from last year's ₹179.31 crore," chairman and managing director, New India Assurance G Srinivasan said.

After a lean phase, the company's registered a robust third quarter results with profit after tax of ₹517

crore as against a loss of ₹177 crore in the corresponding period of previous fiscal, he said.

New India has registered a gross premium in India of ₹8542.86 crore during 2011-12 as against ₹7097.14 crore during 2010-11, Srinivasan said adding together with overseas premium, the company has reached a gross premium of ₹10073.88 crore in 2011-12. Stating that a premium target of ₹12,000 crore has been set by the end of the current financial year, the CMD said New India has become the first Indian non-life insurance company to cross the ₹10,000 crore premium mark.

Maintaining that operational ef-



iciency had increased this year with lesser claims and management expenses, Srinivasan said the compa-

ny plans to increase the number of agents from around 45,000 to one lakh in two years.

The company witnessed a ₹300 crore increase in its investment income, to ₹2,055 crore in first three quarters this year against ₹1709.14 crore reported in the same period last fiscal. It plans to foray into markets of Canada, Qatar and Myanmar to expand its foreign operations in the next fiscal.

The company's assets stood at Rs 42162.74 crore as on March 31, 2012. Srinivasan said it has overseas presences countries like Japan, UK, Middle East, Fiji and Australia with strong global re-insurance facilities.

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

The growth of the country's manufacturing sector increased in February on the back of strong growth in domestic orders and strengthening of international demand, HSBC survey said on Friday.

The HSBC India manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) -- a measure of factory production -- stood at 54.2 in February, after slowing to a three-month low level of 53.2 in January. It stood at 54.7 in December. The index has remained above the 50 mark, below which it indicates contraction, for more than three years now.

"Manufacturing activity picked up on the back of stronger growth in domestic orders," HSBC chief economist for India & ASEAN Leif Eskesen said. The volume of incoming new work at manufacturing firms in India rose during February.

Around 29 per cent of monitored companies reported higher levels of new orders and just 14 per cent registered a decline. "Anecdotal evidence suggested that new orders in-

creased in line with stronger demand, maintained product quality and the launch of new products," the report said, adding that a further rise in export orders was recorded, amid evidence of stronger demand from international clients.

Regarding inflation, HSBC said the pace of inflation during the month February was robust.

"Inflation pressures, however, remain firm, with input cost inflation holding steady and inflation of output prices picking up," Eskesen said, adding that "The numbers underscore that the room for monetary policy easing is limited, even with progress on fiscal consolidation."

The central bank on January lowered interest rates by 0.25 per cent saying that with inflation showing signs of remaining range bound, it was now critical to arrest the loss of growth momentum.

Meanwhile, employment in the Indian manufacturing sector expanded slightly during February. Firms stated that payroll numbers were increased in tandem with higher production requirements.

Djoker, Fedex lead top seeds into last 4

■ REUTERS DUBAI

Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer stayed on course for a scorching desert showdown as they led the top four seeds into the semi-finals of the Dubai Championships on Thursday. The world's leading two players were joined in the last four by Czech Tomas Berdych and Juan Martin Del Potro of Argentina.



Novak Djokovic in Dubai on Thursday — AFP

Djokovic extended his winning streak to 16 matches as he routed Andreas Seppi 6-0, 6-3 to set up a 10th meeting with Del Potro, whose thunderous serving helped him overwhelm German qualifier Daniel Brands 6-4, 6-2.

Federer vanquished Russia's Nikolay Davydenko 6-2 6-2 and world number six Berdych swatted aside wildcard Dmitry Tursunov 6-3, 6-2. Federer and Djokovic, winners of eight of the past 10 Dubai finals between them, have topped the bill each night, while the lower seeds have played in the blistering afternoon heat and that could leave the top two in better condition for Friday's semi-finals.

Djokovic has a 7-2 winning record against Del Potro and has been victorious in their last three matches, but the Argentine did beat Djokovic to claim an Olympic bronze in London last year.

"Del Potro is a fantastic player, he's very powerful and has a great serve," Djokovic said in a courtside interview. "He likes this court, plays very aggressive, so I'll have to be on top of my game."

The Serb had been lax in the closing stages of his second-round match and he began Thursday in a similar fashion, perhaps complacent due to a 9-0 winning record against Italian Seppi.

Djokovic's first serve was rarely on tar-

get in the opening game and a netted forehand left him facing a break point, but the 25-year-old escaped with a venomous serve and eventually held. That scare seemed to refocus the Serb, who broke immediately by exposing Seppi's limitations - an erratic serve, short returns and a limp backhand.

The Italian won just 11 points in a first set whitewash and Djokovic broke decisively for a 3-1 second set lead as a flat-footed Seppi played a forehand that did not even trouble the tram lines.

Earlier, Del Potro was bullish after a relative stroll against the big-serving Brands. "If I am ready and I'm very solid with my forehands and serve it's going to be a very big chance for me," Del Potro said.

Bhupathi-Llodra in final

Mahesh Bhupathi reached the first final of the season with French partner Michael Llodra after overcoming a fighting pair of Rohan Bopanna and Rajeev Ram in the Dubai Tennis Championships, here on Friday. Unseeded Bhupathi and Llodra got past India's Bopanna and Americam Ram 6-4, 6-7 (2), 10-5 in the first semi-final, lasting one hour and 28 minutes.

Man City's Meppen-Walters jailed

Young Manchester City defender Courtney Meppen-Walters was jailed for 16 months on Thursday for dangerous driving. He was found guilty at Manchester Crown Court of causing the deaths of a brother and sister last September



Nolan sidelined with toe injury

West Ham United captain Kevin Nolan is set to miss Saturday's trip to Stoke City with a toe injury, the Premier League club's assistant manager said on Thursday. He aggravated the problem on Monday's 3-2 home league defeat by Tottenham Hotspur

Nadal eases through to Mexican Open semi-finals

■ REUTERS ACAPULCO

Former world No.1 Rafael Nadal breezed through to the semi-finals of the Mexican Open on Thursday, dispatching Argentine Leonardo Mayer in straight sets 6-1, 7-5. The second-seeded Nadal will face fellow Spaniard Nicolas Almagro on Friday. It was another routine victory for the 11-time Grand Slam champion, who is in the midst of a three tournament comeback after a knee injury forced him to take a seven-month hiatus from the tour.

"I'm enjoying playing tennis again," Nadal said. "When you are recuperating there are always going to be bad days, but right now there are more good days than bad." Tournament top-seed and defending champion David Ferrer also reached the semi-finals on Thursday with a 6-3 6-1 victory over Italy's Paolo Lorenzi. The Spaniard will next face Italian Fabio Fognini. Earlier this month Nadal made the final of the VTR Open in Chile, and followed that up by claiming the Brazil Open



AFP

Rafael Nadal in Acapulco on Thursday

title. Since returning to competition on February 5 in Santiago, Nadal has stuck to clay court events that are easier on his still-recovering left knee. Nadal has 37 titles on clay over the course of his career, including seven French Open championships.

Isner, Haas through, Querrey stumbles

■ REUTERS FLORIDA

Top seed John Isner marched into the quarter-finals of the Delray Beach International with a 7-6, 6-2 win over Japan's Go Soeda on Thursday. Isner fired 15 aces and won over 90 percent of points on his first serve to take the match in an hour and 15 minutes.

The towering American will meet another big-serving giant in South African defending champion Kevin Anderson, who was pushed harder by Taiwan's Yen-Hsun Lu in their 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 match. Sec-

ond-seeded German Tommy Haas had little trouble in beating Uzbek Denis Istomin 6-4, 6-1 but third seed Sam Querrey was sent packing by Latvian Ernests Gulbis 6-4, 4-6, 7-6. Haas, the 2006 champion, was also strong on serve and wrapped up the match in just 67 minutes. "It's a little different with the cool weather and no wind today (Thursday) so it was very pleasant to play," Haas said.

"I had a lot of chances early on that I didn't take and frustrated me, but at 4-5 I broke him to win the first set and I think that mentally disturbed him a little bit." American Querrey crashed out af-

ter taking a 4-0 lead in the deciding set, and racked up eight double-faults, including one when serving for the match. Eighth seed Xavier Malisse of Belgium was also bundled out, losing his rain-interrupted match 7-6, 3-6, 6-3 to Daniel Munoz.

Davydenko's new career

Russian tennis ace Nikolay Davydenko is considering following Marat Safin into Russian politics after his sporting career comes to an end. Davydenko, a 31-year-old veteran of the tour with nearly 14 seasons in pro tennis, believes he has one or two years left at the top of the game.

SHORT TAKES



PTI

Bret Lee attends a Press conference after a promotional event in Mumbai on Friday

Foster wants to play for England

London: West Bromwich Albion goalkeeper Ben Foster has come out of international retirement after prematurely hanging up his England gloves two years ago, his manager Steve Clarke said on Thursday. The 29-year-old Foster, who joined West Brom from Birmingham City on a permanent deal at the start of the season after a year-long loan spell, made himself unavailable in 2011 because of injury problems after winning five caps for his country.

Medel, Kondogbia hit with bans

Madrid: Sevilla midfielders Gary Medel and Geoffrey Kondogbia were handed three and four-match bans respectively on Thursday for red cards in their King's Cup semi-final second leg defeat to Atletico Madrid. Sevilla finished with nine men at the Sanchez Pizjuan on Wednesday after drawing 2-2, to go out 4-3 on aggregate. Medel picked up two yellow cards in the same incident after fouling Atletico striker Diego Costa 14 minutes from time.

Costa Rica lose hosting rights

Zurich: Costa Rica have lost the right to host the women's under-17 World Cup next year due to delays in stadium construction, completing a miserable week for soccer in the Central American nation. The decision, announced by soccer's governing body FIFA, came less than 48 hours after Costa Rica missed out on a place at this year's under-20 World Cup in Turkey following a shock 2-1 defeat by rank outsiders Cuba.

Woods trails Villegas by six shots

Florida: Tiger Woods, who saved par with a barefoot shot in water, and Rory McIlroy fired even-par 70s at the Honda Classic on Thursday that left the world's top two golfer's six shots back of first-round leader Camilo Villegas. Colombian Villegas capped a flawless six-under-par 64 with an eagle at the par-five 18th that left him one stroke ahead of South Africa's Branden Grace, Canada's Graham DeLaet and Americans Rickie Fowler and Robert Streb.

—Agencies

Jeev lies 3rd in Tshwane Open

■ PTI CENTURION

Jeev Milkha Singh exploded into superb form on the back-nine with four birdies to card a five-under 67 and grab a share of the third spot after the first round of the Tshwane Open here. Jeev was two shots behind Pretoria native Darren Fichardt, who is once again handily placed at the top of the leaderboard after an opening round of seven-under 65. Fichardt was one stroke ahead of Swede Bjorn Akesson (66).

Jeev, Jean Hugo (SAF), David Howell (Eng), George Coetzee (SAF), Gary Lockerbie and Mark Tullo (Chile) were all locked in tied third at 67 each. Jeev opened with seven straight pars before finding his first birdie on the eighth to make the turn one-under. A par on 10th was followed by a bogey on the 11th for the Indian ace.

Then he birdied the 12th and parred the 13th.

Indians fail to make Open, Kiradech tops

■ PTI THAILAND

None of the three Indians in fray made the grade at the International Final Qualifying (Asia) on Friday as Thai Kiradech Aphibarnrat led the four qualifiers into the prestigious Open Championships at Muirfield. The other three were Japanese duo amateur Hideki Matsuyama, Daisuke Maruyama and China's Wu Ashun.

Anirban Lahiri, who went through to the Open via the IFQ last year, was the best Indian at tied 23rd with rounds of 73 and 68. Himmat Rai (73-71) was tied 41st and Gaganjeet Bhullar (74-76) was further behind. Thai rising star Kiradech topped the two-day qualifying with a flawless nine-under 63 while amateur Matsuyama, a two-time Asia Pacific Amateur Championship winner, finished four shots back following a 69 at the Amata Spring Country Club. Another Japanese Maruyama and China's Wu closed with a 65 and 68 re-

Qing Hua joins Caterham

■ REUTERS LONDON

China's Ma Qing Hua will be a Caterham reserve driver this season along with American Alexander Rossi, the Formula One team said on Friday. Shanghai-born Qing Hua, who was a development driver with now-defunct Spanish outfit HRT last year, will attend all the grands prix and also compete for Caterham Racing in the GP2 support series. He will also take part in the first Friday free practice session at next month's Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai. Qing Hua, 25, featured in four F1 practice sessions last year, becoming the first Chinese-born driver to take part in a

grand prix weekend.

"I'm very pleased to welcome Ma into our team. Alexander continues his development with us into 2013 and his promotion is a reflection of the investment we are making in him for the future," said team principal Cyril Abiteboul in a statement. "Ma will play a key role in helping our GP2 team achieve their 2013 goals. We are looking forward to helping him develop his talents, both in the F1 and GP2 environments, and giving Chinese fans a figurehead to support on track throughout the year ahead." Rossi will also attend all the grands prix and take part in a number of practice sessions.

Astapi, Nefyn fancied

■ OUR RACING CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

The Invitation Cup Weekend races are back to this city. Two days of quality racing will see the running of 18 races over this weekend. In all ₹3.77 crore would be offered as stake money along with the value of trophies which, incidentally, is a record.

The star of the show is the Indian Turf Invitation Cup (Grade I) will be run over a distance of 2,400m on Sunday. The terms of the race is altered this time to accommodate older horses. The move found strong criticism from a section of race buffs as there was no urgency to make a change to an established event which had its 50th running last year.

Instead, it is felt, a new race could have easily been framed over the weekend. There are four more graded races to be run over the weekend which are added to the show later. On Saturday we have the Stayers' Cup (Grade I) and the Sprinters' Cup (Grade I). On Sunday, running of the Major P K Mehra Memorial Super Mile Cup (Grade I) and Suresh Mahindra Multi-Million Trophy (Grade III) will add lustre to the Invitation Cup show.

Coming to Friday's racing, the Sprinters' Cup and the Stayers' Cup get the top billing. The lineup of 14 runners for the 1,200m

sprint looks formidable with the presence of Kohinoor Wish, Nefyn, Speed Six and Bullseye in the pack. Nefyn, the highest rated runner in the pack, is fancied over Bulls-eye.

The Stayers' Cup (Grade I) will see nine runners in action over 3,000m. It looks to be a straight contest between Astapi and Native Knight. In what could be a tossup between the two, Astapi is fancied to prevail.

A carried over jackpot pool of ₹10 lakh will be added to the day's collection. There will be carried over amounts for the third treble pool and tanala pools of two Grade I races.



Indicative odds for Graded races
Sprinters' Cup – Nefyn 2/1, Bullseye 9/4 and Speed Six 4/1.

Stayers' Cup – Astapi 2/1, Native Knight 5/2 and Star Marquesf 4/1.

Selections
12.45 p.m.: REWARDING 1, Miss Watermelon 2, Charlie Cool 3. 1.15 p.m.: SILVERINA 1, Stupid Cupid 2, Razmaden

3. 1.45 p.m.: TRRUST IN ME 1, Angel Quest 2, Sreeyantra 3. 2.15 p.m.: VOYAGER 1, Sergeant Major 2, Sham Sunder 3. 2.45 p.m.: OUR CHIEFTAIN 1, Amica 2, Burst Of Stardust 3. 3.20 p.m.: ASTAPI 1, Native Knight 2, Drop Of Honey 3. 3.55 p.m.: CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS 1, Sur La Tete 2, Cristoffe 3. 4.30 p.m.: NEFYN 1, Bullseye 2, Speed Six 3. 5.15 p.m.: SNOW MOUNTAIN 1, Enchanted Forest 2, Smart Hunter 3.

Day's best: Captain Courageous.

hot WHEELS

Webber puts Red Bull on top

■ REUTERS BARCELONA

Mark Webber was fastest for champions Red Bull in Formula One testing in Barcelona on Thursday with the Australian becoming the ninth driver to top the timesheets in as many test days so far this year.

The opening day of the final test at the Spanish circuit before the season starts in Melbourne on March 17 started cold and wet but ended brightly with Red Bull finally setting the pace for the first time in 2013.

Webber's best time of one minute

22.693 was set on the soft tyres, with 2008 world champion Lewis Hamilton second quickest for Mercedes in 1:24.348 — a yawning gap of 1.655 seconds — on medium tyres.

"We got one hour at the end of the day at half-sensible conditions and we had a look at a few different compounds," Webber told *Sky Sports television*, who also claimed a Formula One first by broadcasting the session live in 3D in Britain. "We opted to throw on some tyres and see how the car went, and that went okay," he added after completing 90 laps

of the Circuit de Catalunya. "We've still got work to do we are seeing some very fast times from the other cars. There are some very strong teams out there. We're not on our own, that's for sure." Frenchman Jean-Eric Vergne was third quickest, although the times mean little given that teams are trying out different settings with various fuel loads, for Toro Rosso while Valtteri Bottas was fourth for Williams. "It's a shame we were disrupted a bit by the wet weather, this did allow us to run on the wet, intermediate and dry tyres," said the Finn.



AFP

Chinese Taipei test for India



Indian players during a practice session at Yangon Training Centre in Yangon on Friday

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

High on confidence but low on performance, India will look to put behind the recent reverses when they take on Chinese Taipei in their opening match of the AFC Chal-

lenge Cup qualifying tournament here on Saturday. India lost to Palestine 2-4 in an international friendly at home on February 6, barely four months after their 0-2 away verdict against Singapore. The scorers against Palestine, Syed Rahim Nabi

and Clifford Miranda, will be turning out on Saturday as well, but it is again going to be skipper Sunil Chhetri who will have to shoulder the bulk of responsibility. AFC Challenge has always been a good outing for Chhetri and despite the lack

of playing time at Sporting Lisbon, the pint-sized striker will be expected to deliver the goods for Wim Koevermans' side. Rankings don't separate the two teams by much but India can take heart from the fact that they had thrashed their opponents 3-

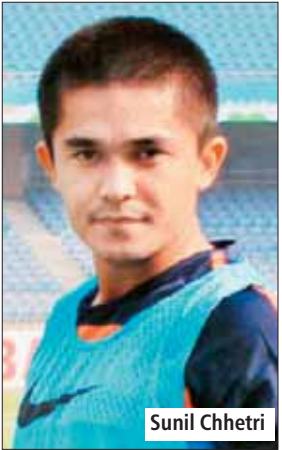
0 the last time they met, in the qualifiers of the same tournament last year. India are ranked 167th in the world, with their opponents placed four places behind at 171. The five group toppers along with two best second-placed teams from 20

nations will make it to the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup in Maldives. The winner of the tournament in Maldives will confirm its berth in the 2015 AFC Asian Cup in Australia, for which DPR Korea has already qualified. Besides Chhetri, Koevermans will have Alwyn George, Jeje Lalpekhlu — the star of the 2010 edition — and Robin Singh as striking options. The defence is likely to be manned by Denzil Franco, Gouramangi Singh, Shouvik Ghosh and Gurjinder Singh. The midfield will comprise Nabi, Mehtab Hussain, Miranda with Lenny Rodrigues, in all likelihood, completing the set-up. Dutchman Koevermans seemed happy with the intensity of the boys. "I'm happy with the intensity. Only be careful, don't ever switch-off, even in practice. Even if you switch-off for three seconds, you're gone," he said. Chhetri said despite the reverses, the quality of the team stays. "A team will always have mixed luck. We won the Nehru Cup as we played to our potential. Then, we were a bit rusty in the international friendlies. But our quality stays. Had we not had them, we wouldn't have won the Nehru Cup, that too beating Cameroon in the final," Chhetri pointed out. Chinese Taipei, on the other hand, made it to the quarter-finals of the AFC Challenge Cup in 2006, when they lost 3-0 to eventual runners-up Sri Lanka. Chen Po-Liang will remain their man to watch. The striker rose to prominence with two goals against Guam in an East Asian Football Championship game in 2009.

I cannot rest on past laurels: Chhetri

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

India skipper Sunil Chhetri, who had struck a hat-trick in the final when India won the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup, stressed on the importance of not resting on past laurels and said he is focussed on leading the team's campaign in the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers. Ahead of the opener against Chinese Taipei in Yangon on Saturday, Chhetri said the team would take no outfit lightly in the competition in its bid to qualify for the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup finals in Maldives. "I just hope that I can live up to the expectations. As a player, it never comes to my mind as to which tournament or match I am playing. I have always had one aim – to do well for my country. This is a very important tournament for us and we, as a team, will give everything we have," Chhetri told www.the-aiff.com. "Chinese Taipei and Myanmar are very good teams especially Myanmar, as they are playing at home. But first things first, and at the moment, we are concentrating on our first match against Chinese Taipei. We need to take one match at a time," he said. India have been clubbed with hosts Myanmar, Chinese Taipei and Guam in Group A. They play Chinese Taipei in their first match followed by games against Guam and hosts Myanmar on March 4 and March 6 respectively. Twenty countries have been



divided into five groups of four with the quartet playing against each other in a one-round league in a centralised venue. The five group winners and two best second-placed teams will join host nation Maldives at the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup finals. India's second highest scorer with 38 goals behind Bhaichung Bhutia's 42, Chhetri said he was happy with his signing for I-league club Churchill Brothers on loan, but admitted the responsibility has come with an added pressure. "It's good but at the same time, it's an added pressure. There will be expectations as we are in contention to win the I-League this season. I have played two matches for them and am looking forward to joining them after the campaign in the AFC Challenge Cup 2014," he said. Chhetri has taken a four-month break from his foreign stint with Portuguese club Sporting Lisbon.

'My relationship with Abramovich is very good'

■ REUTERS
LONDON

Chelsea's beleaguered interim manager Rafael Benitez still enjoys a "very good" relationship with the club's owner Roman Abramovich, he told the *BBC* in an interview on Thursday. The Spaniard's comments came the day after he criticised the Chelsea board for appointing him only on an interim basis following the sacking of Roberto di Matteo in November. "My relationship with the staff and people at the club is really good," the former Liverpool manager, unpopular with Chelsea fans since his appointment, said. "My relationship with Roman Abramovich is very good. When I meet Roman Abramovich we talk about football, we talk like normal people and share our passion for football." Chelsea fans have openly voiced their dissatisfaction with Benitez and the manager earlier this week denied reports of friction with the European champions' senior players following Sunday's 2-0 defeat at Manchester City. Benitez said he was not worried about being sacked by Russian billionaire Abramovich before his contract runs out at the end of the season. "The players are really happy in what we are trying to do. Sometimes you win, sometimes you cannot," he said.

United old guard endure thanks to Ferguson: Beckham

■ REUTERS
PARIS

Alex Ferguson's philosophy is behind the longevity of Manchester United's home-grown players, says Paris St Germain midfielder David Beckham. The former England captain and United player is still active at 37, having joined PSG on a five-month loan at the end of January. Former team mate Phil Neville, 36, plays at Everton and the 39-year-old Ryan Giggs, who started his youth ca-

reer at Manchester City but ended it at United, is still at Old Trafford after signing his first professional contract there in 1990. "The majority of the Manchester United players who started in the mid 1990s - Ryan Giggs, Nicky Butt, Gary Neville, Phil Neville, Paul Scholes and I - are still on the pitch," Beckham told French sports daily *L'Equipe* on Friday. Butt and Gary Neville have recently started coaching careers at United and England respectively but Scholes re-

turned to the field in January 2012, eight months after calling it quits as he sought to help his club through an injury crisis. "I think it is because Sir Alex Ferguson showed us the way when we were teenagers. He taught us to respect the game, to respect our body and to love what we do," Beckham said. "For now, Ryan Giggs is the one who has been furthest (in his career). He continues to play at the highest level and he does not seem to want to stop. But in the end, maybe it will be me (who will quit

last)," he said. Beckham started his professional career at United in 1993 and left to join Real Madrid in 2003. Meanwhile, Alex Ferguson sees himself becoming a director at Manchester United when he finally decides to quit management. The 71-year-old Scot, who shelved retirement plans more than a decade ago, still has no idea when he will call it a day. "There's no getting rid of me," Ferguson, who has been in the Old Trafford hot seat since 1986, said in an interview with *twentyfour7 Football* magazine published on Friday. "I will probably become a director. "Nobody knows (when I will step down), neither do I. It won't be a doctor that tells me to quit," Ferguson, whose side have a 12-point lead at the top of the Premier League, has guided United to many titles including two Champions League trophies, five FA Cups and 12 league crowns. Even though he is still in the job, there is often media speculation about who will fill the vacancy once it comes up. Real Madrid's Jose Mourinho, a good friend of Ferguson's who is heading to Old Trafford this week for Tuesday's Champions League last 16 second leg, is one of the most heavily fancied candidates.



Zinedine Zidane (left) and David Beckham in Paris on Thursday

Van Persie fit for action

■ REUTERS
MANCHESTER

Manchester United's top scorer Robin van Persie has shaken off a hip injury and will be fit for Saturday's Premier League game at home to Norwich City, manager Alex Ferguson said on Friday. The Dutchman, who has 19 league goals to his name for the leaders this season, was substituted in the first half of last weekend's 2-0 win at Queens Park Rangers after tumbling into a TV camera dugout. "Robin van Persie has trained this week — he's available for tomorrow (Saturday). His hip was very tender but he's OK now," manager Alex Ferguson told a news conference. Defender Phil Jones will not be available for Saturday's league game because of an ankle injury but could return for Tuesday's mouth-watering Champions League last 16 second leg at home to Real Madrid. The European tie is evenly balanced at 1-1 after last month's first leg. Ferguson was mindful of not getting distracted by the Real game as his side seek to extend their Premier League lead. They could stretch to 15 points ahead of Manchester City on Saturday as the champions do not play Aston Villa until Monday. "Tomorrow (Saturday) is an important one because Tuesday will look after itself," he said.

Age-defying Giggs signs new one-year deal



■ REUTERS
MANCHESTER

Manchester United's age-defying midfielder Ryan Giggs signed another one-year contract on Friday that will mean he is playing for the Premier League leaders when he turns 40. The Welshman, who made his United debut in March 1991, has made a club record 931 appearances, scoring 168 goals. With his international appearances for Wales and Britain in the Olympics added, his tally is 999 and he could reach the 1,000-game milestone in United's Premier League game against Norwich City on Saturday. "I am feeling good, enjoying my football more than ever and, most importantly, I feel I am making a contribution to the team," Giggs, who scored in last weekend's 2-0 win over Queens Park Rangers, said on the club's website (www.manutd.com).

"This is an exciting team to be part of, with great team spirit, and we are again pushing for trophies as we head towards the business end of the season." The former Wales international, who will turn 40 in November, has won 12 Premier League titles, four FA Cups, three League Cups and two Champions League titles. He looks set to add to that tally this season as United are 12 points clear at the top of the Premier League, while also still in the FA Cup and Champions League. He is the only player to score in every season since the Premier League replaced the old first division in 1992 having also been on target in the two seasons he played in old first division. "What can I say about Ryan that hasn't already been said? He is a marvellous player and an exceptional human being," manager Alex Ferguson said in a statement.

Setubal honours Mourinho

■ REUTERS
LISBON

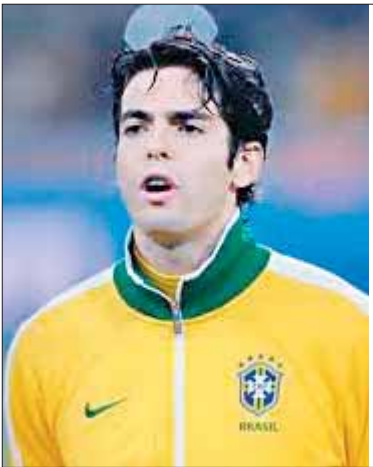
Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho is to get a street in Setubal named after him in honour of his sporting achievements, the town hall of his home city said on Thursday. Mourinho, the 50-year-old self-styled 'Special One', is arguably the most successful ever Portuguese coach. He has won league titles in four different countries with Porto, Chelsea, Inter Milan and Real Madrid, and has led teams to two Champions League trophies. The Setubal town hall said in a statement it had made the decision because of Mourinho's "extraordinary role in international sport". "He is, in all fairness, one of the coaches in the world with the most prestige and qualification." The exact street or avenue has not yet been chosen but the town hall's general assembly voted unanimously to approve the naming.

comeback M A N

Scolari hints at Kaka recall

■ IANS
RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari has hinted at an international recall for former FIFA World Player of the Year Kaka by promising changes to his squad for upcoming friendlies against Italy and Russia. Kaka was absent from the Selecao's 1-2 loss to England at Wembley Stadium Feb 6 – Scolari's first match in charge since taking over from sacked predecessor Mano Menezes, reports *Xinhua*. But Scolari, who guided Brazil to the 2002 World Cup with Kaka in his squad during his first spell as national coach, admitted to erring with his team selection against England. "I wasn't im-



Kaka

pressed with the positioning of the players and a series of details," Scolari said Thursday. In an indication that Kaka will be recalled, Scolari said players not featuring regularly for their clubs would not be ruled out of consideration. "I am going to choose a team that I think is best for Brazil," the 64-year-old said. **Pato cautious** Corinthians striker Alexandre Pato admits he is still "a long way off" from rediscovering the form that made him one of the world's most sought-after strikers. He scored his third goal in seven matches for the Brazilian club during a Copa Libertadores group-stage victory over Colombia's Millonarios Wednesday, reports *Xinhua*.

4th goalline technology system approved by Fifa

■ REUTERS
ZURICH

A fourth system of goal-line technology has been approved and granted a licence, soccer's governing body Fifa said on Friday. Fifa said that the German-produced GoalControl 4D used 14 high-speed cameras placed around the pitch and directed at both goals to determine whether the ball had entered the goal. "The position of the ball is continually and automatically captured in three dimensions as soon as it approaches the goal-line," said Fifa in a statement. "When the ball has completely crossed the line, the central analysis unit

sends an encrypted signal to the referee's watch in less than a second. GoalControl 4D can be used with both standard goalposts and balls." On Monday, the German-manufactured Cairos system, which uses magnetic fields around the goals, was also granted a license. The systems previously approved are Hawk-Eye, which is used in tennis and cricket and like GoalControl is optical-based which uses magnetic fields. Fifa approved the use of goal-line technology last year following a number of controversial incidents where teams had goals disallowed because officials wrongly judged that the ball had not crossed the line.

Dhoni's batting reflected on his captaincy: Ashwin



Ravichandran Ashwin in Hyderabad on Friday

■ PTI
HYDERABAD

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels that Mahendra Singh Dhoni's magnificent batting form reflected on his captaincy which helped India produce a clinical performance in the first Test against Australia.

"I think he pointed it out himself after the match that he isn't sure whether he would be able to replicate the performance again. I mean

he scored two hundreds in almost two sessions which was extraordinary," Ashwin told reporters ahead of the second Test match starting here on Saturday.

"In fact, he (Dhoni) set the tempo as a captain and his performance reflected on his field settings and bowling changes. We didn't look back after that. If someone plays an innings like that, it can be demoralising for any opposition," he said. The burly Tamil Nadu tweaker also played a major part in the first Test with his 12-wicket haul and the confidence with which he is known to answer queries from the media was back in his voice.

Asked about the competition between the spinners with obvious reference being Harbhajan Singh, he gave a terse reply.

"Competition always existed; it still exists and will continue to exist. I don't even think about it," he said.

India aim at increasing lead

■ PTI
HYDERABAD

A morale-boosting win clinched in the opening Test, a confident India will look to consolidate their position by putting up another dominant performance in the second cricket Test against Australia starting here on Saturday.

After putting the visitors on the mat, riding on Mahendra Singh Dhoni's individual brilliance and an equally impressive show from off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, the home team would aim to guard against complacency having learnt their lesson the hard way from the England series. Dhoni and his men would be determined to ensure that Australians aren't let off the hook like Alastair Cook's England, who rallied to win the previous Test series 2-1.

The Indian captain's superlative effort in Chennai could well turn into a series defining knock and his leading from the front is the shot in the arm that the team required as it was not performing as per expectations in the longer format. The last time India played at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Uppal, they inflicted a humiliating innings and 115-run defeat on New Zealand with Ashwin grabbing 12 for 85.

That particular match which ended on the fourth day could well have ended inside three days had weather not played spoilsport on the curtailed second and third day. Therefore Team India will certainly not deviate from their 'turning track template' and Ashwin and company will certainly have a huge role to play again as the hosts look to go for the kill. A 2-0 lead will not only push the Aussies back to the wall but it will also ensure that mak-

ing a comeback in the four-Test series will be practically impossible for the visitors. The hosts also have lesser worries regarding the team composition save whether they would be playing local boy Pragyan Ojha on his home ground.

Even though both Murali Vijay and Virender Sehwag flopped in Chennai, Dhoni and the team management are unlikely to tinker with the opening combination as he had indicated at the post match press conference after the first Test. The Indian captain has never been a firm believer in too much of chopping and changing and might just like to go in with the winning combination.

The middle-order picks itself and the question arises whether Ojha, who certainly got a raw deal in Chennai, gets to play in front of his home crowd. Bowling combination is one area where Dhoni will need to put in some thought. While Ojha is a far better left-arm spinner than Ravindra Jadeja, the Saurashtra all-rounder did his cause no harm by picking five wickets in the first Test and complementing Ashwin well.

Harbhajan Singh wasn't at his best in the first innings but looked like hitting some form in the second innings where he got important wickets of David Warner and Matthew Wade. Playing four spinners can be a luxury as was proved during the Nagpur Test against England as Piyush Chawla was the one who was underbowled in both innings. But in order to put more pressure on Australia, that's the only way to fit Ojha in at the expense of a pacer. It is an open secret that Ishant Sharma and Bhuvneshwar Kumar don't have the ability to generate consistent reverse swing with the old ball and their pace is hardly troubling the Aussie batsmen with the new ball.



Sachin Tendulkar attends a practice session at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on Friday

Anand draws with Gelfand, stays last in Zurich

■ PTI
ZURICH (SWITZERLAND)

Victory eluded world champion Viswanathan Anand yet again as he played out a fourth draw in five games, against Boris Gelfand of Israel, and remained at the bottom after the fifth and penultimate round of the Zurich Chess Challenge here. Following a shock defeat in the previous round against Fabiano Caruana of Italy, Anand looked for sharp play against Gelfand but his efforts did not yield the desirable result as the Israeli first pressed for an advantage and had little problems in holding out a draw in the end.

Meanwhile, leader Caruana yet again played exciting chess before settling for a draw with Vladimir Kramnik of Russia.

With just one round to come, the Italian remained at the top on three points in this four-player double round-robin tournament and he continued to be followed by Kramnik and Gelfand a half point behind. Anand on two points stands last in the tournament.

Playing the black side of a Catalan, Anand went for early complications but found

one of his pawns en prise. "It's a pity when everything has to be defended tactically, it's much nicer when the position holds itself. I think black was quite shaky," Anand said. Instead of going for the pawn which would have netted him a safer advantage, Gelfand came up with an exchange sacrifice and conceded that he had missed something in his calculations.

White still had something to play for but Anand was in control too and after trading of some pieces it was clear that the game would end in a draw.

The peace was signed after 40 moves.

After employing the Benoni defense as black against Caruana in one of the earlier rounds successfully, Kramnik probably figured that he would do much better in the structure if he had an extra move. Playing white, the Russian went for the reverse Benoni but was in for a surprise as Caruana came up with some excellent counter attack. The Italian sacrificed a rook for a minor pieces and two pawns to push Kramnik back, and slowly starting out-playing the Russian.



(From left) Boris Gelfand plays against Viswanathan Anand in Zurich on Thursday

MacGill warns that Doherty is not a Test bowler

■ PTI
MELBOURNE

Australia's newly-appointed spin mentor Stuart MacGill has warned the team against bringing in Xavier Doherty for the second Test as he feels the left-arm tweaker is "not a Test bowler" and the move would boomerang on the visitors. "Xavier Doherty is a great guy, but he is not a Test bowler," MacGill, who took 208 wickets in 47 Tests, told *The Daily Telegraph*. "I'm sure he is awesome for the team dynamic and in the past five years I would say he has been in Australia's top three short-form spinners. He is a fantastic short-form bowler, but I don't think Xavier brings that to Test cricket and his first-class record supports my argument," he said.

MacGill said Nathan Lyon, who took four for 244 in the lost opening Test, should be paired with all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, the only million-dollar buy of this year's IPL players' auction, in the second Test starting in Hyderabad on Saturday. "In India right now, we can pick Nathan Lyon and Glenn Maxwell. I wasn't convinced about Maxwell but after watching the one-day games in the UAE (last August), he thinks he belongs at this level, he is working his butt off, so let's give him a go," he said.

MacGill defended Lyon despite the fact that he was expensive in the opening Test. "I am going to ring Nathan before this next Test and have a chat to him. He should be incredibly flattered that India went after him. He was attacked ferociously, but the only reason that they would do that is to try and mess with him," MacGill said.

"If they care enough about you to mess with you, that means they think you're a threat and they think you are a good bowler," he reasoned. "Nathan Lyon got three wickets in the first innings. You only need 10. I would be looking at the shortcomings of the batsmen and the rest of the attack before I look at Nathan.

"I've spoken to Nathan before about this ... when things become tough, he has a tendency to bowl too fast and too straight," he added.

Spin will again play a big role, says Clarke

■ PTI
HYDERABAD

Australia skipper Michael Clarke on Friday reckoned that spin will "again play a big role" in the second Test against India but was non-committal on whether he would go with an extra spinner or a fast bowler.

He felt the 22-yard strip at Uppal Stadium was pretty "similar" to the one at the Chepauk, where they were thrashed by eight wickets. "There are a lot of similarities to the Chennai pitch in regards to the wicket. It looks as if it (pitch) was prepared quite early. It's going to be quite a dry and obviously spin will again play a big part. There will also be up and down bounce. I would be very surprised if India don't play with three spinners," Clarke told reporters on the eve of the second Test.

Clarke's decision to play to his team's strength backfired in Chennai and probably that's the reason why the New South Wales man preferred to keep the cards close to his chest. "Let me have a look at the wicket and then I will sit with the selectors and decide on the XI. I will have to check whether playing an extra spinner will be a better option than playing an extra fast bowler. We want to assess the conditions well and then make sure that we select the best XI," he said.

Clarke, however, clarified that opener David Warner was fully fit and available for selection. The stylish right-hander made no bones of the fact that just like the Indian team is comfortable playing in home conditions, the 'Baggy Greens' are an equally formidable opposition in their backyard. "When you come



(From left) Shane Watson and Nathan Lyon in Hyderabad on Thursday

to India, you know that the Indian team will be very comfortable because they play here on a regular basis. It's the same with the Australian team. We are very comfortable playing in our own backyard.

"The challenge is to make sure that you perform all over the world. Personally, this tour of India is a huge challenge for me as a captain. We have had a pretty consistent success rate in Australia and we want that to happen on overseas tours as well," he stated. Clarke chose to defend Phillip Hughes, who had single digit scores in both innings. "He got a really awkward delivery in the second innings as it jumped off the rough," he added.

Bengal take on Delhi in semi-finals

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Defending champions Bengal would look to continue their winning run as they take on Delhi in the semi-final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

As the tournament progressed Bengal relied a lot on their bowlers, who showed enough promise and grit to take their team to the last-four stage. Led by captain Laxmi Ratan Shukla, Bengal's pace department comprising Mohammed Shami Ahmed and Veer Pratap Singh humiliated Karnataka batsmen in the quarter-final having bundled them out for 127 runs. Bengal's batting woes were addressed finally after drafting in young Shreevats Goswami in the squad. Perhaps for the first time in the

past two years, the openers – Wriddhiman Saha (52) and Goswami (70) – guided their team to a 10-wicket victory against any team (Karnataka). With senior batsman Manoj Tiwary in great form, Bengal would also depend on his experience to register win against Delhi.

On the other hand, Delhi would be missing their specialist opener Shikhar Dhawan, who is in the India squad for the Australia series. Meanwhile, Gautam Gambhir, who has been recently dropped from the India squad for the Australia Test series following poor form, and India Under-19 captain Unmukt Chand will add fillip to the Delhi batting lineup.

Among the bowlers, Sumit Narwal, Parvinder Awana, and Pradeep Sangwan will look to give a tough challenge.

garnering SUPPORT MCC keen to have cricket in Olympics

■ IANS
LONDON

Fresh moves are afoot to have cricket become an Olympic sport perhaps in time for the 2024 Summer Games. The popular Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) World Committee is lobbying for Twenty 20 cricket to be included, claiming it could significantly raise the profile of the sport.

The earliest the International Cricket Council (ICC) can apply to be part of the Olympics is for the 2024 Games.

"The MCC World Cricket committee appreciates that a great deal of effort may be needed to lobby for the inclusion of cricket in the Olympic Games of 2024," MCC said in a statement. Cricket has already passed the first stage of selection when it received full Olympic recognition in 2010.

The MCC World Cricket Committee, which acts as a complementary body to ICC, admits it would cost the game financially but feels the positives of being an Olympic sport can make up for such losses.

"The committee accepts that, were cricket to be played in the Olympics, there would be a short-term loss in income for the ICC, and therefore for dispersion to its members," the statement said following a two day meeting in New Zealand.

"But is impressed with the potential boost for the game worldwide if cricket were to be included."



The Marlylebone Cricket Club at Lord's

Unmukt new brand ambassador

■ PTI
NEW DELHI

India's Under-19 World Cup-winning captain Unmukt Chand has joined the list of star cricketers who endorse Pepsi after the soft drink giant roped him in as its brand ambassador on Friday. Unmukt, who is emerging as one of the most promising cricketers in the country, will now be seen in Pepsi's "Oh Yes Abhi!" campaign focussing on youth. Having led the Under-19 Indian Cricket Team to a World Cup victory last year, he will now be seen in the IPL in April-May. He will feature in Pepsi's upcoming advertisement which will have a face-off between him and MS Dhoni along with Virat Kohli and Suresh Raina.

মাধ্যমিক ২০১৩

পরিীক্ষা হলের পরামর্শ

জীবন বিজ্ঞান

তীকা ও লেখার টেকনিক সহ ১ সেট মক প্রশ্ন

- অষ্টম
- নবম
- দশম
- জয়েন্ট
- পলিটেকনিক
- টেট

৪ মার্চ

সকালবেলা

প্রতি সোমবার

সকালবেলার সঙ্গে

বিনামূল্যে



weekender

Reel Inspirations

To usher in Women's Day on March 8, **Tanushree Mukherjee** picks five powerful female protagonists in recent films



Anne Hathaway



Jennifer Lawrence



Roopa Ganguly



Vidya Balan

The term 'woman' can evoke different images in different people. While some might conjure the idea of the life-giver and nurturer that has conventionally been the image of women in certain cultures during certain periods, for others the very same term can mean an object of sensual desire. With filmmakers both in India and abroad constantly breaking the stereotypes associated with the image of women, it's time to examine some of the path-breaking female characters that have graced the silver screen over the last year. While some of them have fought private battles in a still-patriarchal milieu, others have redefined gender equations. All in all, these characters depicted on the silver screen have given a whole new twist to the term 'woman'.

■ **Shashi Godbole**, the character in Gauri Shinde's film *English Vinglish* that marked Sridevi's comeback to cinema after 15 years, is the ideal example of the multi-tasking homemaker whose inner spirit makes her rise to a challenge. It is all in a day's work for the *saree*-clad Shashi to take care of the needs of her household and also run a successful *laddoo* business. When she is teased for her English-speaking skills after travelling to the US, she enrolls in spoken English classes where she is praised for being an 'entrepreneur'. The issue is not so much whether Shashi manages to emerge a fluent English speaker, but the courage a dyed-in-the-wool homemaker displays in venturing out of her comfort zone to attempt something unknown.

■ The 'very pregnant' **Vidya Bagchi** (played by Vidya Balan) in *Kahaani* left seasoned cops and criminals in Kolkata totally nonplussed when she appeared out of the blue searching for her missing husband and eventually disappeared after nabbing and killing the mastermind behind a crime that was responsible for the death of scores of metro rail commuters. That the lady uses her apparently pregnant status to garner sympathy and help from a wide range of people including hardened police officers is a fact that is revealed at the very end of the film. This character is an ideal example of a woman using to her advantage an apparent feminine vulnerability and emerging a winner, albeit at great personal cost.

■ **Suchismita** in the recent Bengali film, *Abosheshey*, is unique in that she is a character with whom her son gets acquainted through things she leaves behind in death — her paintings, her diary and her friends. Having been separated from her son in her



Sridevi

youth when her husband travelled abroad with their child, she has yearned for his presence all along. Ironically, he visits to settle property matters after his mother passes away. Veteran Tollywood actress Roopa Ganguly delivers a sterling performance as the mother who manages to touch her son's heart through mementos accumulated during her lifetime and left behind in her wake.

■ We have seen several Hollywood hotties including Nicole Kidman and Michelle Pfeiffer essaying the role of the crafty Catwoman in the Batman series. We have come to associate the role with sex appeal and a feline agility (naturally!) as well as supreme intelligence. But Anne Hathaway who plays **Catwoman** in *The Dark Knight Rises* is probably the first actress who endows the role with a certain innocence. That is not to say that the latest Catwoman is lacking in the ruthlessness department. Not only does the cunning cat burglar nonchalantly make away with Bruce Wayne's family jewels while the handicapped man watches helplessly, she gives the baddies a run for their ill-gotten spoils. There might be debate about whether the last offering in the *Dark Knight* franchise lives up to its predecessor and if Bane can compare with the chilling previous villain, Joker. But as far as Catwoman goes, Anne Hathaway takes the cake.

■ The character of **Tiffany** in *Silver Linings Playbook* has been rendered with so many carefully etched shades that it is impossible to fit her into stereotypes of any kind. And that is what probably makes the character memorable in an otherwise forgettable film and helped actress Jennifer Lawrence bag the Oscar for Best Actress. Tiffany is a recently widowed and depressed dancer who has lost her job because she was having sex 'with everyone at her workplace, including women'. But there is none of the wrist-slashing pill-popping melodrama about her that we have come to associate with mental instability as portrayed by Angelina Jolie and Christina Ricci in films like *Girl, Interrupted* and *Prozac Nation*. If anything, Tiffany talks her equally disturbed neighbour Pat into taking part in a constructive activity like dancing but is real enough to take serious offence when he labels her 'crazy'. Yes, we have seen the ultra-feminine Bella of the *Twilight* series transform into a true-blue blood-thirsty vampire and the plucky Katniss Everdeen of the *Hunger Games* hunt and kill to survive. But Tiffany is the woman we all know and can probably identify with because she falls, and often, but has the courage to rise again.

Mixed Bag

Fortune Teller



ARIES

Not a good day to look for romance. Keep a good hold on your intellect and use it to the best of your ability. Set up your next few moves and be sure to play them out in your head before going after the goal you have set. Come up with a few questions of your own and feel free to answer them too. Feel your passions but keep them hidden for now.



TAURUS

Changes are coming your way. Use your passionate side and use these changes to find success and happiness in all your relationships. Keep in mind that you should continue to have a positive attitude toward things also and keep other people's viewpoints in mind. A narrow outlook or negative approach is something you need to keep in check. Try to subdue your emotional outbreaks.



GEMINI

You now enjoy the benefits of your hard work which are starting to yield results. Still, you want to take steady approach, otherwise conflict will arise, especially at home. You may feel the need to leap into what you desire, but the slow and steady approach will prove more beneficial for you. Not only are your temptations high financially but they will also show up in your romantic nature.



CANCER

Stay calm and it will prove amazing for you in your love relationships, in your family life as well as in your career. In just about everything you feel or do, it will seem to be above extraordinary. Your ideas are more intellectual, your choices are seemingly brilliant and your attitude is utterly magical. You will avoid making wrong decisions today. Use it to your advantage. It will not only be felt by the ones close to you on a deep level but you, yourself, will feel the passion.



LEO

You've had your break from reality and are now ready to jump right back into things with both feet. You'll still feel the demands but they will be of a different nature. These will come in handy when you make that big move soon. If you're feeling a bit run down or not quite yourself in the way you do things, it is more than likely that you are overworked.



VIRGO

You tend to let a lot go and it's just not like you to do so. Your desire and passion are not so predominant today. You are becoming frivolous regarding material things as well as your emotional needs, and the needs of others around you. Perhaps it is due to heavy workload or stress from a project you had to complete. Regardless of where it came from, it may jeopardise your relationship.



You may be stressing yourself out with a work ethic that is too lofty for you to want to deal with anymore. Bring yourself down a few levels and you'll feel your desire come back to you. You'll even get a pat on the back from seniors, co-workers or others around you for your added efforts in the right places. Try and spend some time with your partner today.



LIBRA



SCORPIO



SAGITTARIUS



CAPRICORN



AQUARIUS

Perhaps it is time for a change and to float in a new direction. Conflicting situations in your life make it difficult to continue down the same path. Take a breath and step away from such problems. Find a new adventure or go on a date to a place where you have wanted to go for a long time. There is enough out there in the outside world to keep you occupied.

You embody the need for security in all areas of your life. And yet, you're feeling safe enough to shake things up. That's a good sign. The things you have chosen to do come from an emotional rather than a logical side. Security and love from the family are essential for you now. Enjoy the bonds you have formed with family and friends as well as with your partner. You find much fulfillment and joy in this.

It seems as though you are the centre of attention and yet emotionally weak. Touch someone who needs a hug, reach out to people nearby or help a friend who truly needs your backing. This act of generosity will help you emerge as a better person and euphoria will be created within you. Even the daily cumbersome tasks will seem to be accomplished with ease today. An increase in your sensitivity coupled with enthusiasm will keep your spirits high.

Be prepared for an amazing time with your loved one today. He/she will finally stop 'just noticing' you and will take that next step towards romance. Don't hesitate, grab the gold. Feel the passionate energy around you and don't hold back. It's a fine moment in time to express things that you have been feeling and realising lately. This act will surely reward you both materially.

Today is not the right day to seek that bond you've been looking for in matters of the heart. Let things lie and just go with the flow for a while. The wrong move could mean bitter results in the area of love or finances. And affect the investment of your time, money or emotions. Try not to question your feelings. Just be yourself and don't try to conquer the world.

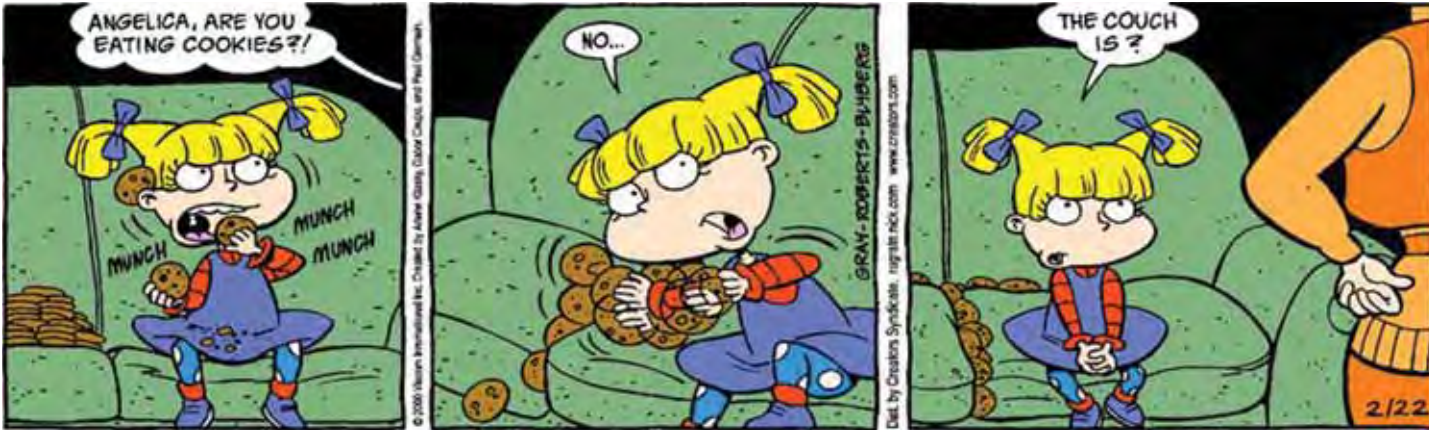


PISCES

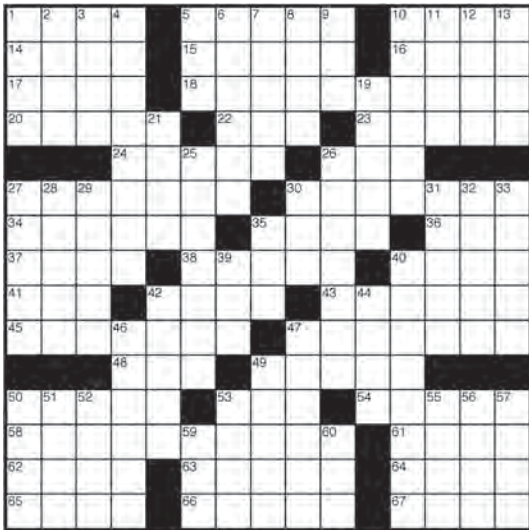
Archie



Rugrats



Daily Crossword



Down

- Gemsbok cousins
- College credit
- Roy's partner
- Doubtful
- Brownie
- Lead ore
- "— Like It"
- Dict. entries
- Mr. in Bombay
- Baseball's "Iron Horse"

- Garfield's house-mate
- Filmmaker — Wertmuller
- MA, BA, etc.
- Dry-heat
- Fiddler of yore
- Reaches
- More agile
- Generator part
- Golfer Lorena —
- Honks
- Part of TGIF

- "The Mummy" setting
- Delhi coin
- Be stertorous
- "Evil Woman" rockers
- Mr. Hammarskjold
- Machine shops have one
- Apple product
- Classical poet
- Mass figure
- Humiliate

- Picasso's name
- Has the flu
- Biting fly
- Home-loan agcy.
- Shore bird
- Dobbin's dinner
- Not a repro.
- Furtive whisper
- Hot drink
- Weathervane dir.

- African antelope
- "Gadzooks!"
- Kind of dust
- equal basis
- Hologram maker
- Ms. McClurg of sitcoms
- Beak
- Art of casting (hyph.)
- Tankard
- Goddess of dawn
- Locales
- Reeves of "Speed"
- Rapa —
- Singer — Flack
- Glove parts
- Spotted cat
- Funny Bombeck
- Outlaw's "must"
- Not we

- Wing it (hyph.)
- Keyboard error
- Comics caveman
- Breezy greeting
- Measuring worm
- Speaking hoarsely
- Fan
- Hwys.
- Grave risk
- Shooting marble
- Herd of whales
- Sag
- Flotation devices (2 wds.)
- Galley movers
- Takes a powder
- Fitzgerald et al.
- Elevator pioneer
- PDQ
- Single-handed
- High NCO ranking

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



Editor's Pick

Food



Green Bite

Discover the greener facet of Bengali cuisine at this all-vegetarian food festival
Venue: Oh! Calcutta
Time: Lunch and dinner



Frozen Delight

Treat yourself to a combination of cream and nutty pistachio icecream
Venue: Gelato Italiano outlets
Time: All day

Art

Sea Change

Hajra Waheed is showcasing a story of disappearance to attain salvation through her paintings
Venue: Experimenter
Time: 3pm-8pm

Brush Strokes

Sunita Kumar, a self-taught painter, will exhibit her



paintings inspired by her close association with Mother Teresa
Venue: The Promenade
Time: 11am-10pm

Ensemble Show

Colour Immersion is an exhibition of drawings and paintings by Atin Basak, Ramananda Bandoopadhyay, Dilip Roy and others
Venue: Idiyas Gallery
Time: 11.30am-6.30pm

Radiant Canvas

Capturing Moments in Watercolour is an exhibition showcasing artworks by Brinda Crishna and Jyotsna David
Venue: The Gallery Gold
Time: 3pm-8pm

Thai Cuisine

Enjoy lip-smacking Thai dishes at this food festival



Venue: Benjarong, South City Mall
Time: Lunch and dinner

Photography

Candid Shots

An exhibition of photographs and images of Jyotish Chakravarty curated by KS Radhakrishnan
Venue: Akar Prakar
Time: 6.30pm onwards

Books

Book Sale

Get exciting discounts on books and other stationery items
Venue: Oxford Bookstore, Park Street
Time: 10am-10pm

Music

Musical Evening

Those Who Could Not Hear The Music is a musical performance, doubly inspired by the life, music and writings of Beethoven and Vikram Seth's novel *An Equal Music*
Venue: Max Mueller Bhavan
Time: 6.30pm onwards

Tribute to Tagore

Sudeshna Basu presents *Rabindranath-er Bhanga Gaan*
Venue: Akhara, Baitanik
Time: 6.30pm onwards

Nightlife

Fun with Music

Enjoy retro, lounge and commercial music by DJ Vikrant, Varun, Chris and Felix
Venue: Underground, HHI
Time: 7pm onwards

Shake a Leg

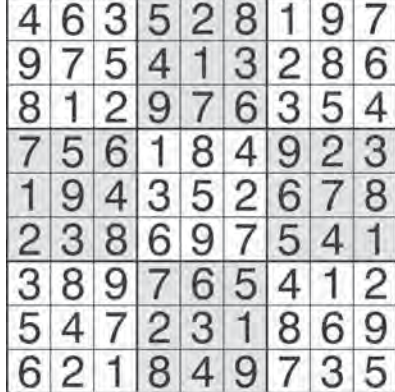
Dance to electrifying numbers with both DJ Ritze and DJ Cas on the console
Venue: Nostradamus Lounge & Bar, Fortune Select Loudon
Time: 8pm onwards

Night Out

Groove to numbers by DJ Nye on the console
Venue: Tantra
Time: 8pm onwards



Sudoku



Open Space



Visual Delight



The Basler Fasnacht (first recorded origins date back to 1356 AD) is held every year on the Monday after Ash Wednesday at precisely 4am with Morgestraich or Morning Parade, in Basel, Switzerland. At four in the morning the lights are turned off in the inner-city, to no-one's surprise among mass of people gathered, and then they are greeted with a boom of drum roll and cheers. Despite the biting Swiss-winter, between Schiffände and Barfüsserplatz, barely a free square inch could be found. Morgestraich – vorwärts – marsch! (Morgestraich, forward, march!) — And what a splendid morning parade it was this year. Without a drop of rain, with lots of people of all ages and social standing, cheering and

walking along with the artistic placards featuring caricatures of recent events which are presented in a wry, witty manner; Freedom of words, freedom of spirit, highlighted with a lot of happiness. Basler Fasnacht is often referred to as "die drey scheenschte Dääg" ("the three most beautiful days"), and so it began this year. Sunshine and clear blue sky, not a drop of rain. The Basler Fasnacht lasts exactly 72 hours and therefore it ends on the morning of the following Thursday, precisely at four. During this period of 72 hours the Fasnächtler (participants of the Basler Fasnacht) exchange music, jam in public, dominate the old town of central Basel, running free in the streets and restaurants, distributing sweets and flowers and in some cases "Bier"!

Photographer
Debolina Dubois
shares eye-catching
snapshots of the
Basler Fasnacht

Overview

Open

Refresh

Archive

Star

Print

New

Reply

Forward

Send

Discard

Screenshot

Send mail to
response@thebengalpost.com

INBOX

WEEKENDER TEAM

The Bengal Post,
Kolkata

To Our Readers,

Enjoy reading about the popular female protagonists and the powerful performances they have delivered. Pilgrimage spots dot the Indian landscape. Jagannath, Ajmer, Vaishno Devi and Shirdi are a few of the spots that pilgrims flock to throughout the year. Sudipta Chakraborty gets candid when she talks about the lessons learnt in the industry. We wish all the ladies a very happy Women's Day in advance!

Readers mail

More mail

Varsha Ganeriwala | Garia

Young designers from Kolkata are being recognised the city and in the country. It was lovely to read about the fashion designers from the city who will be participating in Lakme Fashion Week.

Annie D'souza | Theatre Road

It is good to notice that real life incidents and people have become the focus of scripts in mainstream Bollywood cinema. I hope the trend continues as it has given us many enjoyable films.

Alia Chaudhuri | Dhakuria

I am looking forward to watching Abir act as a professor in his new film. His insights into the character he will be playing in *Hridmajhare* made the interview an interesting read.

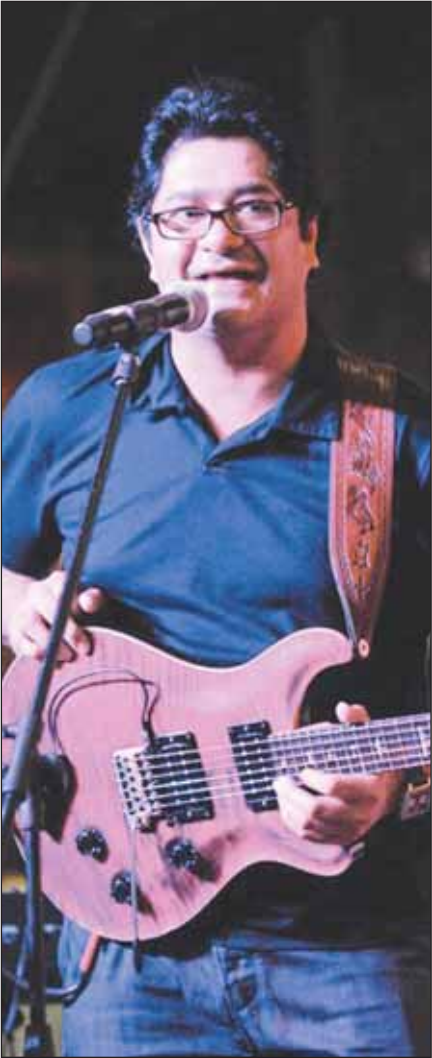
Tina Singh | Ballygunge

Bipasha Basu's interview was funny as she says that she has become the new face of fear in Bollywood and later says that she is very scared of horror films!

Centre Splash

Star Trek

Guitarist Dhruv Ghanekar



Splashing fun!

I recently went on a trip to Thailand, a place that I must have visited at least 10 times in the past decade. The trip happened in the first week of February. I normally make it a point to visit the place once every two-three years.

There is a reason why I love the place so much. You see, the people there are great food lovers just like me. It is absolutely impossible to have a bad meal in Thailand.

Whenever I go there, I snorkel and scuba dive as the adrenalin kicks in and I start feeling more adventurous. I also love to drive, so I normally rent a car and take it with me. I did the same when in Paris, renting a car and driving about 1,500 kms towards outer France. You can only do the same in Phuket. Do not ever try it in Bangkok because the traffic there is insane. It is even worse than Mumbai's traffic. But you see, Bangkok has a good transport system and unless you have time to kill in which case you can hire a taxi and go at a much slower pace, it is best to take a bike when not travelling with your wife. These bikes are also like taxis which will take you at a fast pace across the city.

Our hotel was located in a place from which one can access three of the biggest malls and with the baby on its way, my wife and I went shopping there. I will never visit another mall for the next two years after the amount of time I spent inside the mall. When I am out on a holiday, I make sure that I do not dabble with music at all as it is business. I am already neck deep in music while in Mumbai seven days a week so it feels great to do nothing but just relax. My trip to Thailand could be defined as nothing less than great!

— As told to Ayesha Sultana Mohiuddin



When Smriti Tiwari got married she chose Vaishno Devi as her honeymoon destination. Her explanation was pretty simple — she was just following tradition. “I am a regular visitor to Vaishno Devi and when we began deciding upon our first outing after marriage, I could not think of any other destination but this,” said Smriti. While most people thought that holidays and spirituality did not go together until some time ago, ideas have changed now. Exotic locations are now offering divine deals making pilgrimages an exciting option for people who want a good break. For example, travel portal MakeMyTrip has witnessed a growth in its religious package bookings as compared to that of last year. The icing on the cake however, comes from Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal who in the Rail budget 2013 announced the introduction of more express trains for pilgrims.



Jagannath

The abode of Lord Jagannath, Puri, Odisha is a local paradise for devotees from Eastern parts of India. It is one of the four Holy Kshetras of India the others including temples at Rameshwaram, Dwaraka and Badrinath. The Annual Rathayatra festival in Odisha which is the biggest festival in the city every year is celebrated with much fanfare, attracting hundreds and thousands of devotees. It is said that to see the Lord on the Chariot on that day is to secure salvation from the cycles of birth and death. Apart from Puri the Orissa Tourism Development Corporation has luxury coaches for travellers which go on day-long trips to Konark, Dhauligiri, Temples of Bhubaneswar, Saksi Gopal temple, Khandagiri-Udayagiri, and Nandankanan Zoo.

How to reach there
■ **Air:** The nearest Airport is Bhubaneswar
■ **Rail:** Puri is a terminus on the East Coast Railway having direct express and super fast train links with New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Tirupati etc.
■ **Road:** The bus stand near the Gundicha Temple provides connections to Bhubaneswar and Cuttack and plies every 10-15 minutes. Minibuses to Konark also leave every 20-30 minutes from Jatiababa Chhak. There are direct buses for Kolkata and Visakhapatnam too.



Shirdi

The shrine of the revered saint, Shirdi Sai Baba located 90 km from Nashik, witnesses the devotion of Sai Baba's devotees who start queuing up in the early hours of the day to catch a glimpse and seek the blessings of the life-size statue of Sai Baba. The Land of Sai also has other places of interest that include Dwarkamani Mosque where the saint meditated and slept on alternate nights, the Gurusthan, Kandoba Temple, Shani Mandir, Narsimha Mandir, Changdev Maharaj Samadhi and the Sakori Ashram which are all a testimony of Sai's life.

How to get there
■ **Air:** Nearest airport is Aurangabad.
■ **Rail:** Nearest railway station is Shirdi, on the Manmad-Daund section of Central Railway.
■ **Road:** Mumbai-Shirdi, 296 kms. (Mumbai-Nashik-Niphad-Yeola-Shirdi) Nashik-Shirdi 90kms.

We list some popular



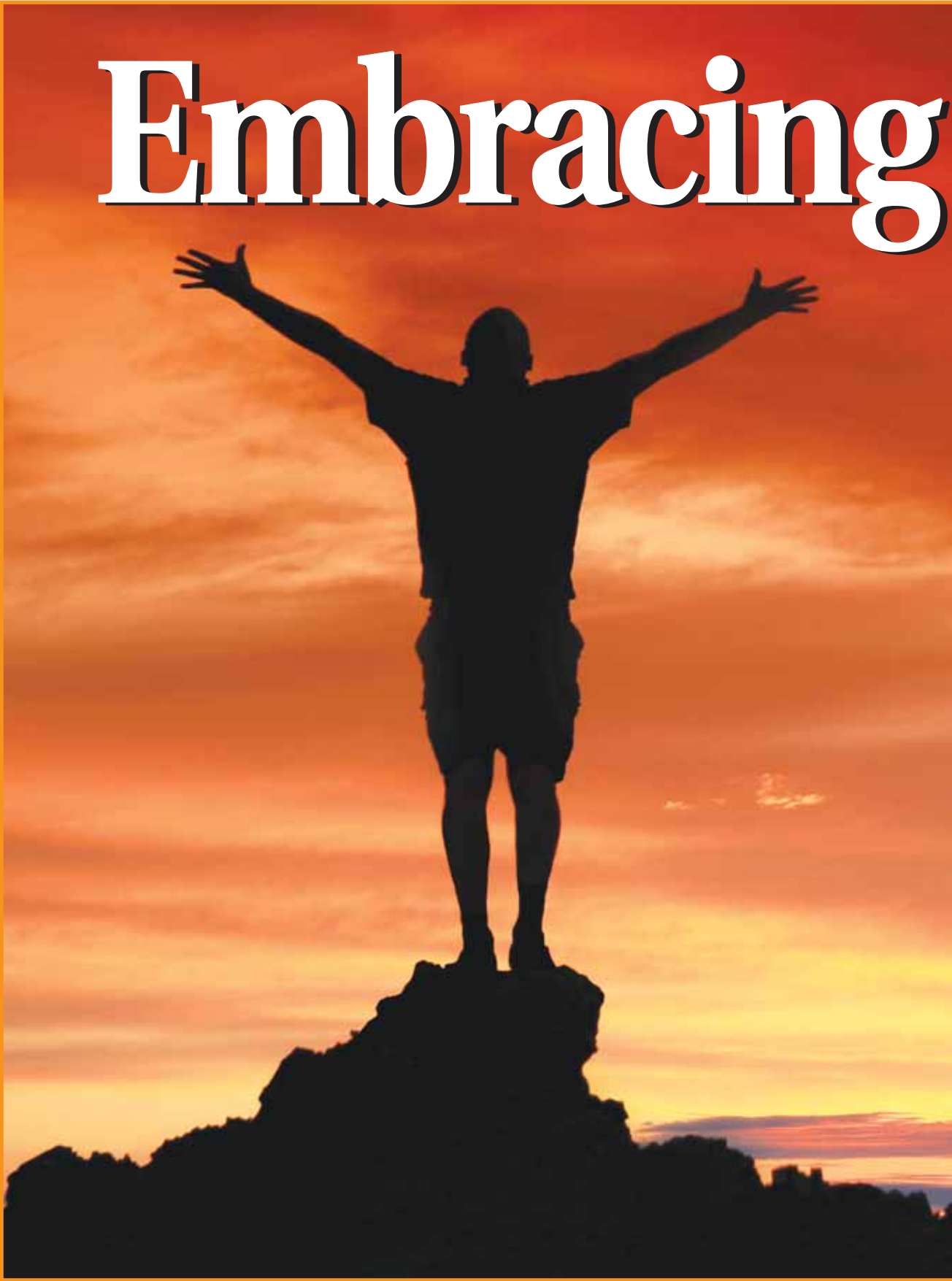
Golden Temple

The Golden Temple, located in the city of Amritsar in the state of Punjab, is a place of great beauty and sublime peacefulness. The temple's architecture which draws on both Hindu and Muslim artistic styles representing a unique coevolution of the two is a place to seek spiritual solace and religious fulfillment. It is the main pilgrimage place for Sikhs in India. Apart from the temple a host of other attractions are also on offer. The testimony to the brutal attack at the Jallianwala Bagh can be explored along with the Wagah border that is just 28 km from the main town of Amritsar. Witnessing the 'change of guards ceremony' at sunset is a spectacular display.

How to get there
■ **Air:** One can avail flights for Amritsar
■ **Rail:** Trains till Amritsar are also available from all parts of the country
■ **Road:** Local buses and special buses are available from Amritsar bus terminal



Embracing



ular religious destinations in India:

Velankanni Church

The shrine, located 12 km south of Nagapattinam on the Coromandel Coast, in Tamil Nadu is dedicated to Our Lady of Health, the Madonna of Velankanni and is popularly known as 'Sacred Arogya Matha Church'. The imposing facade of the church with tall spires and the statue of Our Lady of Health enshrined in the altar is a magnificent beauty to visit. A gala festival is celebrated for ten days from August 28 to September 10 every year and pilgrims from all over the country and even abroad visit the church. The other places of interest are National Arts Gallery and Museum, Fort St George, Fort Museum, St Mary's Church, Victoria Technical Institute and the beautiful Marina Beach.

- How to get there**
- **Air** : Nearest Airport is Chennai
 - **Rail** : Nearest railhead is Trichy, Chennai and Thanjavur.
 - **Road** : Buses are available for Chidambaram, Chennai, Madurai, Pondicherry, Trichy(141kms) and Thanjavur (89kms). Buses and trains frequently run from Nagapattinam too.



Ajmer

Ajmer: The shrine of sufi saint Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti is an ornament of the city of Ajmer which attracts devotees from all communities and across borders. The Dargah lies at the foot of the northern extremity of Taragarh hill. The Dargah that is laden with mughal history includes many other attractive buildings, tombs, courtyards and Daalaans, some of which are exquisite specimens of the Moghul architecture and were erected during the Moghul period. The annual URS attracts thousands of devotees to the city when the shrine is decorated like a bride.

- How to reach there**
- **Air**: The nearest airport to Ajmer is the Sanganer Airport located at Jaipur, which is about 132 km from Ajmer
 - **Rail**: Ajmer junction railway station lies on the Delhi-Mumbai railway line and is well connected to several cities in India like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Allahabad and Lucknow.
 - **Road**: Ajmer has a good network of roads connecting all the main cities of Rajasthan. Many tourist Volvo bus services are available across the cities apart from state government transport buses.



Tirupati

The ancient Lord Venkateswara Temple, known for its elaborate Dravidian style architecture and gold-plated cupola makes the holy city of Tirupati an alluring destination for pilgrims. It is considered to be the wealthiest temple in the world with pilgrim, including celebrities flocking to it throughout that year. Several other temples dot the town and the lush countryside contains numerous waterfalls too. Tirupati is also home to a rare, naturally-occurring pre-Jurassic stone arch that is 25 feet long and 10 feet high, one of the only three other geological features from that age, in the world. The Temple of Seven Hills with its scenic beauty located in Andhra Pradesh is a delight for the ones who love to trek.

- How to get there**
- **Air**: Flights from Tirupati Airport are frequent.
 - **Rail**: Trains from Chennai, Bangalore, Mangalore, Coimbatore and Hyderabad are available.
 - **Road**: APSRTC buses connect all towns in Andhra Pradesh with Tirupati. Also Tamil Nadu public transport corporation buses connect many cities in the state to Tirupati.



Vaishno Devi

Situated in the middle of Jammu, Vaishno Devi is one of the most eminent pilgrim destinations of the state that is visited by millions of devotees. Located at an altitude of 5,200 feet it attracts devotees to worship the Goddess. With better road, rail and airway systems and enhanced security it is one of the preferred pilgrim destinations. The cave temple has been transformed into a proper temple and extended into big multi-storey buildings on the Trikuta Hills having facilities for accommodation and lodging. This attracts devotees all throughout the year.

- How to get there**
- **Air**: Flights to and from Jammu and Sanjichat are frequently available along with helicopter services.
 - **Rail**: Jammu is linked by railways from all the important places in India.
 - **Road**: There is local transport operating in and around the city and also to the adjoining places from Jammu City bus station. One will then have to either go by foot or hire palanquins to get to the main temple after reaching Katra city, Jammu.

Launch pad



Kurkure has launched three new flavours. Punjabi Pizza, Andhra Bangkok Curry and Rajasthani Manchurian are fusion flavours that are popular international tastes that have been given a signature Kurkure twist. Price: ₹5 onwards.

Fusion flavours



Greenways Foods & Beverages has launched, its fruit-energy drink Notty. Enriched with vitamins, the healthy drink for children is both nutritious and tasteful. Price: ₹35.



Usha Hunter fans are available with reversible plywood blades in different shades. They rotate both clockwise and anti-clockwise for efficient cooling in summer as well as winter. Price: ₹11,599.

Stylish cooling



Swiss watch maker Raymond Weil has introduced its new high-end feminine time-piece collection Jasmine, Turandot Splendor. The watch is set with 29 diamonds with a jasmine blossoming at the centre of the dial. Price: ₹1,99,120.



Maybelline ClearGlow BB Stick is a first of its kind in a stick format. The Stick is a combination of a BB cream and an anti-shine powder which leaves a flawless and bare-skin look. Price: ₹250 for 10 grams.

The matte look

g the Divine

With pilgrimages becoming more popular among tourists, exotic locales are now giving divine deals to help set the mood for some fun and meditation...

—Compiled by Farah Khatoon

The flower of luxury

Screen Saver

‘I believe in constructive criticism’



Actress Sudipta Chakraborty gets up, close and personal with Monami Ghosh

First shot: Many years ago when DD Metro had a two-hour slot for Bengali programmes, serials would be of a ten-minute duration. My first shot was for one such serial called *Boka Bou Chalak Chashi* directed by Kheyali Dastidar. I played the role of the *boka bou*. It was the late Jochhon Dastidar's (theatre personality and pioneer of Bengali serials) production and the cameraperson was Sabyasachi Chakraborty. Unfortunately, the serial wasn't aired but I was so much in love with the subject and the character I played that I worked in it again when it was remade and aired many years later by Sabyasachi Chakraborty and Debangshu Sengupta. However, my first serial to be aired was *Nachni*, a weekly series that starred Ratna Ghosal as the protagonist and dealt with the sensitive subject of the stigma associated with leprosy.

First paycheck: I was in the fourth standard when I worked as the very young and demure *boka bou*. Those weren't the

see me on screen again in Tista's avatar. The role of Malati in Rituparno Ghosh's *Bariwali* had won me a national award and immense appreciation. Although, it was a tremendous experience, I don't consider it to be my best performance. Playing Rai in the serial *Nana Ronger Dinguli* was inspiring. My character Rai is unattractive and therefore rejected several times before she marries into a rich family and she binds the family together. I would love to take up this task of bringing people closer in real life. Portraying the character of Bhristi in the first theatre adaptation of author Suchitra Bhattacharya's novel *Kacher Deowal* was liberating. Currently, I am playing Koel in Bratya Basu's play *Bikele Bhorer Shorshe Phool* and I am enjoying it to the core. On days when the play is to be staged, I wake up in high spirits and remain excited throughout the day!

Learning experience: After so many

strategy to adopt. I am a very honest person and I believe in constructive criticism. If I don't like something about someone, I always voice my opinion because I think it gives the person a chance to improve. However, some people can't take it in their stride. Criticism doesn't go down well with them as they mistake it for an insult.

Hobbies: I enjoy writing. I have contributed articles to publications. When I write, I don't consciously condition myself to write either poetry or prose. At times, it can just be a two-line expression while on other occasions, it could be a four page script. I also like watching films, listening to music and interacting with people.

Plans of turning director: No such plans as of now! I have directed television shows. I was the creative and floor director of *Dada Na Didi Gaaner Big Fight*, a music competition starring celebrities, *Purono Shei Cine-r Kotha* and a celebrity

Her various avatars

Goynar Baksho

Half Serious

Hosting a television show

days of paychecks and I was too young to even think about being paid. But Jochhon *jethu* had given my first remuneration to my father.

Most satisfying performance: The role of Tista that I played in Ravi Ojha's *Khela* remains the most satisfying performance till date. Not only was I happy portraying that character, even people who were ardent followers of that serial keep telling me that they want to

years in the industry, I have learnt that being completely honest can make you unpopular. So being diplomatic and keeping what you think to yourself is a safer

talk show. I know how things work on television but I am not ready for the big screen plunge yet. Moreover, I want to learn first by assisting film directors.

Favourite films: I love all kinds of films that have a soul and are not pretentious. Some of my favourite films include *Taxi Driver*, *Jab We Met*, *Kill Bill 2* and *Sonar Kella*.

Upcoming projects: Kaushik Ganguly's *C/O Sir* is ready for release and so is Utsab Mukherjee's *Half-Serious*. I have done a cameo in Aparna Sen's *Goynar Baksho*.

Taking love to the next level



Directed by Partha Chakraborty and produced by Rakesh Singh, *Kkoli* that stars Kharaj Mukherjee, Rajesh Sharma, Tulika Basu, Locket Chatterjee and Ruplekha has begun its shooting. It tells the tale of two friends Kkoli and Shankar who stay in the same village and have grown up together. Shankar serves as a guardian to the fatherless Kkoli as she grows up. She soon realises that Shankar is more than just a friend or mentor. The film revolves around the society's acceptance of such a romantic association. The film also explores the intensity of affinal relationships as opposed to blood ties.



Fashion's rustic edge

Watch out for the maha-episode of *Star Jalsha's Aanchal* this week where Tushu (Sriparna) a village belle enters the fashion industry with the brand Prabha saris and advertises it through television, radio, newspaper and hoardings making it a house hold name. Tushu proves her mettle in the fashion industry by putting together a dazzling ramp show that impresses all, making them give Tushu a standing ovation. This maha-episode will feature on March 3 from 9.00 pm to 10.00 pm.

Mumbai Wrap



Rakesh Roshan with wife Pinky and daughter Sunaina



Dimpy Mahajan



Dolly Thakore



Rajev Paul

The recently held party of the *Savvy Magazine* was a glamorous event with stars from TV and film industry coming together for the launch of their next issue, *I Believe Collector's Edition*, which will be carrying 11 inspirational stories since 1984 in their next issue. Rakesh Roshan's daughter Sunaina was selected for the felicitation for her fight with cancer. *Bigg Boss 6* star Rajev Paul was seen along with Dimpy Mahajan and Dolly Thakore.



Bipasha Basu



The gorgeous Bipasha Basu was recently seen at the launch of Promart, a multi-fashion outlet. A whole range of stylish outfits for men and women were presented on the ramp by city models.



A model presents the collection



Mansi Joshi Roy and Rohit Roy



Abhijeet Sawant

Singer Sonu Nigam's mother Shobha Nigam passed away after battling cancer for a long time. Her last rights were performed on Friday morning with a host of celebrities from the film and music industry dropping in to offer their condolences. Singer Abhijeet Sawant and Shaan, actors Rohit Roy with wife Manasi Joshi Roy and choreographer Farah Khan were seen at Sonu Nigam's residence.



Shaan



Farah Khan



An old picture of Sonu Nigam with his mother in happy times



Bollywood star Abhishek Bachchan was recently snapped at the Wassup Andheri Festival 2013 along with filmmaker Anurag Basu and Vikramaditya Motwane. The annual art and entertainment festival also has a short film-making competition.

Abhishek Bachchan

Vikramaditya Motwani

Anurag Basu

