

Weekender

Twilight saga lacks punch

The latest franchise in the series, *Breaking Dawn*, does not live up to its hype **P8**



World

NLD eyes political comeback

Aung San Suu Kyi's party takes first step towards mainstream politics **P10**

BRIEFLY

Pawar attacker sent to Tihar Jail

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Friday sent the youth, who slapped Union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar on Thursday, to Tihar Jail on Friday. Metropolitan magistrate Jasjeet Kaur remanded 27-year-old Harvinder Singh in judicial custody till December 9 after Delhi Police produced him in the court amid tight security. —P7

Chief minister's mother in hospital

Kolkata: Gayatri Banerjee, mother of chief minister Mamata Banerjee, was admitted to SSKM Hospital around 12.30 pm on Friday. The CM, who reached the city after a two-day tour of Delhi, went to the hospital straight from the airport to see her mother. —BP

Wait for Tendulkar's 100th ton continues

Mumbai: Sachin Tendulkar fell six runs short of his milestone century as India were all out for 482 in their first innings. At the end of day's play, West Indies were 81 for 2. Sachin scored 94 and was out to Ravi Rampaul, caught in second slip by Darren Sammy. —P16

Ramdev responsible for Ramlila chaos: Cops

New Delhi: The crackdown on Ramdev at the Ramlila ground was a result of "entire mess" created by him and he should take "responsibility" for it, Delhi Police told the Supreme Court on Friday. —P6

PM to speak to Jaya, Chandy on dam

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday promised to speak to Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalitha and Kerala CM Oommen Chandy to defuse tensions between the two southern states over the Mullaperiyar dam and find an amicable solution. —P6

CBI interrogates Maderna again

Jodhpur: The CBI on Friday grilled the sacked Rajasthan minister, Mahipal Maderna, in the Bhanwari Devi disappearance case in which he is the key suspect. Maderna was quizzed for about four hours, sources said. —P6

Sensex slides back to 2-yr low, down 163 pts

Mumbai: The sensex slid back to fresh 2-year low of 15,695.43 on Friday amid weak global markets on persisting investor worries over euro-zone debt troubles and slow growth in world's leading economies. Only retail stocks gained. —P12

WEATHER

High **31.2°C** Rain
Low **18.5°C** Nil

FORECAST

High **31°C** Rain
Low **19°C** Mainly clear sky

MARKET

Indices
Sensex: 163.06 ▼ Nifty: 45.95 ▼
Bullion
Gold/10gm ₹28,415 Silver/1kg ₹55,290
Top Gainers
Agre Developers - 20%
Birla Precision - 20%
Exchange
Dollar 52.16 Pound 80.64 Euro 69.42

Hunt on for Suchitra in Burisol forests

Joint forces find bag containing ladies' purse, letters, medicines and newspaper photo of her slain husband Sashadhar Mahato



■ CRPF DG K Vijay Kumar (second from left) with other officers at the site where Kishenji's body was found on Thursday

Subhrajit Chandra

Sabyasachi Roy

Burisol (West Midnapore): The joint forces on Friday kept up their hunt for Suchitra Mahato in the forests of Burisol and found near Thursday's encounter site several bags, documents and an external hard drive — a sign, senior officers said, that Kishenji had other guerrillas alongside during the exchange of fire.

"A bag with more than 100 letters, mostly addressed to Kishenji and written in Hindi and Bengali, two active cell phones, six SIM cards and more than ₹85,000 in cash were found in the forest. There is clinching evidence that these belonged to Kishenji," CRPF inspector general (operations) Alok Raj, a key man in Thursday's operation, said.

The forces also recovered a black

bag containing a ladies' purse, several letters and documents, a 160 GB hard disk, microchips, earphones, medicines and a newspaper snapshot of Suchitra's husband and slain Maoist leader Sashadhar Mahato, sub-divisional police officer (Jhargram) Sumit Kumar said.

"The purse and Sashadhar's photo indicate that she was with Kishenji, but managed to escape," a senior police officer said. The forces also recovered several nylon sacks, mats, mattresses, empty food packets and water bottles from the area and detained Mohit Mahato and Kanchan Mahato, two brothers from Burisol village, for presumed Maoist links.

Apart from the police and CRPF battalions searching the Burisol forests and adjacent villages, four sniffer dogs were put on the trail of

Suchita and other rebels. "We suspect that Suchitra and some other rebels may be sheltering in some nearby village because the forest has remained cordoned off since Tuesday evening. The operation will continue until the entire forest is sanitised," Raj said.

Senior officers, including director general of police Naparajit Mukherjee, inspector general (Western Range) Gangeswar Singh, deputy IG (Midnapore Range) Vineet Goyal and West Midnapore SP Praveen Tripathi visited the site where Kishenji's body was found. Later during the day, CRPF director general K Vijay Kumar, who visited the site, congratulated force personnel for what he said was a "symbolic and significant strike".

He also clarified after talking to Tripathi and various other officials

that there was no confusion anymore about the body being Kishenji's.

He made a pointed reference to rights activists' allegations of fake encounters, saying they always sided with rebel leaders but kept quiet when security personnel were killed. "Are you surprised? I am not. When we die in large numbers it's a fair deal but if we take on the rebels they allege fake encounters," he said. "Our personnel were able to pinpoint Kishenji based on specific information. But we will not share operation details," Goyal said. The search operations would continue, he added.

Meanwhile, Kishenji's body was taken to the Midnapore Medical College morgue from Jhargram hospital for autopsy amid tight security. **See Page 5**

Villagers go about their chores, their houses searched

Sabyasachi Roy

Burisol (West Midnapore): Operation Burisol. It's not really the official name. But the two words sum up the massive manhunt that the joint security forces carried out from dawn to dusk on Friday in the nondescript, typical tribal village tucked inside the Burisol forest, barely 12 km from Jhargram, in West Midnapore.

The forces are convinced that several Maoist guerrillas, including Suchitra Mahato, are still holed up in the village or the adjoining dense jungle. As the brief winter afternoon quickly gave way to the pitch-dark night, the village remained cordoned off. The relentless search was still on.

Located less than half a kilometre from the jungle, where Kishenji was killed in a fierce gun battle on Thursday, Burisol is a small village with 65 households. As the morning fog slowly lifted from the neatly painted colourful tribal houses and the surrounding half-harvested fields, nothing was visibly amiss. It could have been any other day, except for the heavy presence of the joint forces.

Right from the place where a kuchcha narrow path branches out of the asphalt road, all the way to the village, one could see a long queue of security vehicles — around 20 SUVs and at least 30 motorbikes. The whole distance, not more than a kilometre, hummed with hundreds of security person-



Subhrajit Chandra

■ Spent cartridges found in Burisol's forests

nel. While some were searching the adjoining fields and jungles with trained dogs, the rest — armed to the teeth and combat-ready — surrounded the village.

"The home of Kalipada Mahato in this village was a den of the Maoists," said an officer. Mahato is absconding. The tar-painted door of his small thatched-roof house in the middle of the village was locked.

Even as the villagers went ahead with their daily chores, the tension in the air was palpable. Eyes filled with suspicion, they evaded all questions from the inquisitive journalists. Did they really see the Maoists coming to or leaving Kalipada Mahato's home?

"We have never seen anyone like that. If they came and left at the dead of night, how would we know?" said Durjodhan Mahato, a small farmer. His reply was typical. In brief, none of them had seen or heard anything about the Maoists. None of them seemed to be particularly resentful about the presence of the security forces. **Continued on Page 3**

Senior woman reporter held for J Dey murder



Jyotirmoy Dey

Jigna Vora

Mumbai: A senior woman journalist was arrested on Friday for her alleged role in the sensational killing of crime reporter Jyotirmoy Dey.

Jigna Vora, deputy bureau chief of *The Asian Age* was arrested under the stringent Maharashtra control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) for allegedly abetting the crime. A court later sentenced her to police custody until December 1. She was taken into custody on charges of providing Dey's mobile number, motorbike license plate number and his location to mafia don Chhota Rajan, who has taken responsibility for the June 11 killing.

Fifty six-year-old, Dey was *Mid Day's* editor for special investigations, who wrote

extensively on the underworld. He was gunned down near his residence in central Mumbai's Powai by motorcycle-borne assailants. Vora was described as a friend of the late Dey. Crime beat journalists were shocked by her arrest.

As soon as Vora entered the court, her colleagues embraced her and she broke down, weeping uncontrollably. A senior colleague was seen comforting her saying "Don't worry, be bold, we shall fight it out."

Prosecutor Dilip Shah argued that police had learnt during investigation that Vora had passed on vital information to the Rajan gang which resulted in Dey's murder. However, the motive behind the crime is still unclear.—Agencies

TMC leads charge against FDI in retail

Rajesh Sinha

New Delhi: The Trinamool Congress (TMC), a key Congress ally, joined the Opposition on Friday in slamming the government decision to allow foreign direct invest (FDI) in retail. The protests forced adjournment of both Houses for the fourth consecutive day, ending the winter session's first week without any business done.

The TMC led the protests in the Lok Sabha, demanding cancellation of the cabinet decision to allow up to 51 per cent FDI in multi-brand retail and 100 per cent in the single-brand format. The TMC members gathered near Speaker Meira Kumar's podium to protest the decision as soon as the House met

in the morning. They were joined by the Left and the BJP MPs. Carrying banners, the CPI, CPI(M) and the BJP MPs asked the government to reverse its decision.

The House also witnessed demonstrations by Congress MPs (from Telangana region) demanding statehood for Telangana. Congress MPs from the south carried placards, demanding the government table the Telangana bill in the winter session.

The protests created a ruckus, forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House. Protests were also witnessed in the Rajya Sabha where a united opposition demanded that the government reverse its

decision. Shouting slogans, the protesting members created bedlam in the House, forcing chairman Hamid Ansari to first adjourn the House till 12 and then for the day.

The Left parties termed the decision to open the retail sector to FDI as "unprecedented" and said the government should have discussed it first in Parliament.

Outside Parliament, CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury said, "We will not discuss the FDI issue in Parliament unless the government revokes its decision. We will oppose it in the House and outside too." Dubbing the decision "anti-people", he said it would render many people jobless and

spread unemployment.

CPI national secretary D Raja termed the move as "most unwise", particularly when Parliament was in session. He said it was "really an anti-people decision and the government is toeing the line given by the multinational corporations".

Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley said, "The BJP is completely opposed to FDI in the retail sector. Our economy is dominated by the services sector which accounts for 58 per cent of India's GDP. The retail chains in India, both small and big, account for a major segment of this sector. FDI in this segment will have an adverse impact on our growing domestic retail sector." **See Page 7, 12**

Jyotish knows whom you'll meet and where

London: In Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report*, a specialised police department, PreCrime, apprehends criminals based on foreknowledge provided by three psychics called "precogs".

Now, a team of scientists has revealed the possibility of a "pre-social" network — a bit like the PreCrime unit — that would predict where users will go, how long they will stay and who they are likely to meet there.

The team has developed a technology that they believe

could spawn a novel form of social network, which tells its users where and when people with similar interests or habits are likely to congregate.

The system, named *Jyotish* after the Sanskrit term for Hindu astrology, was developed at Boeing's research centre at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

The system was developed to help Boeing predict the movements of work crews in its huge aircraft factories, but

Long Vu and Klara Nahrstedt, the system's developers, believe it can do a lot more.

Vu explained *Jyotish* draws up maps of people's movements by monitoring the connections their smartphones make to Wi-Fi and Bluetooth networks, which have ranges of 100 and 10 metres respectively — small enough to pin down users' locations and thus who they meet.

Vu tested this by giving 79 volunteers Android smartphones whose Wi-Fi and

Bluetooth modems were made trackable.

This detailed log of users' movements and habits can be used to create a mobile version of Facebook that allows people in the same area to create a "hang-out event", Vu said.

"Indeed, this version of Facebook could even recommend that people create a hang-out event because they are likely to be in the same location in the future," *New Scientist* quoted him as saying. —ANI



■ A still from the film *Minority Report*

HC bans *pandas*' entry into Kalighat temple



■ The Kalighat temple

Our Legal Correspondent

Kolkata: A two-judge Bench of Calcutta High Court on Friday ordered a ban on the entry of *pandas* into the *garv griha* (sanctum sanctorum) of Kalighat temple. Authorities have been asked to step up security in and around the centuries-old temple.

The directive was issued after a public interest litigation was filed by advocate Primit Bose against poor maintenance, security and management of accounts at the temple.

The Bench, headed by Chief Justice J N Patel, also asked the Archaeological Survey of India to file a report stating whether the temple could be listed under the category of national monuments within two weeks' time.

"Flower stalls occupy narrow paths leading to the temple. The *garv griha* has also turned into a hell since it is not properly cleaned. Women feel unsafe to

enter the sacred area with offerings during worship at the feet of Goddess Kali with people falling on one another," said the petitioner.

Describing it as a violation of the Supreme Court order, the petitioner sought the court's intervention to stop "the menace" and restore the sanctity of the temple. Thousands of people visit the place daily and donate cash and jewellery. The temple committee maintains accounts of the total income and expenditure. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation had submitted a report to the Bench regarding steps to be taken for the upkeep and security of the temple. They said that closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) could not be installed inside the sanctum sanctorum due to strong opposition from *sevayats* (priests).

The Bench also directed the priests to inform the court as to why they were opposed to the installation of CCTVs.

Special audit soon on transport corps

Our Special Correspondent

Kolkata: The state transport department has asked the finance department to make a special audit on four transport corporations. The idea is to find out the number of employees engaged by these corporations without proper sanction. The organisations include Calcutta State Transport Corporation (CSTC), South Bengal State Transport Corporation (SBS-TC), Calcutta Tramways Company (CTC) and North Bengal State Transport Corporation (NBSTC).

State transport secretary B P Gopalika, told reporters at Writers' Buildings on Thursday that the government had been spending more than ₹40 crore as subsidy to pay the salaries and pensions of the staff of these

corporations. "We have asked them to submit the list of employees since many appear to have been appointed without observing the norms," he said.

The secretary said the government had asked the corporations to augment their income so that they could achieve a semblance of self-sufficiency. He said that his department had sent a file regarding the payment of October salary to CSTC, CTC and SBSTC.

Gopalika said that there was no pending case of pension payment either. But, from now on, the pensioners would have to submit a life certificate and an individual bank account. Incidentally, a section of the transport corporation staff had been agitating over the delay in payment of salaries for the last few days.

Training on robot-assisted surgery from today

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: Performing surgery without even touching patients is not a distant dream anymore. As a private hospital in Kolkata starts providing necessary training in the technology from Saturday, surgeons from the city would soon be able to conduct virtual procedures.

The surgeons will be trained at the hospital located off the E M Bypass with leading US-based surgeon Mani Menon and director of the Vattikuti Foundation acting as the teacher. "We have reinvented the technology as a tool that will add to the skills of surgeons. While a surgeon will conduct surgeries virtually, a robot will translate the actions of the surgeon on the human body following the

MAN MEETS MACHINE

- The surgeons will be trained at the hospital located off the E M Bypass with leading US-based surgeon Mani Menon
- The technology will be such that the surgeon would perform the operation on a video screen and the robot would translate these actions on human



surgeon's hand movements," he said.

The technology will be such that the surgeon would perform the operation on a video screen and the robot would translate these actions on the human body. The

robot has been designed to perform multiple operations and can handle super-specialties as well.

There are various advantages to a robot-assisted surgery, the prime one being that there is hardly any blood loss

and the error rate goes down by a staggering 90 per cent. Since the hands of the robot can rotate up to 360 degrees, procedures like stitching would become easier.

"The training will be done on a specialised basis. The

surgeons are experts themselves but now, they will be assisted by a robot. The training will be given to neurologists first and later, to cardiologists as well," said Rupali Basu, CEO of Apollo Gleneagles Hospitals.

A patient might have to shell ₹1 lakh or more depending on the speciality, for a single robot-assisted surgery. Surgeons said that there is immense psychological satisfaction in such surgeries as the robot performs with precision and perfection.

"The technology is such that even when a surgeon is coughing or sneezing during surgery, the robot would not follow instructions till the surgeon's hands stop trembling," said Mahendra Bhandari, CEO, Vattikuti foundation.

TMCP records a huge victory at Medical College election

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: Trinamool Chhatra Parishad (TMCP), the student wing of the Trinamool Congress, claimed yet another victory on Friday by winning the students' body election of the Medical College and Hospital (MCH) with a thumping majority. TMCP recently posted a similar victory at the Calcutta National medical College, too.

While TMCP won 15 of the 21 class representative (CR) seats, the student body's working president, Shankudeb Panda, hailed the victory as a mandate for chief minister Mamata Banerjee's government and its pro-people poli-

tics. The Opposition Medical College Democratic Student's Union (MCDSA), however, alleged foul play in the polls.

"The election results have given a clear mandate to Mamata Banerjee, whose popularity sustained among the masses," Panda said after the results were declared. He further said that the mandate of students was also against the anarchic elements who ruled the roost at MCH.

MCH principal Utpal Dutta congratulated the students for exercising restraint and ensuring a peaceful election. He also declared the result late in the evening where one third-year seat remained tied. Though MCDSA took the

loss in its stride, it cried foul play because the authorities had barred 18 voters for organising a picnic and claimed the CMC result would have been different had the election been conducted in a "fair" manner.

"TMCP has been winning the elections for a few years now. But then, why do they resort to foul play and why have the authorities connived with the TMCP," asked MCDSA spokesperson Orko Bairagya.

"Our immediate priority after the mandate to our party would be to seek Mamata Banerjee's attention to the problems of general students of CMC," said TMCP state secretary Sujit Shyam.

Bidhannagar fair in the balance over plot issue

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: Question marks hang over the Bidhannagar Mela with the state government yet to allot a plot of land to the organising committee. The fair committee wrote a letter to chief minister Mamata Banerjee on the issue on Tuesday and informed state urban development minister Firhad Hakim to reconsider the government decision to cancel the land allotted.

The committee has been organising the event for the past 21 years. With the state government not allocating any plot to the organisers, the fate of the event hangs in the balance.

A proposal to organise the mela was sent on January 19, 2011 to the state government by the fair committee. Subsequent clearance along with the permission was given on May 28, 2011. "In the midst of all the preparations, we submitted a letter to the chief minister for inaugurating the fair on September 15. But then, after four days, we were informed by the urban development department that we cannot organise the event," said P K Chatterjee, a member of the fair committee.

He said that the committee would not take any legal step against the state government to organise the mela. "We will repeatedly request the state government to give us permission to organise the event. We want synergy between the state government and the people of the fair committee in organising the event," Chatterjee said.

"This is not a fair to facilitate any political interest. The revenue earned from the fair is utilised by the committee for many social purposes. If the government thinks that we need to pay more money in order to get the permission to organise the fair, we will agree," said another member of the committee, Swapan Mitra.

Team of 14 is inspired by Bard's ideas & imageries

Women join hands to pay homage to legend

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: The ideas and imagery of Rabindranath Tagore have come alive on the canvas of 14 women. In an effort to pay homage to the multi-faceted Nobel laureate on the year of his 150th birth anniversary, this group of women have taken up the brush and painted their canvases inspired by Tagore.

Poems, songs, short stories, novels, plays and even paintings by Bengal's Renaissance man inspired them to create their pieces of art.

These 14 women were from various age groups, different cities and countries.

While some of them were based in Kolkata, others came from Jaipur and even Florida in the US. The exhibition, inaugurated at the North Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts, will continue till December 1.

"We painted especially to commemorate Kabiguru and all these paintings have some relation to the poems, paintings, novels and songs of Tagore. Most of us drew on the thought process of Tagore and his ideas. We have portrayed some intimate relations which have been mentioned repetitively by Tagore," said Shyamashree Basu, one of the painters.

The exhibition was inaugurated by painter Sunil Das. "I have been a part of the exhibitions by this group of women for a long time now. I have made a small donation to them so that their art is encouraged and the exhibitions continue through the years," said Das.

One of the painters, Bharati Das, said: "I have portrayed the companionship between two women as sisters and as friends through my painting, Tagore



Poems, songs, short stories, novels, plays and even paintings by Bengal's Renaissance man inspired the group of 14 women from various age groups and different cities to create their pieces of art

Tagore's paintings fake: ASI tells HC

Our Legal Correspondent

Kolkata: Twenty of the 23 paintings on display at the Government Art College to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore at the beginning of the year were not the creation of the poet, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) told the Calcutta High Court on Friday.

ASI submitted the report to the court on an order seeking to examine the veracity of the paintings by experts.

The two-judge Bench, headed by Chief Justice J N Patel, issued the order

has written about many such intimate relationships in his poems and novels. While one of my paintings has been done with acrylic colours, the other one has been painted on a different base."

Most of the paintings have been done using oil colours.

after a public interest litigation was filed by Tapas Sarkar, a sculptor, who doubted the originality of the paintings. The court also appointed a special officer to oversee the matter.

One of the paintings belonged to renowned painter Jogen Chowdhury and the rest to Jayanta Banerjee, a resident of Dhanbad in Jharkhand.

The exhibition was held from February 27 to March 8 at the Government Art College on the campus of the Indian Museum in Kolkata.

The matter will come up for hearing again on March 19, next year.

However, some of the paintings have been done on a plastic sheet and then run on the press.

Along with paintings, there are pieces made with papier-mâché as well.

Sculptures made out of bronze have also been displayed.

Star Shine



■ Fans gather to catch a glimpse of actor Rituparna Sengupta at Park Street on Friday —Prabir Bhattacharya

State ranks second in crime against women

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: Bengal is placed second when it comes to crime against women. According to a report prepared by the National Crime Records Bureau, Bengal, which has 7.6 per cent of the country's total population, accounted for nearly 12.2 per cent of the total crimes against women in the country.

First place goes to Andhra Pradesh, which accounted for 12.8 per cent.

The report also stated that cruelty by husbands and relatives and molestation are the two major crimes which accounted for 44 per cent and 19 per cent respectively of the total crimes against women.

In order to fight the grow-

ing crime rate against women, a mass awareness campaign was organised on Friday outside the Academy of Fine Arts.

The campaign, organised on the occasion of International Day against Violence on Women by Swayam, a women's rights organisation, aims to spread mass awareness on the various crimes committed against women.

It also aims to convert the victims of crime into agents of change. The campaign will end on December 10, which marks Human Rights Day.

A cultural programme was also organised by the group to increase awareness about the implications of child marriage and dowry. There was also a screening

of films on dowry and child marriage. Women were seen holding posters and banners highlighting the importance of education of the girl child and the impact of domestic violence on children.

Kakali Bhattacharya, a member of the organisation, said: "With each passing year, crimes against women such as dowry death, sexual harassment, rape, molestation, physical and mental torture by husbands and in-laws are on the rise. Such crimes are not limited to villages and are often committed by educated people living in cities."

"Moreover, the girls are not getting proper education and child marriages do take place even today. In such a situation, creating

mass awareness is the only way out to limit such crimes," Bhattacharya added.

A number of programmes are also lined up for the coming fortnight.

Next week, a panel discussion on 'The Status of Muslim Women in the Sachar Committee Report: The Role of the Wakf Board and the Minorities Commission in Ensuring Rights and Entitlements of Muslim Women' will be conducted in Metiabruz.

Also next week, on the occasion of South Asian Women's Day, a panel discussion on 'Globalisation, Women and Violence in South Asia' will be conducted at Max Mueller Bhavan.

Maoists call two-day strike in state

Kishenji's body will be sent home, says Mamata

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has said that the body of slain Maoist leader M Koteswara Rao alias Kishenji will be sent to Andhra Pradesh as per the wishes of his family members in the city on Friday. Also, the state has been put on high alert following a call for a two-day strike by the Maoists from Saturday.

The CM, who returned from Delhi during the day, told reporters at Writers' Buildings: "We will arrange for the body to be sent to Hyderabad."

The slain Maoist leader's niece Deepa Rao, who visited the state secretariat and met home secretary G D Gautama, requested the state administration to release her uncle's body so that it could be taken to the rebel's hometown in Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh for the final rites.

Deepa's visit came in the wake of a letter to chief secretary Samar Ghosh, asking for the release of Kishenji's body so that his mother Madhuramma, a cancer patient, could get to see her son one last time after he left home 32 years ago.

Deepa was accompanied by Telugu poet and Maoist ideologue Varavara Rao and two family members Chandrashekhar and Padmavati and Amityuti Kumar, vice-president of the Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) and Sukhendu Bhattacharya of the National Alliance of People's Movement.

"My uncle looks just like my grandfather. So, identifying him will not be a problem," a visibly distressed Deepa reportedly told Gautama. She said that

While vigil has been tightened, the number of security personnel deployed in Jangalmahal has also been increased

while her grandmother Madhuramma collapsed after hearing the news of her elder son's death, her father Anjanayulu, who is also bed-ridden, was equally distressed.

While asking for an appointment with the chief secretary, the APDR letter pointed out that they would want a post-mortem on Kishenji's body to be conducted by a board of forensic experts according to the guidelines of the National Human Rights Commission.

Varavara Rao, who will accompany Deepa to West Midnapore to identify the slain rebel's body, questioned the circumstances under which Kishenji died and said that he and other human rights activists, along with the rebel's family, would move court demanding a judicial probe into the Maoist leader's death. Meanwhile, security forces have put the state on high alert following a call for a statewide strike by the Maoists on November 26 and 27.

While vigil has been tightened, the number of security personnel deployed in Jangalmahal has also been increased. CPI(Maoist) state secretary Akash said the party will also observe a week-long demonstration across the state to protest the killing.



Mamata Banerjee at Writers' on Friday—Rahul Chattopadhyay

Kin deny student's Maoist links, villagers think otherwise

Sabyasachi Roy

Bagsole: While the family members of Dharmendra Mahato, a college student arrested on Thursday for being a Maoist linkman, claimed that he was in no way involved with the Maoists, a number of people of his village said he had some connection with the People's Committee against Police Atrocities earlier.

The joint forces on Thursday raided the home of Dharmendra, claimed to have recovered a laptop bag suspected to belong to Maoist leader Kishenji and later arrested him on charges of harbouring links with the Maoists.

All these allegations were, however, vehemently denied by Dharmendra's mother Chhabi Mahato. "My son never had any connection with the Maoists. He was not at home when the forces raided our house because he was in Jhargram town with his elder sister, helping her with her application for the job of an anganwadi volunteer," she said.

"We have not seen him since," added the mother, who was on the verge of tears.

The Mahatos are a comparatively affluent family of the area. Dharmendra, 25, is a second year student of geography honours at Kappari College. He and his family live with his uncle's family in the same house at Gosaibandh near the Kushboni forest. Dharmendra has two brothers and two sisters.

His mother alleged that during the raid, the joint forces personnel even took away ₹20,000 in cash, "which we had earned by selling our first paddy harvest". Dharmendra's sister Tinku Mahato claimed that "a bag was even seized by the police."

It was a school bag which my brother bought during the Pujas for my younger



Security forces sanitise the area where Kishenji's body was found on Thursday (Top), the commandos after successfully killing the dreaded Maoist in a gun battle—BP

brother. Since he did not like it, my elder brother was using it."

"We raid only those homes about which we have specific information. And, the allegation of taking away the cash is totally false," said a senior police officer, refusing to be quoted officially.

While his family members insisted that Dharmendra had no "links" with the Maoists, several villagers did confirm that he was seen at PCPA rallies and writing slogans for the

organisation during its heydays. Although the police had raided the Mahato home last year, too, they did not arrest anyone then.

Following a specific lead, the joint forces on Thursday afternoon cordoned off the entire area before deciding to search Mahato's home where they found the laptop bag. They boy was then arrested and following further leads, Kishenji was gunned down in the Burisol forest around 5 pm.

NEWS WRAP



Bengal put on high alert following a call for a two-day strike by the Maoists

Slain Maoist leader Kishenji's niece Deepa Rao arrives in the city along with Maoist ideologue Varavara Rao

They requested the state administration to release Kishenji's body so that it could be flown to his hometown

APDR activists take part in a rally the march to state secretariat

Vigil has been tightened, the number of security personnel deployed in Jangalmahal has also been increased

There have been allegations that Kishenji's death was the result of a fake encounter

B D Sharma, former National Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, G N Saibaba of the Revolutionary Democratic Front, Debaprasad Roy Choudhury, APDR general secretary and Sujato Bhadra, interlocutor demanded a judicial probe into Kishenji's death

Villagers go about their chores, homes searched

Continued from page 1

One of the villagers, Durgadasi Mahato, however, alleged that two of her sons, Mohit Mahato, 32, and Kanchan Mahato, 25, were detained by the forces on Thursday night. "They had gone to the field for harvesting with other lads of the village. They have not returned." Soon after, the two were seen being taken away across the field by a couple of policemen. "They are being taken to Jhargram police station for interrogation," said an officer. Suddenly at around 7:10 am a large group of gun-toting security personnel arrived with a couple of dogs, led by a deputy superintendent of the counter insurgency force (CIF).

His instructions were swift and clear. The journalists were told to wait outside the village, and the security personnel to raid every home but not to be rude to the villagers. From a distance, one could see the combat-ready personnel going inside each of the 65 houses, one after another.

The hunt continued for hours. It was past 11 am when the group returned. Nothing had been found, the media was told unofficially. No one arrested. No arms or ammunition recovered.

The forces were, however, seen carrying on the intensive manhunt all across the area, and the village cordoned off till evening fell. Sources said, the operation would continue late into the night.

Death may throw spanner in peace works

Sabyasachi Roy

Kolkata/Jhargram: Kishenji's death in a gunfight with the joint forces at Burisol forest in West Midnapore district on Thursday is likely to finally drive a nail into the efforts by the government-appointed interlocutors to initiate peace talks between the government and the Maoists.

"In spite of repeated demands to withdraw joint forces from Jangalmahal, which was one of the conditions laid down by the Maoists to initiate the peace process, the forces were not withdrawn," said one of the interlocutors.

"At this time it is impossible for us to continue as interlocutors and convince the Maoists to sit for talks. They have lost confidence and faith in the government. Most of us are also not interested in continuing as interlocutors anymore," he added.

"As a human rights activist, we demand that in compliance with the National Human Rights Commission's mandatory directives, 1995 and 2003, a criminal case under Section 302 of IPC be registered against the party which killed Kishenji, irrespective of whether it was a real or fake encounter," said Sujato Bhadra, who has been unofficially leading the team of interlocutors so far.

"We held a meeting on Friday to discuss what should be our position in carrying out the peace process between the government and the Maoists. The meeting was inconclusive and we would make our stand clear soon," said Chhoton Das, one of the six interlocutors.

SNAPSHOTS A DAY AFTER APDR activists come out with rally in city



- 1: Maoist ideologue Varavara Rao with Kishenji's niece Deepa Rao at an APDR rally during their march to the state secretariat on Friday
- 2: Varavara Rao and Deepa Rao with police officers at Writers' Buildings
- 3: A cat and mouse chase between the joint forces and Kishenji came to an end on Thursday when he was gunned down in the jungles of Burisol in West Midnapore. His fellow comrade Suchitra Mahato managed to escape
- 4: A sniffer dog at the spot where Kishenji's body was found

Sambit Saha, Subhrajit Chandra, Rahul Chattopadhyay

Red alert issued in Maoist-hit villages

Our Correspondents

Bankura/Purulia: A red alert has been issued in the Maoist-affected villages with the joint forces guarding the borders of Bankura and Purulia districts to prevent Maoists injured in the gunbattle at the Burisol forest from slipping through.

The district police fear that the injured Suchitra Mahato, the widow of Maoist squad commander Sasadhar Mahato who was killed in a similar operation in March, Akash, Jayanta and other Maoist leaders may enter Bankura district through this route.

So, villages under Raipur and Barikul police stations which are directly connected with the Burisol forest have been put on high alert.

"We have taken enough precautions for the safety of the people. So, we are conducting searches," said Bankura superintendent of police Pranab Kumar.

Security, meanwhile, has been beefed up in the Maoist-affected areas of Balarampur, Bandwan, Barabazar, Baghmundi and Jhalda in Purulia district. The joint forces have been conducting raids and also sealed the border. The SP has been attending meetings with senior officials in phases.

"We have been conduct-

ing routine checks and high alert has been issued in all police camps," said Purulia SP Sunil Kumar Choudhury.

Five suspected Maoists, including a woman, were detained following a massive combing operation that began in the Kushboni forest near the Jharkhand border in West Midnapore district on Tuesday night.

Police claimed that some of them were probably involved in the attack on the Eastern Frontier Rifles camp in Silda, West Midnapore district, on February 15, 2010, in which 24 jawans were killed.

The police also searched the Simulpal panchayat area near the Belpahari border and recovered a 9 mm pistol, 16 rounds of cartridges, few detonators, seven rucksacks and Maoist posters from the Lalboni forest.

The posters demanded the unconditional release of political prisoners lodged in jails across the state and the withdrawal of joint forces from Jangalmahal.

While Suchitra has purportedly escaped to Jharkhand, the joint forces, numbering around thousand jawans, have intensified vigil and more so as the Maoists are expected to strike back to avenge the death of Kishenji.



BRIEFLY

Two men get life sentence

Barasat: Two persons were awarded life imprisonment by a Barasat court on Friday, for killing a person at Kalitala of Kalyangarh. According to sources, Atanu Ghosal, alias Puchki, and Ranjan Samaddar, alias Paltu, had killed Samir Dutta on October 22, 2007. — BP

Man's body found in Nadia

Nadia: A 35-year-old man's body was recovered from no-man's land between the Bangladesh and India border near Kumarinagar under Hanskhali station on Thursday night. The border security forces handed over the body to Hanskhali police. Sources said that there were bruises on his neck and legs. According to local sources, the man was a noted criminal, who came from Bangladesh. — BP

CPM leaders, workers held in protest rally

Hooghly: The Hooghly district Left Front committee took out a law disobedience movement in front of the district magistrate's office at Chinsurah on Friday, protesting against the TMC's torture and price rise in daily items. Around 1,500 CPI(M) leaders and supporters were arrested in this connection. — BP

Woman injured in blast

Basanti: A woman was badly injured in a blast at her own house at of North Bhangankhali under Basanti police station on Friday. According to local residents, they heard the sound of a blast at around 10 am and found Serina Bibi lying in injured condition. Police also recovered two bombs from the spot. According to sources, houseowner, Mujibar Laskar was an antisocial. — BP

Man wants to jump from mid-air flight

Kolkata: A "depressed" passenger on board a flight bound for Kolkata on Friday told the crew to open the plane's door midair so that he could commit suicide, airport sources here said. Bijay Kumar, 49, told the crew of the Jet Airways flight to open the door while it was flying from Silchar to Kolkata. — PT

Fake job racket busted in Howrah

Our Correspondent

Howrah: One person was arrested and three youths were detained by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) on Friday at Liluah Railway Hospital in connection with a railway employment racket.

The RPF said Kumar Dhiman, 44, the arrested person, was a resident of the Belur Bazar area in Howrah. The reported middleman of the racket, Dhiman was held at 4.30 pm when he was allegedly trying to conduct a fake medical test on three youths. He had allegedly promised them employment in the Liluah Railway Workshop.

Dhiman and the trio were handed over to Bally police station

The youths, Sanjay Kumar, Arvind Kumar and Rupendra Kumar, were residents of Mainpur and Bijnaur in Uttar Pradesh. The RPF is also searching for another accused.

Inspector of Liluah RPF, Swarup Kumar Ganguly, said the youths were misled by the racket. They were asked to pay between ₹2 lakh to 3 lakh for "appointment" in the railway.

Dhiman and the trio were handed over to Bally police station. Howrah additional divisional railway manager K K Patra said that similar rackets had been busted earlier also.

Lift restrictions on new industries in hubs: State

Our Special Correspondent

Kolkata: Keen to quicken the pace of industrialisation, the state government has urged the ministry of environment and forests to waive the moratorium on new industries in congested industrial hubs like Howrah, Asansol-Durgapur and Haldia beyond March 2012.

State commerce and industry minister Partha Chatterjee told reporters at Writers' Buildings on Friday that he, along with the state's environment minister, Sudarshan Ghosh Dastidar, had met Union minister for environment and forests Jayanthi Natarajan in Delhi to clear the pending proposals for new industrial units in these regions. "We have assured her that we will look into the environment angle thoroughly before issuing clearance to any entrepreneur," he said. Chatterjee and Ghosh Dastidar went to



■ Metro Railway construction work — BP

Delhi as part of chief minister Mamata Banerjee's team to attend the India International Trade Fair.

Chatterjee said that the Union minister, who is going to Durban in South Africa on December 10, told them that she would look into the issue on her return. He alleged that the previous Left Front government had never taken any initiative to secure the

environment and forests ministry's clearance for the state's industries.

The minister announced that a seminar on 'Rising Bengal' would be held in the city from January 6 to 11, next year. "We want to go forward on the path of fast-track industrialisation in such a manner that investors would certainly prefer this state as an ideal investment

destination," Chatterjee said.

He said the message had been sent loud and clear by the chief minister herself at the interactive session with the captains of industry in Delhi. "The doyens of the industrial houses, including those who had gone from this state, had been very enthused with the manner the chief minister has gone about the job of creating an industry-friendly atmosphere." It was for the first time that the state government had reached out to industrialists to woo investment, he said.

Chatterjee said that he had undertaken a tour of the districts to explore the potential for industry on the advice of the chief minister. "I have already addressed a meeting of the Jhargram Chamber of Commerce and will meet chambers in other districts one by one." He said he would also urge new investors to try and revive at least one sick unit in their preferred district.

Kishenji was killed in cold blood, says Maoist

Our Correspondent

Behrampur: Maoist squad member Saidul Haque aka Idris Sheikh aka Mithu aka Kana Raju, who was arrested from the border straddling Nadia and Murshidabad districts, claimed on Friday that the media and the establishment had been propagating the false news of Kishenji's death in an encounter with joint forces.

According to Haque, Kishenji had been murdered in cold blood through a well-hatched plot and chief minister Mamata Banerjee had betrayed the marginalised people of Jangalmahal by the deployment of joint forces instead of withdrawing them as she had promised before the Assembly election. The CM also did not keep her promise of releasing political prisoners, he added.

Meanwhile, some Maoist posters, saluting the death of Kishenji, appeared on the walls of a polytechnic college in Barasat, North 24-Parganas, on Friday.



■ Jyotipriyo Mallick inspects a ration shop in Purulia on Friday — BP

Govt to buy paddy from farmers

Our Correspondent

Purulia: The state government has already been given the Centre's nod to procure maximum six quintals of paddy from each farmer and pay the minimum support price for their harvest as fixed by the state government, said food minister Jyotipriyo Mallick at a gathering of farmers organised by the Purulia district administration in Hura on Friday.

This had fulfilled the longstanding demand of the impoverished farmers of this backward district who usually fall prey to unscrupulous middlemen. The farmers let it be known that they were really happy this time that they had been paid in cash instead of cheques by rice mills like in the past.

The minister, moreover, declared that the state government would directly purchase paddy from farmers living in the Maoist-affected Jangalmahal area of the district under the strict vigilance of joint forces. For this, as many as nine outlets had been established by the administration in the Ayodhya Hills alone.

Mallick announced various plans and packages for the well-being of farmers to save

them from the clutches of greedy traders as envisioned by chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

The food minister arrived in Purulia from Jhargram on Thursday evening.

On Friday morning, he left for Hura with self-employment and self-help minister Shantiram Mahato, food secretary Sunay Goswami and other senior officials of the food and supply department. There, Mallick was seen monitoring the procurement of paddy at a camp.

"Our government is pro-people and we want the economic well-being of the farmers, who are the pillars of our agrarian society. So, my department would take steps to help the farmers," claimed Mallick in a short speech.

He emphasised that the programme related to the procurement of paddy in the extremist-hit areas of the district under enhanced security monitored by central paramilitary forces from 10 am to 3 pm.

Mallick directed the association of ration dealers to keep at the most four thousand ration cards for each outlet to ensure smooth and transparent functioning of the government's public distribution system.

'Kishenji's death due to rift among Maoists'

Our Correspondent

Suri: The main reason behind the death of Kishenji was the internal feud in the CPI(Maoist), claimed Joydeep Mukherjee, secretary of the Legal Aid Forum, at a press conference in Tarapith on Friday.

Moreover, the Maoists have been sidelined in Jangalmahal since the Trinamool Congress-led government announced development packages for Jangalmahal, he said.

"We have always supported the peace process and requested Kishenji to initiate peace talks with



■ Joydeep Mukherjee

the government on several occasions. But he never showed any interest. Rift between the Kishenji faction and the followers of Akash was the primary reason behind the

death of Kishenji," asserted Mukherjee.

Criticising the actions of Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR), Mukherjee said APDR would be taking out a protest rally in Kolkata in the first week of December. "The options of peace talks between the Maoists and the government had opened up with the help of Mukul Roy at the instructions of Mamata Banerjee. However, the process was purposely stopped midway by the APDR," he said.

"APDR has always been soft

towards the Maoists and they want rebel activities to continue in Jangalmahal," added Mukherjee.

He further alleged that since several Chinese organisations have been helping APDR initiate rebel activity in the state, the rights organisation does not want Maoists to return to the mainstream.

Supporting the actions of the joint forces, he said: "The CRPF was always performing their duties and never crossed their limit. The APDR is trying to put a stop to the peace process between the government and the Maoists."

Prez wishes to see cultural function

Our Correspondent

Santiniketan: Following the wish of President Pratibha Patil to see a cultural performance by students during her visit to Visva-Bharati on November 29, the university authorities have made plans for a 20-minute programme for her.

Earlier, the university authorities had cancelled a planned cultural programme for Patil as she would spend only two hours on campus. The President is scheduled to arrive at 10.30 am and leave at 12.30 am.

Patil is the Paridarshak of the university and would be accompanied by state Governor and rector M K Narayanan.

The President will first visit the Uttaryan complex. Arrangements have been made in front of the 'Udyan Bari' for the President's interaction with 20 students from each Bhavana or department, the respective head of departments and the principal. The President would deliver a lecture before watching the cultural performance.

Sangit Bhavana principal Indrani Mukhopadhyay said: "Though it was decided all of sudden by the university, our



■ Students rehearse before Pratibha Patil's visit to Visva-Bharati — BP

students are happy that they would perform in front of the President. We have arranged a 20-minute cultural programme."

The programme would start with Vedic invocation and then after the vice-chancellor's and President's speeches, students would give a dance performance to Rabindrasangeet.

Mukhopadhyay said: "We have selected five Rabindrasangeet songs to which the students would perform Rabindra Nritya. The songs are on various themes. The five songs are — Dui hate kaler, Jodi Tor Dak Sune, Poush Toder Daak Diyeche, Aji Dakshin Duar and Aj Khela Bhangar."

At the end of the programme, the National Anthem and the Ashram Sangeet would be sung. The President would then inaugurate an exhibition of Tagore's paintings at Nandan Art gallery and visit Kala Bhavan.

After visiting Kala Bhavana and before her departure, she will meet 40 special guests, including former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee and Dwijen Mukhopadhyay, who have been invited by Visva-Bharati.

City traders protest FDI in retail

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: Apprehensive of losing out to the global players in the retail market, small-scale traders of the city have urged chief minister Mamata Banerjee to intervene. While the chief minister had expressed her reservations with the Centre's go-ahead to foreign direct investment (FDI) in the retail sector on Thursday, a plea from the city's small traders reached Banerjee, expressing their fears and disagreement with the Centre's decision.

In a letter to the chief minister's office on Friday, representatives of the Forum of Traders' Organisations of Paschim Banga stated that if big players enter the market, small-scale traders and shop owners would suffer heavy losses. The central government announced on November 24 its decision to relax FDI norms, allowing 51 per cent stake to global retail majors such as Walmart and Carrefour.

They requested the chief minister that steps should be taken to guard the interests of such traders. "Mamata Banerjee has always been against FDI in the Indian market. She had organised a traders' day at Singur where hundreds of traders participated," said forum general secretary Rabindranath Kolay.

He said that it was under the former railway minister's leadership that the 'Krishi O Jiban Jibika Rakha Committee' was formed and Didi fought for the rights of the traders. "We want Didi to hear our pleas and demands and then take a decision. If our demands are not met, then the traders will protest against this," Kolay said.

He said that there are about 45 lakh small scale-retail traders in the city and eight crore in the country, making up about 20 per cent of the population. Kolay said that a committee chaired by Murlidhar Manohar Joshi constituted by the UPA-I government opposed the entry of FDI in the Indian market.

Countdown Begins



■ An artisan gives finishing touches to the dolls ahead of Christmas in Nadia on Friday — Avijit Louis Sarkar

Water pipeline system gets approval

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: The much-awaited Dhapa water treatment plant finally received the thumbs up from the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) on Friday. The decision was taken following a meeting of the members, mayor-in-council, (MMiC) after agreeing on the location for the water distribution pipeline system.

"We have finally agreed on the locations through which water pipelines would pass in the city to supply water to areas like Tiljala, Topsia, the western and southwestern parts of the city and areas

A senior civic official said the project cost, which originally was ₹98 crore, has shot up to ₹350 crore

adjacent to the E M Bypass," said mayor Sovan Chatterjee. He said out that the decision to start work as soon as possible was passed in the MMiC meeting.

A senior civic official said the project cost, which originally was ₹98 crore, has shot up to ₹350 crore. Civic sources said that costs increased not just due to a

delay by the central government but also due to changes in the plan of the distribution network. The pipeline system for this project will pass through areas like the E M Bypass, Mukundapur, Patuli, Anandapur and Ruby till Garia.

This new water distribution pipeline would cost the KMC a sum of ₹215 crore. The civic body had to change its plans as the defence ministry had not given clearance to construct a water jetty at Mallickhat, which was then shifted to Mayer Ghat. The entire project was delayed due to various reasons, including a PIL filed in 2007

by an NGO in the Calcutta High Court that claimed the project would affect wetlands in the area. After the court gave the civic body the go-ahead in January 2009, the NGO filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court.

But since construction had progressed, the Supreme Court gave its nod. The project was expected to be completed by 2010 but now, the date has been postponed to the end of 2012. The mayor said that ₹8.5 crore had already been released by the Centre under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission for the project.

BRIEFLY



National Service Scheme members at a rally in Siliguri on Friday to observe Harmony Campaign Week—B

Gour Banga University gets new registrar

Malda: Shyam Sundar Bairgya, professor in the education department of the Gour Banga University, took charge as registrar of the university on Friday. It is learnt that even the vice-chancellor and members of executive council were not aware of this new appointment. —BP

Minister vows to sort out PF issue

Balurghat: Minister of state for labour Sabina Yeasmin is set to meet the transport minister to sort out the problem of paying the due Provident Fund amounts to North Bengal State Transport Corporation employees in quick time. The minister said this at a press conference here on Friday. —BP

'Congress against Alipurduar district'

Alipurduar: Senior partner of the alliance in power at the Writers' Buildings, Trinamool Congress (TMC), has accused the Jalpaiguri district and Alipurduar sub-divisional units of the Congress, its partner, of hindering procedures of declaring Alipurduar as separate district. The Congress, however, rubbished such allegations. —BP

Fire victims seek rehabilitation

Cooch Behar: Eighty-two businessmen who suffered huge losses in a devastating fire, which broke out at Bhabaniganj Market here eight years ago, met the Cooch Behar district magistrate on Friday demanding rehabilitation. —BP

Language stir gains momentum

Subhendu Bhattacharjee

Cooch Behar: The movement over recognition of Kamtapuri language has gathered steam as the Kamtapuri Bhasa Unnayan Parishad submitted a memorandum with a three-point demand to the Governor and chief minister Mamata Banerjee through the Cooch Behar district magistrate on Friday.

They demanded for the inclusion of the Kamtapuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, recognition of the language as a medium of instruction at least at the primary and upper primary levels with a special recommendation and formation of the Kamtapuri Academy of Language to promote learning among the masses.

The parishad has written that Kamtapuri is the mother tongue of about two crore people of North Bengal, Purnea in Bihar, Goalpara, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, and Kokrajhar in Assam, irrespective of religion, race, cast or sex.

Parishad members contended that these areas have a distinct cultural base thriving on unity and communal harmony of inter-related social relationships based on the language.

Today's temperature

City	Max	Min
Siliguri	28°	15°
Darjeeling	18°	9°
Cooch Behar	28°	14°
Jalpaiguri	27°	14°
Kalimpong	20°	10°

Border alert over Kishenji death

Sudipta Chanda

Siliguri: An alert has been sounded along the Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh borders following Maoist leader Kishenji's death in an encounter with the joint forces in West Midnapore.

Sources in the state and central intelligence agencies said a lookout had been ordered for unusual activity at all three borders. The Assam and Bihar borders too are under watch since the Maoists are known to have expanded their influence in the two states.

Intelligence agencies say Kishenji visited Assam in the recent past and therefore the existence of Maoist support bases in the region cannot be ruled out. A special eye is being kept on the Alipurduar area which saw some Maoist activity in 2010.

Siliguri, which has developed into a conduit for rebels and outlawed ele-



APDR members take out a rally in Siliguri on Friday—Santanu Bhattacharjee

ments in Nepal and Bangladesh, is known to have housed Nepalese Maoists in the past.

The agencies also claim that narcotics trade through the Siliguri route to fund militant outfits is conducted by different outfits entrenched in the neighbouring nations and adjoining states. An extra watch

has been mounted to detect such activity.

While the Sashstra Seema Bal looks after the Nepal and Bhutan borders, the BSF is responsible for the Bangladesh border.

Officials of the two organisations said networks have been activated on Thursday evening along the borders.

FB, CPM to agitate jointly on Nov 29

Our Correspondent

Cooch Behar: The Cooch Behar district Forward Bloc will participate in an agitation with the CPI(M) on November 29 here against price hike and "worsening" law and order situation.

The decision was taken after a meeting between leaders of both parties at the district CPI(M) office where differences between the two parties were resolved. The CPI(M) also said that it would take action against leaders who speak against Left Front allies.

CPI(M) district secretary and district Left Front convener Chandni Paul admitted that at local conferences of the party, some leaders had issued statements against ally Forward Bloc. The party, however, did not support the state-



CPI(M) and Forward Bloc leaders at a meeting in Cooch Behar on Friday—BP

ments and decided that local committee leaders should avoid criticising Left Front allies or action would be taken. CPI(M) leader Dinesh Daku said four local committees of the district had criticised the Forward Bloc in their secretarial statements. "We are now trying to find out who was engaged in proofreading and will take necessary action against them."

At the meeting, which nearly went on for two hours, Paul, Ananta Roy, Pradip Nath, Sudhir Pramanik and Benubadal Chakraborty were

present from the CPI(M) while Udayan Guha, Akkhay Thakur, Paresh Adikari, Debasis Banik and Dioak Sarker were present from the Forward Bloc.

After the meeting, district Forward Bloc secretary and Dinhatia MLA Guha said: "At some local committee conferences, the CPI(M)'s local leaders criticised the FB and so, we had decided not to participate in the agitation by the Left Front in Cooch Behar. However, after the meeting, we are satisfied and would join the agitation on November 29."

Call to revive Gorkhaland demand

Our Correspondent

Darjeeling: Old banners and wall writings saying "We want Gorkhaland" will be seen as the Gorkha Janmuki Morcha youth wing has asked local people here to again put up these slogans. This is nothing but a part of the Gorkha Janmukti Yuva Morcha's (GJYM) fresh start to their agitation for Gorkhaland for which programme would be announced by the youth front on December 18.

"We are asking people everywhere to again put up banners and writings with the slogan 'We want Gorkhaland'. Besides, we are also reorganising our members in various places like we have started out by appointing our new vice-president. We will be doing the same for our units in Teesta and NH-31A and this is all being done as homework for the agitation that we would launch



soon for a separate state," said GJYM organising secretary Siddhant Rai.

"We have already sent faxes to the chief minister, Prime Minister, President among other senior leaders asking them that the demand for Gorkhaland should also be looked upon by them keeping in mind that the talks about the formation of four states in UP is going on," said Rai.

It might be mentioned here that the youth wing has also organised a mass public meeting at Mungpoo on December 18 where they would announce programmes for Gorkhaland. "We will be holding a public meeting on the 18th of next month. But, if we see any development regarding UP, then we can hold it earlier, too," said Rai.

Tea union threatens stir for super staff's wage hike

Our Correspondent

Darjeeling: The Darjeeling Terai Doars Plantation Labour Union (DTDPLU) has threatened to start an agitation if its demand for hike in wages of the super staff workers of tea gardens is not met within the 28th of this month when they are slated to hold a meeting with the Darjeeling Tea Association (DTA) on the matter.

The DTDPLU, which is affiliated to the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, has threatened to paralyse the tea industry if the wages of the super staff (consisting of clerical, medical and technical workers) was not increased by 33% of the gross salary they were getting.

"We will not disclose what steps we might take if our demands are not met. But that has to be finalised at the

TEA INDUSTRY TUSSELE



► The DTDPLU has threatened to start an agitation if its demand is not met by November 28

► The GJM-affiliated body demanded that wages of super staff be raised by 33 per cent

meeting we are holding with the Darjeeling Tea Association on the 28th," said DTDPLU president PT Sherpa.

At the 87 tea gardens that are there, the maximum number of gardens are under the DTA. At present, the technical workers at the gardens get wages between ₹3,000 and ₹4,500 according to seniority or the gardens they are employed with. Similarly, medical and clerical workers

get between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000.

Speaking about the demand of the trade union, DTA adviser Sandeep Mukherjee said: "They should not only make demands as they are an educated lot and drawing good wages. But first, they should be able to fulfill their duties properly so that their subordinates, too, follow their example."

Left Front demonstrates in Balurghat

Our Correspondent

Balurghat: Hundreds of Left Front supporters staged a law violation movement in front of the office of the South Dinajpur district magistrate (DM) on Friday demanding lifting of paddy from farmers at the government fixed price and opposing hike in prices of goods and petro-products. Former ministers Narayan Biswas

and Biswanath Chowdhury and other Left leaders were present on the occasion.

Left Front leaders and supporters took out rallies at various parts of the town during the day and converged in front of the DM's office.

However, things turned for the worse when police personnel present on the spot tried to stop the agitators from moving towards

the DM's office. The demonstrators turned impatient at this and the police were seen advancing towards them with batons in hand. However, there was no untoward incident.

Additional district magistrate Narayan Sarkar said nearly 3,000 Left supporters had been arrested on charges of law violation. He, however, announced their release later.

LF farmers protest

Our Correspondent

Malda: Farmers' organisations associated with the Left Front on Friday held a protest in the district on the demand to increase the minimum support price for jute and rice and against inflation.

Senior district leaders, including former minister Saiten Sarkar and former MP and well-known rival of Sarkar, Dinesh Joaddar, were present.

The leaders and workers courted arrest on the occasion.

Taking a Glance



Women look at paintings by school students made at a slogan and art competition organised by the American Center under the name 'Peace Beyond Borders' in Siliguri on Friday—Santanu Bhattacharjee

Unicef move against child marriage

Manas Roy

Malda: The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has asked the Malda administration to step up its campaign against child marriage.

On Thursday evening, a high-level meeting was held where Paramita Niogi, the state child protection officer of Unicef, was present. Representatives from the district administration, health, police, social welfare department, Nehru Yuva Kendra, Child Help Line and a few others departments and organi-

sations were also present. At the meeting, officials expressed their worries over the recent death of children in the district.

Additional district magistrate, development, Nurul Islam said: "The health department will get more responsibilities to prevent child marriage. The Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers would take care of the task on behalf of health department

because ASHA workers are involved at the grass roots level. The Nehru Yuva Kendra will encourage clubs to raise the issue. Even panchayat-level monthly meetings would discuss the issue."

It may be mentioned that Malda has been identified as the district with the second-highest rate of child marriages after Murshidabad in the state. Almost 42 per cent of marriages in the district

involve girls aged below 18.

A pilot project on preventing child marriage in the district is on with financial help from Unicef and involving the social welfare department and NGOs. The district administration has set up a monitoring committee headed by the additional district magistrate, development, to supervise the programme. Between February and October this year, a total of 65 child marriages were prevented in the district. Eight persons have been arrested in this connection.

Social forum rescues HIV boy in Alipurduar

Our Correspondent

Alipurduar: Alipurduar sub-divisional officer (SDO) Amal Kanti Roy on Friday handed over money, clothes and winterwear to a 12-year-old HIV-positive boy, Laxman Sarkar. He was taken to the SDO by members of Alipurduar Guardians' Forum.

Sarkar, who is an orphan, was diagnosed HIV-positive after he was admitted to North Bengal Medical College about six months ago after falling ill. His parents had also died of HIV and he was looked after by his uncle and aunt. It is alleged that Laxman's uncle and aunt used to torture him and on Thursday, he was driven out from the house.

The boy was found crying

on an empty road in the town and later, members of the forum rescued him after being informed by local people. He was later admitted to Alipurduar Hospital.

Laxman later said that his uncle drove him away after usurping his father's property. "They used to torture me after coming to know about my illness. They even provoked me to undertake a drastic step," he said.

Members of the Alipurduar Sub-divisional Society for People Living with HIV/AIDS visited Laxman on Friday morning and talked to the forum about meeting the SDO.

"Laxman's property will be retrieved," said Roy.

Laxman is currently staying with the HIV/AIDS body.

Minister not happy with uplift scenario

Our Correspondent

Malda: State social welfare minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Sabitri Mitra has expressed dissatisfaction over the status of various development schemes of the district.

Prior to the chief minister's visit to the district early next month, Mitra called a meeting with various departmental heads and administrative officials to assess the overall development scenario here. She was clearly unhappy over the situation.

MALDA

"I have seen lacunae in the working of various departments and I don't want the chief minister to get a negative picture as far as Malda's development is concerned. I have suggested some ways to improve the situation before the CM arrives here," said Mitra.

District administration officials on Friday shared information on the district's development, which they would present to the CM during her visit on December 2 through PowerPoint and booklets, with Mitra and the latter asked them to improve things at the earliest.

It can be mentioned here that the Assembly standing committee on minority affairs, during its recent visit to Malda, said it was not happy with the condition of the minority here.

Pratham Nath Roy, state minister for development and planing, is scheduled to reach Malda on Friday to inspect the situation before the chief minister's visit.

BRIEFLY



■ President Pratibha Patil during her visit to Raghunath Temple in Jammu on Friday —PTI

CCTVs in Mumbai to be set up by January

Mumbai: Seven global consortiums have been selected through expression of interest for setting up the CCTV project in the metropolis by January next year, a move initiated after terrorists struck the financial capital three years ago. Under the project, about 5,000 CCTVs would be set up at 1,200 locations in the city and will be monitored through remote and cable connectivity. — PTI

Five killed in UP road mishap

Mathura (UP): Five persons, including four members of a family, were on Friday killed when a truck hit their car, police said. The mishap occurred at Chaumuha village when the truck, en route to Agra, rammed into the car, they said. All the occupants of the car died on the spot. — PTI

Hurriyat strike hits normal life in Valley

Srinagar: Normal life in the Kashmir Valley was on Friday disrupted due to a strike called by hardline Hurriyat Conference chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani in protest against alleged detention of "minors" for their involvement in separatist activities, a claim rubbished by the police. — PTI

Fencing work along Bangla border stopped

Agartala: Barbed wire fencing and floodlighting on 180 km of Tripura's border with Bangladesh was yet to be completed as the work has stopped after the Union home ministry delayed payment, state chief secretary S K Panda said. The fencing and floodlighting work was under the direct supervision of the central government with the BSF being the nodal agency and the state government only providing logistical support, Panda said. — PTI

Nigamanand's guru sits on indefinite fast

Haridwar: Five months after the death of Swami Nigamanand, his guru Swami Shivanand on Friday began an indefinite fast demanding immediate stopping of quarrying in the Ganga here. Sixty-five-year-old Shivanand, the founder of the Matri Sadan Ashram, said that he would not break his fast until the state issues a notification regarding stopping of quarrying in the Ganga. — PTI

Indefinite curfew imposed in Karimganj

Karimganj: Indefinite curfew was imposed from Badarpur to Bhanga in Assam's Karimganj district on Friday after local people turned violent and burnt down 13 houses following the recovery of the body of a kidnapped college student, a senior district official said. The curfew was imposed from 6.30 pm from Badarpur to Bhanga as the situation went out of control. — PTI

Top anti-Posco leader arrested in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Top anti-Posco leader Abhaya Sahu was arrested on Friday in Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district for committing several offences, police said. Sahu is the chairman of the Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti which has been spearheading the agitation against the proposed \$12 billion steel project by South Korean company Posco in the region. — BP

'Ramdev responsible for midnight swoop'

The crackdown at the Ramlila was a result of the 'entire mess' created by the yoga guru, says Delhi Police

New Delhi: The midnight crackdown on Ramdev and his followers at the Ramlila grounds during their protest against corruption was a result of the "entire mess" created by them and the yoga guru should take "responsibility" for it, Delhi Police told the apex court on Friday.

The police also justified the involvement of home minister P Chidambaram for maintaining the law and order situation at the venue saying that "mala fide" cannot be attributed to him as he was obviously "worried" when the gathering exceeded the capacity and his action was "constitutionally permissible".

"If you have a capacity of 50,000 and it went up to one lakh at the Ramlila Maidan, the home minister will be worried and the Union government is expected to maintain order. Does it become mala fide if



■ File photo of the midnight crackdown at the Ramlila grounds

the Delhi Police commissioner is in touch with the home minister and home secretary?" Delhi Police counsel and senior advocate Harish

Salve asked before a Bench comprising justices B S Chauhan and Swatanter Kumar. He said the organisers of the

event had "not given the correct impression" as to how the situation of chaos was created. "What happened was unfortunate and unpleasant but who is responsible," the senior advocate said while blaming Ramdev and his followers.

"They (Ramdev and his followers) had created the entire mess. The police had gone to Ramdev giving certain reasons as to why permission for holding protest has to be cancelled and why he has to call off his ongoing programme. But he jumped and started running away. Ramdev has to take responsibility. The irresponsible behaviour of those present at the venue were responsible for the so called midnight crackdown. Police were not there to remove the people," Salve said.

Delhi Police was responding to the sharp reactions of the apex court which on November 21 had

asked it to explain the reasons for not waiting till the morning of June 5. Salve said there was a great degree of "bonhomie" between the organisers and the government before the incident which was reflected from the letter written by Ramdev to the Prime Minister on June 2 or 3.

He questioned the organisers for pointing fingers at Delhi Police and said the same force received accolades from Team Anna which chose the same venue for demonstration.

"After his (Ramdev), Anna Hazare's protest took place there. Team Anna was critical of all, except the Delhi Police," he said. Delhi Police explained the circumstances and the sequence of events which formed the basis for using excessive force and lobbing tear gas shells at the Ramlila grounds on the midnight of June 4-5. — PTI

Bhanwari Devi case: CBI grills Maderna

Jodhpur: Sacked Rajasthan minister Mahipal Maderna was again grilled by the CBI on Friday in the Bhanwari Devi disappearance case, in which he is the key suspect. Maderna, who has earlier been questioned twice by the agency, was quizzed for about four hours at the circuit house here, CBI sources said.

After two days of questioning, he was admitted to a local hospital on November 12 following complaints of chest pain. He was discharged on November 18 and agency officers on Friday asked Maderna to appear for questioning. The agency got his medical report reviewed by doctors at AIIMS who are understood to have declared him fit enough to face the CBI questioning, agency sources said.

Besides Maderna, the agency also summoned Maderna's driver, Mohan Bishnoi - the husband of Indira Bishnoi and brother-in-law of MLA Malkhan Singh, one Riyaz, who had been in contact with one of the accused, Shahbuddin, for questioning.

Maderna, who was sacked from the Ashok Gehlot Cabinet on October 16 after his name cropped up in the case, is accused of being involved in the abduction of Bhanwari, 36, an auxiliary nurse midwife at a sub-centre in Jaliwada village, missing since September 1.

Bhanwari's husband Amar Chand has alleged that she was kidnapped at the behest of Maderna, who denied the charge. A CD allegedly showing Maderna in a compromising position with Bhanwari had come to light after she went missing. The CBI has so far grilled several people, including ruling Congress MLA Malkhan Singh, his brother and sister, Mahipal Maderna's wife Lila Maderna and others. — PTI

High alert in states post-Kishenji killing

Our Correspondents

Patna/Bhubaneswar: The death of Koteswar Rao, alias Kishenji, in Thursday's shootout in Bengal's Jangalmahal, appears to have foxed officials in Bihar. Maoists are now expected to hit back hard to avenge his death. Kishenji controlled rebel pockets in Bihar for nearly 20 years.

State police have already sounded an alert. Maoist-infested districts, particularly those falling in Patna, Gaya, Munger and Bhagalpur divisions, have been asked to be watchful. DGP Abhayanand said that central paramilitary forces have been alerted in the bordering districts - often used by radicals as safe havens.

"Though I do not find any reason for retaliatory action by Maoists in Bihar, all the

concerned district superintendents of police have been asked to maintain vigil on rebel activities in their respective areas. We have also alerted officers of the GRP to pay full attention to trains and railway tracks."

Meanwhile, authorities also sounded high alerts on Friday across Odisha for fear of retaliatory attacks by Maoists, a day after top rebel leader Kishenji was killed in an encounter in Bengal, officials said.

A senior state police officer said the security forces have been told to remain watchful, especially in areas which are close to Bengal. Kishenji, who was killed by security forces in a gun battle, was third in the CPI (Maoist) hierarchy. The rebels often retaliate when any of their leaders get killed, he said.

Govt inks peace pact with UPDS in Assam

New Delhi: The government on Friday reached a path-breaking peace pact with a prominent insurgent group in Assam under which the Karbi Anglong hill district will get more power and a ₹350 crore special financial package.

Describing it as a "historic" moment, home minister P Chidambaram said government is ready for dialogue with any group which shuns violence and puts its demands within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

"This is a historic moment...the memorandum of settlement will change the face of the Karbi Anglong district in all spheres," he said in a statement.

Friday's agreement, signed by the representatives of the central and Assam governments and the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) here came at the end of two-year long peace negotiations. Under the pact, the Karbi Anglong auton-



■ P Chidambaram during the signing ceremony of the tripartite memorandum of settlement in New Delhi

omous district council will get more power and the Centre promised a special financial package of ₹350 crore spread over five years.

The UPDS was spearheading a violent insurgent movement in Assam's Karbi Anglong district since its formation in 1999 till May 23, 2002

when it entered into a ceasefire agreement with the government.

"The government has always shown its willingness to enter into a dialogue with any group that is willing to abjure the path of violence and place demands within the framework of the Constitution of

India," Chidambaram said after the signing of the peace pact. Chidambaram also urged all groups in the country to give up violence and come forward to find a peaceful solution to all their perceived problems.

Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi, who was also present on the occasion, said it was a significant moment for Assam, particularly for Karbi Anglong, as the pact would bring peace and development. The home minister said negotiations with another Assam insurgent group, Dima Halem Daouga, was continuing and was near the final stage and the tripartite agreements with the outfit would be signed shortly.

"Talks with Ulfa and the NDFB (Progressive) are also continuing. Recently, we have authorised (interlocutor) P C Halder to initiate the peace process and hold talks with the NDFB (Ranjan Daimary) group," he said. — PTI

All in a Day's Work



■ After a late-night encounter with Maoists, CRPF jawans coming out from the Sataki forest, 45 km from Ranchi, on Friday — PTI

Singh to speak to Chandy, Jaya on Mullaperiyar Dam

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday promised to speak to Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalithaa and Kerala's Oommen Chandy to defuse tensions between the two southern states over the Mullaperiyar Dam and find an amicable solution, said MPs from Kerala after meeting him.

"The Prime Minister assured us that he would take all possible steps to defuse the situation, but advised that an emotional upsurge should be avoided," senior Congress leader P C Chacko told reporters after the meeting.

The Kerala MPs, belonging to various parties, met the Prime Minister at his office in Parliament House for 15 minutes on Friday.

They drew his attention to the fact that the dam is situated in an earthquake-prone area and the water level had



■ Manmohan Singh

been crossing the danger level, Kerala Congress-Mani leader Jose K Mani said.

Several other MPs, including P Rajeev (CPM) and Kodikunnil Suresh (Congress), also urged the Prime Minister for immediate intervention of the central government in the issue.

Panic has spread among the residents of the central districts of Kerala after some cracks appeared recently in the 116-year-old Mullaperiyar Dam in Idukki district, bordering Tamil Nadu.

The dam, though located in Kerala, is under the control of Tamil Nadu as the land has been given on lease for a long period (999 years) to Tamil Nadu. Kerala wants a new dam to be built as it says the existing dam has surpassed its life-span.

The Tamil Nadu government, however, wants its height to be raised, saying a Supreme Court-appointed committee has declared the dam safe. The dispute is pending before the Supreme Court.

An all-party meeting convened by the Kerala government recently had sought Tamil Nadu's cooperation in building a new dam. — IANS

Jihadists in Pakistan are against any improvement in ties with India

Banned Islamic outfits hold anti-India rally in Pak

Seema Guha

New Delhi: A day ahead of the third anniversary of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, anti-India groups in Pakistan organised massive protests against the government's decision of granting Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India.

The move, if finally implemented, is expected to be a game changer leading to booming trade ties between the two countries.

Though this does not come as a surprise, what remains to be seen is whether Islamabad gives in to their demands or ensures that free trade is not affected despite the backlash from these elements. Interestingly, Pakistan granted MFN status to India according to WTO protocol. India had done the same 15 years ago.

The lead role in the Lahore rally was taken by the banned Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), the alleged masterminds behind the Mumbai carnage.

The Pakistani government has so far failed to bring them to book despite India's long-standing dem-



■ Members of Pakistan's banned Islamist groups including Jamaat-ud-Dawa, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba, shout slogans during an anti-India protest rally in Muzaffarabad on Friday — AFP

and that JuD leader Hafiz Saeed be tried and punished.

The JuD rally was held in Lahore on Thursday, while several anti-India terror groups, including the LeT and JuD held protests across the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and in the main city of Muzaffarabad on Friday.

The Lahore rally flagged began from Minar-e-Pakistan, which was depicted as a symbol of an independent and proud Pakistan by former Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Vajpayee had reassured that India wanted a strong and stable Pakistan as its neighbour.

The speakers in the Lahore rally were apprehensive that granting MFN status to an "enemy country" like India, would spell the end of indigenous industry as cheaper Indian goods would flood the Pakistani market. They also blamed India for manipulating the Indus waters. Farmers with tractors turned up for the rally demanding India stop building dams in Kashmir and give to Pakistan its rightful share of water.

Most speakers at the Lahore rally criticised the government for its peace moves with India and declared that no further talks should be held till Kashmiris get justice.

Islamists and jihadists in Pakistan are against any improvement in ties with India.

The Mumbai attacks took place when the new Pak civilian government was showing keen interest in building bridges with India. The attacks led to major disruption in the peace efforts and it is mainly because of PM Manmohan Singh's personal commitment that composite talks were renewed this year.

India-China border dialogue postponed

New Delhi: In a sudden development, the border talks between India and China scheduled to commence here on Monday have been indefinitely postponed.

Officials were tight-lipped about the postponement but some sources said that demands by the Chinese side, which were regarded as 'unacceptable' by India, led to the postponement of the 15th round of talks on the long-pending boundary problem.

Chinese special representative Dai Bingguo was to travel to Delhi for talks with his Indian counterpart Shivshankar Menon to follow up on their talks in the 14th round in Beijing in November last year. Indian ambassador to China, Jaishankar, who was scheduled to be here for the talks, is still coming to Delhi despite the postponement.

The external affairs ministry issued a terse statement

which said "We are looking forward to the 15th round of SRs talks in the near future and the two sides will remain in touch to find convenient dates for the meeting." Dai and Menon were expected to discuss putting in place a mechanism for border management mooted by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao during his visit to India last year. A decision to set up the mechanism was taken at a meeting Wen had with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at Sanya in April.

Earlier this month, government sources had said that India would be hosting the talks on November-end. The dialogue is a three-stage process which started in 2005 with the declaration of the Guiding Principles and Political Parameters.

The mechanism was established in 2003, when Menon was India's ambassador to Beijing. — PTI

BRIEFLY



■ Actor Divya Dutta at the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti shrine — PTI

2 accused in journalist Soumya murder let off

New Delhi: Two gangsters and key accused in the sensational murders of TV journalist Soumya Vishwanathan and an IT executive have been let off by a Delhi court in a vehicle theft case on grounds of several unexplained "inconsistencies" in the police probe. Ravi Kapoor and his accomplice Amit Shukla were acquitted of the charges of stealing a car and using it with fake number plates. —PTI

30 injured as iron grill falls over a gathering

Agra: At least 30 people were on Friday injured after an iron grill ceiling fell over them during a religious congregation in a house. Around 70 to 80 people had gathered at a house in Loha Mandi area to attend a congregation of the Jain community when the grill fell on them. —PTI

Assam, Arunachal to maintain status quo

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have decided to maintain status quo on each side of the interstate boundary till a logical conclusion is arrived at the decades-old border dispute between the two neighbouring states. After the reported encroachment of Arunachal's land by Assam forest officials along the interstate boundary, the district administrations of both sides on Thursday agreed that there would be no further encroachments. —PTI

Nine arrested for fraud in Rajasthan

Jaipur: Nine people were arrested for allegedly luring several people to invest in a multi-level marketing company and duping them of around ₹2.5 crore, police said. Acting on a complaint filed by one of the investors Ram Babu, who had invested ₹3.5 lakh, nine employees of Swarn Yug were arrested from the company premises. —PTI

2 farmers shot dead in Uttar Pradesh

Ghaziabad: Two farmers were allegedly shot dead by some unidentified persons, police said on Friday. Aurag Mian, 75, and his son Shajad, 32, were shot dead on Thursday by the assailants while they were working in a sugarcane field in Badli village. Old enmity could be the reason behind the incident. —PTI

Former BSP MLA's houses raided

Faizabad: Police searched the house of former BSP MLA Jitendra Singh Bablu in connection with his brother's alleged involvement in an attack on a Samajwadi Party leader. As Bablu enjoyed 'Y' category security round-the-clock, a heavily-armed police team drawn from about half-a-dozen police stations and a platoon of the provincial armed constabulary raided Bablu's ancestral village. —PTI

BJP notices to Reddy brothers' loyalists

Bellary: The Karnataka BJP on Friday slapped show-cause notices on three MLAs and an MLC loyal to the Reddy brothers for alleged anti-party activities in backing rebel candidate B Sreeramulu for the Bellary Rural Assembly bypoll. —PTI

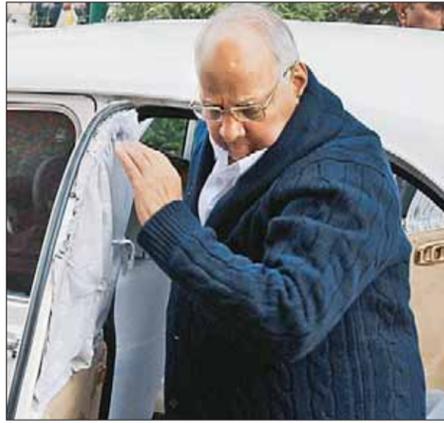
Assault on Pawar strongly condemned in Parliament

New Delhi: The attack on agriculture minister Sharad Pawar saw Parliament on Friday strongly condemn the incident, with several members utilising the occasion to target the electronic media for sensationalism and Anna Hazare for the way he reacted over the issue.

Leaders from different parties demanded stern action against the attacker as Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and Rajya Sabha chairman Hamid Ansari condemned the assault on Pawar at a public function on Thursday.

"People may express divergent views on any issue, but the attempt to cause physical harm should be condemned by the entire House in the strongest terms," finance minister Pranab Mukherjee said. Mukherjee, who is also leader of the House, described Pawar as a senior politician and parliamentarian of long standing.

Agreeing with him, leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj said "no amount of



■ Sharad Pawar outside Parliament House on Friday —PTI

words are sufficient" enough to condemn the attack on Pawar, who has always been "nice and decent".

Amid cries of 'shame, shame', JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav lambasted the electronic media for "showing one slap as 50 slaps by constantly focusing on such incidents and glorifying them".

He lamented that an attempt was being made to malign the entire political class despite the fact that several leaders have spent decades in selfless service. "This atmosphere needs to be changed," he said.

Among those who criticised the media were Dhananjay Singh of the BSP,

TKS Elangovan of the DMK, Gurudas Dasgupta (CPI) and Putul Kumari (Ind), with some of them saying that channels were glorifying the wrong things for increasing their television rating points.

Dasgupta attacked Hazare saying the way he reacted to the assault on Pawar was wrong. Yadav, Kumari and Reoti Raman Singh (SP) also took potshots at the Gandhian without naming him.

Maintaining that Indian democracy was passing through a difficult phase, Yadav said "lumpen elements" were ruling the roost as the political class and democratic institutions were being demeaned and defamed.

The NDA convener, who was repeatedly cheered by several members, warned that if institutions like Parliament are destroyed, then entire Indian democracy would be in peril.

All institutions should observe decency and decorum and not cross the lakshman rekha, Yadav said. —PTI

Man, who slapped minister now in Tihar

New Delhi: A small-time transporter, who slapped Union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar days after assaulting former telecom minister Sukh Ram, was sent on Friday to Tihar Jail by a Delhi court.

Metropolitan magistrate Jasjeet Kaur remanded 27-year-old Harvinder Singh in judicial custody till December 9 after Delhi Police produced him in the court amidst tight security. He has been charged with assaulting the 71-year-old Pawar, a public servant, and threatening him on Thursday, besides trying to kill himself by slashing his wrist with his small kirpan.

Activists of the NCP shouted slogans and blocked traffic outside the Patiala House court premises and even tried to assault the accused later. Singh was remanded in judicial custody after police pleaded that he has become "a threat to society" and should not be released. Singh showed no remorse and shouted slogans like 'Bhagat Singh zindabad, Rajguru zindabad' in the courtroom.

He also said he would want to repeat what he did later, when police were escorting him to the Patiala House court lock-up after the court order, around 25 NCP supporters tried to assault him. The police, however, managed to take him away to the lock-up. Police officers persuaded the NCP supporters, who shouted slogans like 'Sharad Pawar zindabad', to leave the court premises.

The NCP activists blocked traffic at India Gate near the court premises for about 10 minutes but were dispersed by police. During the court proceedings, Singh refused to engage any lawyer to defend himself saying he has no hope from the government. Singh had assaulted Pawar when he was coming out of a literary function at a public auditorium on Parliament Street, claiming to protest against price rise and corruption. —PTI



■ File photo of Sukh Ram outside a court

HC notice to CBI on Sukh Ram plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday sought the CBI's response on former telecom minister Sukh Ram's appeal challenging his conviction and sentencing by a trial court for taking bribe to award a contract to a telecom firm in 1996.

The court also sought 86-year-old Sukh Ram's medical report on his plea for suspension of sentence on health grounds and old age. Justice Suresh Kait issued a notice to the CBI and sought its response by November 28. Appearing for Sukh Ram, senior counsel Arvind Nigam argued that the trial court has convicted his client merely on the basis of "speculation".

Sukh Ram, who had held the telecom portfolio in P V Narasimha Rao's Cabinet, was convicted on November 17 in a cable contract case. He was handed down a five-year jail term by special CBI judge R P Pandey on November 19 and sent to jail.

Referring to the trial court's judgment in which the judge had relied on circumstantial evidence, the counsel stated that the court had ignored the fact that the CBI had failed to seize the envelope in which the money was kept.

He argued that despite some prosecution witnesses not supporting the CBI's claim that six bundles of ₹500 denomination notes (₹3 lakh

along with a visiting card was kept in the envelope, the trial judge held Sukh Ram guilty. "The entire claim of the CBI about the money and the visiting card contained in the envelope was bogus. Neither the currency nor the envelope was produced before the trial court," Nigam submitted.

The lawyer also argued for suspension of Sukh Ram's sentence and his immediate release on bail on health grounds. Claiming that Sukh Ram is on regular insulin as per doctor's advice, the counsel said that the trial court has ignored the medical documents furnished to him while awarding the sentence to the accused.

The counsel said Sukh Ram's wife is no more and his son also lives abroad, leaving him with no one to take care of him. He also cited the earlier high court's order in two different cases, in which Sukh Ram was sentenced to three years each but the sentence had been suspended by the high court.

At this submission, Kait directed jail authorities to submit the leader's medical report by November 28.

Sukh Ram had earlier been convicted in two separate corruption cases in 2002 and 2009 but remained out of jail after suspension of his sentence. —PTI

'FDI will help create 1cr jobs in India'

Our Special Correspondent

New Delhi: Seeking to allay fears about entry of foreign equity in multi-brand retail, commerce minister Anand Sharma on Friday said FDI in retail would not only help farmers but also create one crore jobs over three years, while not affecting smaller, domestic retailers.

The government took the decision after prevaricating for a long time as the move is fraught with great political risk. Perhaps going through the weakest phase, the government faced opposition on this issue from two of its allies — the Trinamool Congress and the DMK.

Sharma addressed the media to explain the government's logic behind the move. "My initial estimates are that it will create over four million jobs in the country and in logistics about five to six million jobs in three years," said Sharma.

He said that the steps taken by the Centre would help Indian farmers "immensely" and would also help in creating jobs in sectors like agro and food processing and bring FDI to build infrastructure. Overseas companies will be allowed to own as much as 51 per cent of retailers selling more than one brand. The government also approved plans allowing companies that sell a single brand to own 100 per cent of their operations, removing a cap previously set at 51 per cent.

Conditions for foreign retailers opening stores include having to invest a minimum of \$100 million. At least 50 per cent of that money must be spent on back-end infrastructure and 30 per cent of produce must be bought from small industries. "In respect of proposals involving FDI beyond 51 per cent, 30 per cent sourcing would mandatorily have to be done from SMEs/village and

cottage industries artisans and craftsmen," Sharma said. This condition would benefit Indian SMEs, especially in sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather and jute, he said. Under the policy, the government would have the first right to procure farm products in its new policy allowing foreign supermarkets in India, the minister said.

Individual states would have to give their consent to allowing foreign companies to open shops, Sharma said, and companies would only be able to establish stores in cities with a population of more than one million. Sharma said that the government would have the first right to procure agricultural products. Citing examples of Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia where 100 per cent FDI is allowed, he said that the move would not impact small and marginal retailers in the country.

Elephant in UP eating away funds sent by Centre: Rahul

Our Correspondent

Siddharthnagar/ Lucknow: Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi who minced no words in criticising chief minister Mayawati and Samajwadi party president Mulayam Singh all through his five-day contact programme in Uttar Pradesh, on Friday said an 'elephant' in Lucknow was eating away all the money sent by the Centre for the poor in Uttar Pradesh.

In an apparent reference to the ruling BSP and its poll symbol, the elephant, Gandhi said that UP has decided to "throw away" this elephant. Gandhi prefaced his attack on the BSP supremo by saying that there is no dearth of funds in the country and that UP can get as much money as required but what is needed is that the funds reach the poor.

He also criticised the BJP and said: "In 2004 (during the general election), the Opposition had launched the 'India Shining' campaign. They can give this slogan as their leaders do not visit your houses, do not eat food



■ Rahul Gandhi

with you."

"It is shining in their houses and air-conditioned cars but not in villages, India will shine only when no poor person is left in the country," Gandhi said.

Continuing his tirade against the BSP, Gandhi said the Maya government branded farmers as Maoists whenever they demanded their rights. He also accused the government of creating a situation where "people migrate from villages to

towns and cities in search of employment".

He promised that the UP government would launch loan waiver schemes for farmers as it considers them to be the backbone of the country.

Hitting out at the ruling BSP's caste-based politics, Gandhi said: "A government which belongs to all castes, religions and sections should come to power in UP. With such a government, Uttar Pradesh would change in five years and in the next 10 years, no one would recognise that it is the same (backward) state," he said.

On several occasions, he called ordinary workers on to the dais and listened to their grievances. In one such incident in Barabanki, he called on stage a worker who was raising anti-Beni Prasad Verma slogans and listened to his complaints. Union minister Verma was present on the dais.

Congress leaders claimed that though Gandhi was not able to attract huge crowds during his contact programme, he earned respect wherever he went.

Sikkim tourism registers 75pc drop after earthquake



■ Tourists at Tashi View Point near Gangtok — BP

Our Correspondent

Gangtok: The September 18 earthquake hit Sikkim where it hurts the most — its promising tourism industry. As was feared, tourist inflow has dropped in the peak season following the quake.

According to data of the state tourism department, a drop of nearly 75 per cent was registered in September. No signs of improvement are in sight as the percentage plummeted further to 84 per cent by the end of October

with tourists cancelling their bookings. Only 9,682 domestic tourists visited Sikkim in October, a drastic drop when compared to 59,582 of previous year. "Sikkim had never experienced such a severe loss in tourism sector," said a tourism stakeholder.

"Bengal alone contributes to around 50 per cent of domestic tourists visiting Sikkim every year but this time, even tourists from Bengal are very less," said another official.

In comparison, the Darje-

eling Hills had more visitors this season. Stakeholders here have cited "political stability" as the chief reason for diversion of tourism traffic to Darjeeling.

Despite severe losses this year, tour operators are optimistic of good returns next summer. "We are hopeful that next year, the number of tourists in Sikkim would be high as post-earthquake concerns would subside by then," said a Gangtok-based tour operator.

However, a few intrepid

visitors like Somnath Sanyal have decided to come to Sikkim despite the quake. "Earthquakes can happen anywhere, anytime, so why single out Sikkim," he told *The Bengal Post*. Sanyal, hailing from Delhi is here, with his entire family for a vacation.

However, there has been an increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting Sikkim. A total of 4,286 foreign tourists visited Sikkim in October as compared to 2,780 last year.

Blackbucks found dead in army camp, Col ordered

Jaipur/ New Delhi: Three heads of blackbucks and uncooked meat were on Friday seized from an army tank repair unit in Barmer in Rajasthan following which it ordered a Court of Inquiry (Col) to investigate the matter.

The remains of the blackbucks and the uncooked meat was recovered from the camp of the 88 Armoured Workshop, which is there to take part in Operation Sudershan Shakti being conducted by the Bhopal-based 21 Strike Corps. "Following a tip off, we went to the camp at Neemla area near Sheo tehsil in the district and recovered three heads and uncooked meat. An army Gypsy was also seized at the spot," deputy conservator of forest in Barmer district B R Bhadu said. He said the blackbucks were apparently brought in the service vehicle and which is why it was seized.

Blackbuck is included in the endangered species list of India and hunting of these animals is legally banned.

A board of veterinary doctors and a forensic science laboratory team has reached the spot to carry out its investigation, he said, adding, no one could be arrested in this connection. Bhadu said a case was registered under sections 9 to 51 of the Wildlife Protection Act-1972. Punishment for offences under these sections carry a maximum punishment of a seven-year jail term. —PTI



■ The heads of the three blackbucks — PTI

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The Bengal Post

"The problem is that when government controls the economy, those who can influence government keep winning, and everybody else just stays the same."

—Marco Rubio
(1971)



Unnecessary controls

It is the same story all over again. The country is headed for another spell of sugar glut unless the government lifts all curbs on sugar exports. With the sugar output in 2011-12 expected to exceed the projected demand by three to four million tonnes, it will be the second consecutive year when the market will have to contend with a surplus. Between 2000 and 2003 and again between 2006 and 2008, a similar surplus situation had hit both the sugar industry and sugarcane farmers. While the industry suffered heavy losses owing to a price slump, the cane growers were distressed because of non-payment of their cane price dues by the liquidity-starved mills. What followed, predictably, was a diversion of acreage away from sugarcane and a fall in sugar output, perpetuating the cyclic oscillations in sugar production and prices. It would be unfortunate if such an adversity is allowed to hit the industry again; although, admittedly, neither the sugar industry nor sugarcane farmers see an escape as matters stand now.

The government's policy of allowing sugar exports in instalments has not helped in adequately trimming the sugar inventories before the new cane-crushing season begins. Domestic sugar prices have remained more or less static for months. The chances of a surge in prices in the near future, too, are slim since the main festival season is over, the free-sale quota for November has been pitched fairly high and fresh production has begun. On the other hand, the cost of sugar production is bound to rise, thanks to an increase in the fair and remunerative price by the centre and a relatively more liberal increase in the state-advised prices. The government of Uttar Pradesh, the second largest sugar-producing state, has jacked up the state-advised price by a substantial Rs40 a quintal with an eye on the assembly elections due in a few months. Such policies, coupled with retrograde measures like continuing sugar levy (which is tantamount to the industry subsidizing sugar for the public distribution system) and a cap on monthly sugar sale by mills, stockholdings and turnover, are making matters worse for the sugar industry.

In their overzealous drive to protect cane growers, ruling party politicians often overlook the fact that the fate of farmers and the sugar industry is interlinked since neither can survive without the other. Nothing is more far-fetched than the premise that, given the freedom, the industry would exploit cane growers. On the contrary, the sugar mills would do everything to keep cane growers in good humour by paying them remunerative prices so that they continue to grow enough cane to feed their plants. The time, therefore, is ripe for the government to totally wash its hands of this sector, giving the industry full freedom to procure cane and produce, sell and export sugar the way it wants. The sugar industry, on the other hand, will be well-advised to evolve a mechanism of paying a benchmark price at the time of cane delivery and determine the final price after taking into account the realization from sugar as well as its by-products, including bagasse, molasses, press mud, alcohol and power, in a transparent manner to the satisfaction of the farmers. If such practices are enthusiastically endorsed, it will be a win-win situation for all players in this sector.

Government curbs on export is the reason for repeated sugar gluts

The artists' artist

Five wildlife filmmakers nominate their favourite living artist in their field



Alan Root on Mark Deeble and Victoria Stone: Mark Deeble and Victoria Stone have produced an unbroken string of great wildlife films, notable for the variety of creatures depicted, the strange behaviours captured, and the stunning photography — but most of all for the quality of the storytelling. Giant crocodiles stalk their prey; hippos open their mouths to have their teeth cleaned by schools of fish; tiny wasps hatch into the extraordinary world hidden inside a fig; a fish opens her mouth to release tiny fry, not realising she has been cuckolded, and they are someone else's young. They have brought so many new, extraordinary sequences to the screen, all of them woven into deeply satisfying stories. And that, for me, is the *raison d'être* for film-making.

(Alan Root's 1978 film about termites, *Mysterious Castles of Clay*, was nominated for an Oscar.)

Gavin Thurston on Martin Dohrn: Dohrn's technical innovations are inspiring. The lens systems he designs and builds might look very Heath Robinson, with all their buttons and dials, but they serve a purpose: they have allowed us to see new behaviours in the wild. Using military technology, he came up with the Starlight Camera, allowing him to capture animal behaviour in the wild in complete darkness, for a film called *Mara Nights*, shot in a Kenyan national park. As soon as you turn a light on, nocturnal animals change their behaviour. But film in the dark and you'll see things you'd never normally witness.

Film cameras are generally so huge, you can't follow something such as an ant. So he built a miniature one, called an "ant cam", that lets you shoot at

knee level. It was like having a camera in a tiny helicopter. Rather than being stuck in one position, suddenly you could do tracking shots around army ants, or follow them through the rainforests of central America.

(Gavin Thurston worked on the BBC's *Life in Cold Blood* and *Planet Earth*.)
Sophie Darlington on Doug Allan: Allan is one of those people who goes beyond the call of duty. The results are extraordinary and inspiring. He did a lot of work on *Blue Planet* and *Frozen Planet*. When he became one of the first cameramen to dive under the Arctic ice, I thought: "I couldn't do that." He brought us images we'd never seen before: his footage of sea stars feeding under the ice was not only beautiful but a revelation, too. It showed the seabed as such a hostile environment.

One of his standout sequences is of a polar bear trying to capture beluga whales in *Blue Planet*. It is extraordinary, in such extreme conditions, to capture this kind of behaviour: their scars; the bear's jump. It's never been filmed before. But then he's always pushing his work to the next level. He has filmed polar bears and killer whales a number of times, actually, but each time he goes back he will use a new technique, or look for new behaviour, so his work's always fresh.

(Sophie Darlington has worked for the BBC, National Geographic and the Discovery Channel.)

Charlie Hamilton James on Hugh Miles: I was nine when I saw Miles's *On the Tracks of the Wild Otter*. It changed my life. It didn't just turn me into a cameraman, it made me an otter-obsessive. The best wildlife cam-

eramen put in a huge amount of time, and he puts in more than just about anybody — to the point where the animals trust him. He is profoundly patient. Sometimes his films take years to make. With that patience come those amazing moments other people would miss. He filmed polar bear cubs emerging from their den in the Arctic: to get shots like that takes weeks of waiting — in freezing conditions. And when those moments finally happen, he has the skill and level-headedness to film them beautifully.

(Charlie Hamilton James's films include *My Halcyon River* for the BBC.)
Doug Allan on Alastair MacEwen: MacEwen shoots in all kinds of ways: he can do long lens work, say, in the African savannahs, as well as macro footage, close-up stuff like insects, rats and mice. Unless you're working in the desert, you just don't see animals like that scurrying around, so you need to build sets. That takes skill: you need to look after your animal so it accepts your set as its natural environment and will carry on displaying the behaviour you want. He is very good at building — and lighting — sets.

He has been principal cameraman on a lot of David Attenborough series. I remember he filmed some archer fish in the Amazon that use spit to shoot insects off branches and down into the water. It was covered from lots of different angles — and in slow motion. He is quite a technical man. He takes the latest technology, wrestles it to the ground, and comes back with amazing pictures.

(Doug Allan worked on BBC's *Blue Planet* and *Frozen Planet*.)

—The Guardian

Cuisine Calypso

Gourmet salt

Mina Holland

It has emerged that most "gourmet" salts are nearly 100 per cent sodium chloride, just like regular table salt. Fascinating stuff. Didn't we already know that? Despite my indifference to the news, I've found it interesting to see how the study by Cash (Consensus Action on Salt and Health) and consumer watchdog Which? has been presented.

The study has revealed that the likes of Maldon and Tidman's is not only as potentially harmful in excess as plebeian Saxa, but costs 46 per cent more, with celebrity chefs blamed for glamorising their use. The report implies that consumers are being duped into spending extra money in the belief that sea and rock salt have added health benefits to table salt. But a glance at, for example, the Maldon website shows that while they state they're "completely natural and free from artificial additives", they don't purport to being less harmful (unlike their low sodium counterparts such as Lo-Salt). Sea salt flakes are, quite simply, free from artificial anti-caking agents used in table salt that make it flow freely from its container (and, incidentally, are also said to carry health risks).

The 28 per cent of Which? members who think rock and sea salts to be a healthier option clearly need to learn that language like "natural" and "minerals" doesn't mean "healthy" or "slimming". The report is obviously missing the point for sea- and natural rock-salt lovers. It's never been claimed that majority of people who use gourmet salt do so for health reasons, and in fact if you look at the figures from another perspective they demonstrate that most people don't think it's less unhealthy. There are myriad reasons why cooks choose it over cheap table salt. Variety is one: sea salt crystals for example naturally come in all shapes and sizes, and smoked and even herby versions are manufactured.

So why else do we love gourmet salt? Well, it tastes better. Its chemical make-up may be similar to Saxa (although each differs, Zauber der Gewürze fleur de sel for example is only 91.5 per cent sodium chloride), but there's a wholeness that's lacking elsewhere: it's flavour is consistent and doesn't fade into the bitter aftertaste of table salt. Almost as important as taste, though, is the experience of using certain ingredients that makes cooking — for those who love it — so wonderful. I love the impulsiveness of measuring it out by hand, the crunch between the fingers, the sense of live culinary instinct as you throw it into a pan. And then there's the way it looks — salt flakes are beautiful. Who'd choose to top their salad with dodgy looking white powder over these gleaming savoury flecks?

It also strikes me that much of the criticism meted out to celebrity chefs — specifically Jamie Oliver and Rick Stein — is unfair, and I quote Cash's chairman: "It is disgraceful that chefs still encourage people to use so much sea and rock salt." Chefs may err on the liberal side when it comes to salt, but why the disproportionate blame placed on celebrities and premium products when, actually, there are much bigger sodium issues out there like the astronomical popularity of fast food? It might also be worth recognising Jamie's efforts to change the way we eat. Salt of the earth, you might say.

I'll admit to being more liberal with gourmet salt as a table or finishing salt than I might be with a shaker of Saxa, but what about you? Do you stick to the cheap stuff, the expensive stuff, or have several types of salt in the kitchen? —The Guardian

Learning to breath where the air is always thin

Nikhil Roshan

Eight in the evening. It had just stopped snowing a couple of hours ago. The sky had cleared and a bright half-moon was out, casting a deep blue hue over our white night. We had sat in the hut and watched from the window as the snow fell all morning. And when it showed no signs of letting up by afternoon, we began to worry about friends who must have been making their way back from the glacier. We'd had terrible weather the last two days and it only seemed to be getting worse.

A handful of us had decided to stay back at base camp for various reasons — due to exhaustion from the previous day's activities or due to trouble acclimatising, or simply to sit still and stare out at the snow. My excuse was a combination of all three. I had woken up that morning with a throbbing head, a common ailment caused by high altitude. We had ascended about 2700 metres in a matter of 3 days and it was going to take a while getting used to the rarified air and the harsh glare of snow of the outer Himalayas of western Sikkim.

The previous day, I had come in from the cold, dazed by the near-blizzard situation, with snow crusted on my beard. It had been our first experience of Rathong glacier, birthplace of the Rathong Chu river and a natural phenomenon that I would come to dread the sound of over the next week. 'Glacier days' we called them. This icy monster that had receded considerably away from our base camp — as some of our older instructors had witnessed with concern over the last few decades — now lay at a distance of about two kilometers from it.

Our first glacier day began on a clear note. A steep climb up from camp led to a grassy patch with rocks and poles of colourful, Buddhist prayer flags. (On the way to the glacier on our coldest day there, the flags had frozen over and hung ominously grey and still.) From here on, it was a more or less a flat walk along a brown, grassy path until we got to a small frozen lake, along the banks of which lay huge boulders that were easy enough to cross over if it weren't for our



supremely uncomfortable, heavy snow-boots, and the soon-to-descend snow. Once past the lake and a few breathless, rocky, ups and downs, and ups again, an icy wilderness opened out. We walked towards it, as the landscape changed. Rock smoothed out into ice formations that curled into walls and hung as icicles that broke with a glassy clink as we ran our hands through them.

Ice axes in hand, crampons strapped on to boots and harnesses worn, we were divided into groups of eight, linked to one another by a 50 foot long rope. On the way to the glacier we marched, led by our instructors. Snow-covered peaks well over 15000 feet towered all around us, drifting clouds momentarily revealing their crests. But as we walked further on to the glacier, the blue sky began to disappear and we were surrounded by

clouds and snow. Gasping in the thin air, some of us stopped frequently. A tug on the rope came, sometimes pulling from ahead, sometimes arresting from the back. A Sherpa who had already climbed the Everest thrice, but was doing this mountaineering programme with us simply for the certification, seemed to come into his own as conditions grew harsher. He was asked to lead, and as we struggled to keep up, he forged on to the toughest reaches of the glacier like Don Quixote in a down jacket.

Being 'roped in' is a strange experience. One ought to keep up with the rest of his group, but be patient with those who cannot. The former commandment was drilled into us with a constant reminder that there was no kinship on the mountains. It was each man for himself. The mountains are indeed a great

test of character. But they are also levelers. A couple of days trekking and one soon realizes the competition is with oneself. We began to talk to ourselves, introspect.

The snow came down harder and the engulfing blankness was beginning to have a lulling effect on my senses. Though attentive while jumping over crevasses and watery ditches, my thoughts began to drift. It's the sounds that stayed with me. Heavy breathing, people shouting out instructions to one another, crampons grinding into ice — and occasionally against bare rock, ice-axes hanging loose in tired hands and clinking against boots, and the whistle of the rope as it uncoiled in our mittens.

On our way up to the base camp, we crossed Dzongri where the trees end with an expanse of rhododendron fol-



lowed by large meadows that slope upward till the mountain pass, Dzongri La, a frontier of sorts. While trudging along paths along high ridges, the slightest turns would alter the gurgling sound of the river flowing through the valley down below. And then there were the songs. While walking we sang quite a bit to keep our morale high and to distract us from the exhaustion. Evenings at the camp were spent playing cards, dumb charades, chess, and some dancing as well. *Resam piri-ri*, a nepali folk song was a constant refrain at those heights. But a highlight for some of us were evenings spent reading out particular bits of Shakespeare. Episodes with the three witches in *Macbeth* were recontextualised in preparation for a cultural night we were promised at the end of the course.

Alas, the night never came, but for those who expected a show, let it be known that Macbeth, in our reimagining, was a diarrhoea-ridden mountaineer who falls into a crevasse and is fed with ambition of climbing from peak to peak by witches with Tamil, French and Bengali accents. It would have been something.

Stooping under a load well over 20 kilograms on my back while trekking, I remembered how the German filmmaker Werner Herzog had written *Of Walking in Ice* about a journey he undertook on foot from Munich to Paris in the height of winter as an act of sacrifice for an ailing friend. At the risk sounding self-indulgent, I confess, I romanticized my own walks as some sort of cleansing, stoic endeavor. For this was no vacation. I had willingly signed myself up for boot camp. I knew that a mountaineering programme run by the Indian army was going to be serious stuff, but along with the regimentation, the mountaineering institute had inherited a slightly comical love of ritual. Apart from precious lessons on avalanches, crevasse rescue and rock climbing we were also taught synchronized applause for our graduation ceremony. But surrendering our individuality was a small price to pay for those snow filled days.

Eight thirty, and we were ready for bed. After etching five-pointed, yellow stars into the powdery snow, we would tell our bladders to have mercy on us till dawn. No one fancied getting out in the middle of the night even if there was a magnificent, wide starry sky to stare at. In the dark, I crawled into my warm sleeping bag, switched on my headlamp and settled in with T S Eliot's *Rhapsody on a windy night* to compliment the weather outside.

Here is the number on the door
Memory
You have the key,
The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair.
Mount.
The bed is open; the tooth brush hangs on the wall
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life!
The last twist of the knife

Renewed hope for recognition

The fragile existence of the transgender community, hijras or kinnars, stigmatized as the "other" sex, scrambling for an identity as a recognized member of community, is undergoing a slow transformation, at last if events like participation of transgender social activist Laxmi in the Bigg Boss is any indication. **Vatsal Varma** reports

Most of us, at some point or the other, have encountered eunuchs, or hijras or kinnars as they are called, in trains, crowded streets or subways clapping loudly, singing, dancing and taking bakshesh in exchange for blessings. Unfortunately, that is only how far our knowledge goes about them. What is even more deplorable is that we refuse to see beyond those ridiculed faces and notice that there is more to them than this stereotyped image.

Despite the fact that the transgender community in India consists more than one million people, including both those who are biologically of neutral sexes as well as those born as either of the 'recognized sexes' but with intense opposite souls (called transvestites, majority of whom are males who identify themselves with women), it still scrambles to fend for an identity of its own as a recognized member of the society.

They not only struggle to find acceptance by common people but are also subject to prejudice, disgust, and derogatory remarks more than any other marginalized group of the society.

Devika Rani, a transgender, a cross dresser to be more specific, says, "Being a cross dresser in India is no less than a nightmare. If you come out of the closet, you need to fight against the whole world and even then you don't get what is due to you."

"The most painful part is being detested by your dear and near ones. The worst part comes when even your mother doesn't accept you. This is the prime reason why people do not want to come out and accept their orientation," Devika says.

Interestingly, the hijras trace back their origin from some 4000 years. Even both, Hinduism and Islam, talk about characters that were eunuchs.

In Mahabharata, when Aravan keeps the condition of spending the last night of his life in matrimony, Krishna assumes the form of a beautiful woman called Mohini and fulfills his last wish. The Hijras in Tamil Nadu believe themselves to be reincarnations of this form of Krishna and thus call themselves Aravanis.

In Islam as well, since the grave of Prophet Muhammad prohibited entry to any man or woman, eunuchs were employed to guard the tomb of Prophet Muhammad in Medina for over six centuries.

Even the practice of calling hijras to seek blessings on occasions of marriage and child-

birth has its root seeped in the legend of Ramayana. Lord Rama, overwhelmed by the devotion of these hijras (who decided to stay back when Lord Rama commanded all 'men and women to return') conferred upon them the special power to bless people on all auspicious occasions.

Today, on one hand they are endowed with such a sacred responsibility and the rest of the time they are stigmatized. It seems so ironical that people who were so revered in ancient times and given duties that no ordinary man or woman could perform face such a paradigm shift in their condition in modern age.

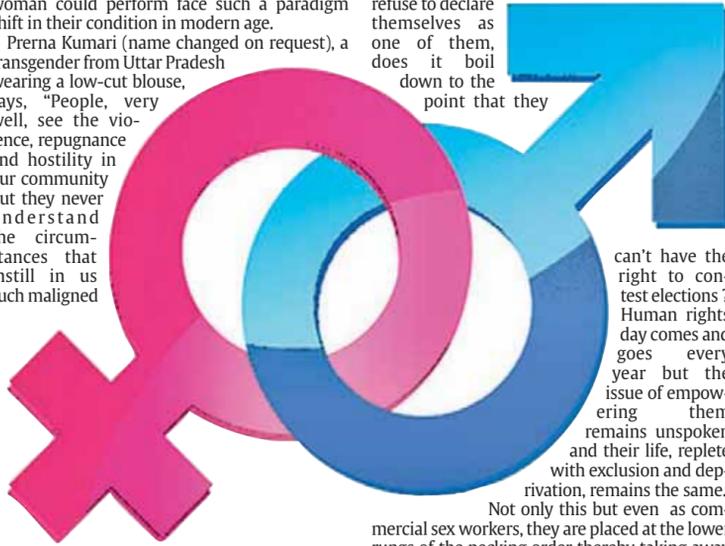
Perna Kumari (name changed on request), a transgender from Uttar Pradesh wearing a low-cut blouse, says, "People, very well, see the violence, repugnance and hostility in our community but they never understand the circumstances that instill in us such maligned behavior."

The life for most hijras begins with an enigma stemming from the contradiction that they find in their physical and inner self. Subsequently, they are banished by their own families and thrown out of their houses only to find more scorn in the society. Majority of transgender people live in slums (commonly known as chawls) and due to limited education and in some cases absolute illiteracy, are unable to find any job opportunities due to

which an estimated 80% of them resort to begging and prostitution as a mode to earn their livelihood. Even if they are capable of doing a respectable job, no one is willing to employ them because of their identity.

One such case is of Katni in Madhya Pradesh where a eunuch, Kamla Jaan, was dismissed from the post of mayor because she contested for a seat reserved for a female and the court refused to recognize her as a woman.

For the simple fact that they are neither male nor female and they refuse to declare themselves as one of them, does it boil down to the point that they



can't have the right to contest elections? Human rights day comes and goes every year but the issue of empowering them remains unspoken and their life, replete with exclusion and deprivation, remains the same.

Not only this but even as commercial sex workers, they are placed at the lower rungs of the pecking order thereby taking away from them the power to negotiate for safe sex and in turn, making them more vulnerable to HIV. Once, HIV positive, they again go through the plight of not being properly medicated due to their gender crisis.

May be their behaviour is a reflection of the affliction that they face in their life, of the low self-esteem they are forced to have and the guilt they carry in their hearts for something they never had the option to do away with. May be they use it as maneuver to guard their insecurity

in life. We surely need to think about this from a broad perspective.

Perna adds in her manly voice, "People need to come to the terms of our being a little different from them in terms of sexuality and then accept us. We breathe, eat and sleep in the same way as any normal man or woman. We are no different species or creatures that people need to fear from us."

Ask her if she has any regret about not being a male or a female and she smilingly answers, "Absolutely no regrets. I am happy that God has not made me ordinary. He might have seen in me a special strength to endure such hardships that he gave me birth as a eunuch."

As the adage goes 'There's always light at the end of the tunnel', even for this community signs of changing times have begun to appear. Up until recently, transgender community had no legal rights, no ration cards and no voter identity. Although gradually, but their status in the society is undergoing an improvement.

The best example in recent times is of the participation of noted social activist and transgender Laxmi Narayan Tripathi in the Bigg Boss show. Even after she was eliminated, Laxmi says she managed to send across the message nationwide that they can live a normal and harmonious life as well.

In 2006, owing to their skill of persuasion, the Bihar government employed hijras for collecting taxes—singing and dancing loudly at the defaulter's doorsteps until he/she feel ashamed into paying up—an effective technique to deal with tax evasion.

Recently, the government of Tamil Nadu issued ration cards to the community with the column for 'sex' marked with 'T', or Third gender, giving them a certain degree of acceptance in the fabric of Indian society.

Though transsexuals were allowed to vote from 1994, they had to mark their 'sex' as 'M' or 'F' but now the Election Commission has allowed them to declare their 'sex' as 'O', indicating 'Others'. This step is again a metaphor that the community that has always remained on the periphery is finding its way inside.

Bangalore University, going a step forward, has reserved quota of one seat in each of the 52 post-graduate courses that it offers. Similar to the above two examples, the application form, apart from male and female, will have a 'TG'



(transgender) option too. But what is of utmost importance is the need for Indian people to shun their belief that being a transgender is all about begging and prostitution. We need to break free from our narrowed mindsets and realize that all a transgender desires is a life of dignity—just like you and me. (Images: Transgender social activist Laxmi who participated in Bigg Boss) —TWf

Kolkata will miss Chacha

Charles Sarkies, fondly known as "Chacha" to all and sundry, passed away on October 18 near the age of 90. He is survived by his daughter Margaret. Charles was born in Julfa, Iran on 23 December 1921. His parents were Sarkies and Tzaghih (Flora) Catchatour. Charles had five sisters and one brother; he was their fifth child, and was the last surviving sibling for a good many years. Charles is survived by his children Margaret and Joe, who live in Sydney, Australia. Charles has seven nephews and eleven nieces who reside in Iran, UK, USA and Canada.



Charles left Iran for India in 1934 arriving in December. He commenced school at the Armenian College & Philanthropic Academy (Established 1921) in January 1935 Matriculating in August 1942. At school he became a King's Scout and a won a Bushman's Thong. He was also in-charge of the Infirmary. Charles held the surname Catchatour until he graduated from school. He changed his last name to Sarkies by Deed Poll when he commenced working. Charles married Josephine Avetoom on 20 April 1945 and was blessed with a daughter Margaret Rose in 1947 and a son Joe Caro in 1953. They lost a son at child-

birth. Their children were born in Asansol. The family lived in Radhamadhavpur from 1945 to 1965, then in Sripur from 1965 to 1967.

Over numerous years in West Bengal and Bihar, Charles volunteered for many deserving causes and charities, particularly helping Indian families place their children in Christian schools through his Christian connections, which would amount to thousands of children having received an education.

In addition, he was president of the Armenian Association for sixteen years, and president of the Armenian Club for seven years, as well as Manager of the Armenian College for a number of years.

Mr. Sarkies joined the Burial Board of Calcutta as Hon'y Members almost together nearly 17 years ago.

He was then retired as a coal mining expert and appointed by the Armenian Church as a superintendent of Sir Catchick Paul Chater Home Complex beside the Heritage Cemetery at Mullickbazar.

Unlike most others, he could mix easily with all other communities. He spoke fluent Bengali, Hindi, Farsi, English and of course Armenian which was his mother tongue.

—Ranajoy Bose

Mum's the world



1. Mom Ganguly with daughter Sneha
2. Richa Sharma with daughter Aashna
3. Jaya Seal with son Tatin
4. Agnimitra Paul with son Vignesh



Pinjala Kundu

In the last scene from Rituparno Ghosh's *Titli*, Konkona Sen Sharma asks her mother, *Koshto hocche maa?* (Are you feeling bad, mother?). A visibly shaken Aparna, who has just received the news of her former lover's engagement, manages a wry smile. Titli, who had been perceiving her mother as her arch rival since quite some time, warms up to her in a single moment of togetherness. Somewhere down the line the anguish joins the lives of a teenage girl and her mother.

This is the beauty of a mother-and-child relationship where at times the roles are reversed. While the mother bears the child, brings her up, gives her all the strength and warmth that she could need, the child too acts as a pillar of strength and support when her mother needs her. Not so long back, it was perceived that working women could never be good mothers as they could never manage enough time for their children. But, the idea has begun to change. Or that's what several celebrity mothers in our city believe. Fashion designer Agnimitra Paul says that she works in a disciplined man-

ner and hence has no trouble managing time for her son Vignesh. She says: "I really do not think that staying back in your house throughout the day and checking on my son makes any sense. What matters is how much quality time you can spend with your children. At the end of the day, when my child lies down beside me and tells me what are the things he has done throughout the day and asks me about my day, that is the most satisfying part." "It's not only the growing up years, but your bond with your child needs to be strong throughout, or else he would be leading a com-

pletely hollow life and that would reflect in his work as well. So, I always keep in mind that at the end of the day my son Tatin needs to be a good person and that's what I try to make him. I try to give him a healthy parenthood," said actor Jaya Seal. Mrs India International 2011 Richa Sharma points out that the way in which you bring up your children completely depends on your own upbringing. "I always keep in mind that my daughter Aashna and my family is my first priority. Aashna is only nine-years-old, but she is so understanding and such a lovely soul. Few days ago, I found

her telling someone that she is so proud that I won the beauty pageant after having her. So, I believe that you just need to get your priorities right. Everything else falls in place." According to Mom Ganguly, a Mohiniyattam dancer and wife of cricketer Snehashish Ganguly, says that she shares a very special bond with her 13-year-old daughter Sneha. She adds: "I believe, when you are working, your bond definitely gets better with your child as instead of keeping a constant check on her staying at home, you can be a special friend too keeping check on her needs and pri-

orities. I do not mind cutting on my social life for being with her." It is said that motherhood changes everything. Perhaps it does. Like any other relationship things may not always be smooth and rosy, but what remains constant throughout is the bond. May be that's why in *Unish April*, the enormous cloud of misunderstanding created out of communication gap over years between the mother (a danseuse) and her daughter (a doctor) gets cleared over a night of confessions and emotional outbursts. The bond just keeps growing stronger with the passage of time.

BRIEFLY



Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, left, at the Gorki presidential residence outside Moscow on Friday — PTI

Putin to contest for top Kremlin job

Moscow: Russian presidential polls in which Prime Minister Vladimir Putin will be contesting for the top Kremlin job as part of a power-sharing deal with incumbent Dmitry Medvedev have been set for March 4 next year. In accordance with the Constitution, Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian Parliament, on Friday announced the next presidential polls on March 4, 2012. — PTI

Lebanon PM threatens to quit over funding

Beirut: Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati has said he is ready to resign should his Hezbollah-dominated Cabinet refuse to transfer funds to a UN-backed court probing the murder of ex-Premier Rafiq Hariri. "I cannot imagine being Prime Minister of a government under which Lebanon breached its international commitments or isolated itself from the international community," Mikati told LBC television late on Thursday. — AFP

Syria faces new Arab sanctions deadline

Damascus: The Arab League on Friday served Syria notice to endorse a plan for the dispatch of observers to monitor unrest in the country or face crippling sanctions. Activists urged demonstrators to flood the streets nationwide after the main weekly Muslim prayers in support of dissident army officers. — AFP

50 bodies found in two days of Mexico carnage

Guadalajara: Fifty bodies have been discovered over the past two days in western Mexico, victims of a fierce war waged between the government and the nation's powerful drug cartels. — AFP

Triple bombings in S Iraq kill 19, injure 64

Basra: The death toll from a market bombing on Thursday in the city of Basra, 420 km southeast of Baghdad, climbed to 21, with another 80 people wounded, a grim sign of the security challenges Iraq will face after American troops go home. The US military is drawing down its troops ahead of an end-of-December deadline to have all American forces out of the country. — AP

Thousands rally in Egypt on 'last-chance Friday'

Cairo: Tens of thousands of Egyptians demanding an end to military rule converged on Cairo's Tahrir Square on Friday in what activists say will be the biggest day yet in a week of demonstrations in which 41 people have been killed.

The military men who took over after people power toppled President Hosni Mubarak on February 11 are themselves under fire from protesters who accuse them of clinging to power, leading to street battles that look like a replay of February's unrest. The ruling army council named Kamal Ganzouri, 78, who served as Prime Minister under Mubarak from 1996 to 1999, to head a national salvation government. Prime Minister Essam Sharaf's Cabinet had resigned this week amid the protests.

The United States, long a bedrock supporter of Egypt's military, called on the generals to step aside "as soon as possible" and give real power to the new Cabinet "immediately".

The military rulers say they are working on a transition of power, including parliamentary elections set for



Pictures of the Israeli PM, US President, Egypt's de facto military ruler and other local personalities plastered on the sole of a shoe during protests in Tahrir Square on Friday — AFP

Monday. Voting in each phase of Egypt's three-stage parliamentary election will be held over two days instead of one, Egypt's ruling military

council decided on Friday. The decision aims to avoid "overcrowding and security issues" in polling stations during Egypt's first free par-

liamentary ballot in living memory, an interior ministry source told reporters. "Those who cannot vote on the first day can do so on the next".

Speaking to reporters shortly after his appointment was announced, Ganzouri declined to reveal details of his new Cabinet, saying, "Everything will be outlined later".

After his appointment was confirmed, crowds in Tahrir chanted: "They brought a thief and appointed another thief," referring to Sharaf and Ganzouri. "Say without fear: the (army) council must leave," they shouted. Activists sought to bring a million people into the streets of Cairo on what they dubbed "the Friday of the last chance".

Thousands flooded into Tahrir Square for prayers, where Sheikh Mazhar Shahin told worshippers the protest would go on until Egypt had a new salvation government. Protesters said they expected the crowd to continue to grow in the afternoon.

Friday, the weekly Muslim prayer day, has traditionally been the biggest day of demonstrations in the "Arab Spring" protests sweeping the West Asia this year. — Reuters

Suu Kyi party moves to make Myanmar political comeback

Naypyidaw: Democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi's opposition took its first step towards a return to mainstream Myanmar politics on Friday, days before a historic visit by US secretary of state Hillary Clinton. The National League for Democracy (NLD) applied to officially re-register as a political party — after boycotting last year's much-criticised parliamentary election — amid signs of reform in a country long dominated by the military.

Clinton will travel to Myanmar on Wednesday to make the first visit by a US secretary of state in 50 years to try to boost what President Barack Obama has called "flickers" of progress. Myanmar, ruled for decades by a repressive junta and isolated on the world stage, has seen promising changes since the November 2010 vote brought to power a nominally civilian government, albeit one with close links to the military.

Ex-general Thura Shwe Mann, speaker of the lower house of Myanmar's Parliament and considered one of the most powerful men in the current regime, said on Friday Myanmar wanted a "regular relationship" with Washington. The new administration has surprised many observers with a series of reformist moves, including holding talks with Suu Kyi, passing a law giving workers the right to strike and releasing hundreds of political prisoners.

Jim Della-Giacoma, South East Asia Project director at the International Crisis Group, said the NLD's return to the fray marked the beginning of a new era in Myanmar politics.

Ex-junta chief has no govt role: A top Myanmar official on Friday insisted feared strongman Than Shwe has no government role, in the first public confirmation that the former junta head had released the reins of power. "The senior general has really retired," Thura Shwe Mann, lower house



Myanmar democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi at a recent 'fun fair' event in Yangon — AFP

speaker told reporters after the final session of parliament in Naypyidaw.

After a two-decade reign marked by suppression, isolation and deep paranoia about Suu Kyi, Shwe officially stepped down from his role as head of Myanmar's "Tatmadaw" armed forces after the military junta was disbanded in March. The senior general has been virtually invisible since then. But few believed he had fully relinquished his grip on the impoverished nation, despite controversial November 2010 polls which brought a nominally civilian government to power. — AFP



Yemeni anti-regime demonstrators in Sana'a — AFP

Yemen Oppn to name ex-minister to form new govt

Sanaa: Opposition parties agreed on Friday to nominate the head of an alliance that led months of protests against President Ali Abdullah Saleh to form a new government, an Opposition leader said.

Saleh transferred all his powers to Vice-President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi after signing an agreement in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday that was proposed by Gulf states to resolve the crisis resulting from months of demonstrations against Saleh's rule.

Yahia Abu Usba, deputy head of the Yemeni Socialist Party, said that Mohammed Basindwa, a former foreign minister who now heads the Opposition National Council formed after the protests broke out in February, had been nominated to be the next PM.

The Gulf-backed accord, under which Saleh retains the title of President, pro-

vides for the formation of a new government led by the Opposition to prepare for early presidential elections within 90 days.

Earlier in the day, fierce clashes broke out between rival security forces in the Yemeni capital. Dissident troops from the First Armoured Brigade led by Gen Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar exchanged mortar and machinegun fire in the early hours with forces of the central security services commanded by Saleh's nephew, Yehya. The clashes had erupted outside Hadi's residence.

The fighting, which spread to the heart of the capital, lasted more than two hours. There was no immediate word on any casualties. Tensions soared in the Al-Hasaba neighbourhood of north Sana'a, scene of months of fighting between forces and dissident tribesmen, as rival gunmen set up roadblocks across the area. — Agencies

Stir to cause Heathrow chaos next week

London: If you are scheduled to travel to London Heathrow next Wednesday, prepare to face long delays on landing due to a strike by immigration officers as part of a nation-wide strike of public sector workers against changes to pension rules.

In fact, passengers may face up to a 12-hour delay before completing immigration formalities, and some may be confined to their aircraft if the lobbies get clogged with incoming passengers in the world's one of the busiest airports.

British immigration officials posted in India and other countries have been offered free travel to London to stand in for the officers who'll be on strike. They could also spend some time with their families when they volunteer for this duty, officials said. — PTI

Last train with N-waste heads into Germany

Forbach (France): The last train carrying reprocessed nuclear waste back from France to Germany crossed the border on Friday after being delayed by protests and steamed towards more trouble.

The train, carrying 11 wagonloads of vitrified radioactive material, left a siding in the station of Remilly, just outside the town of Metz and around 30 km from the German border, at 9:00 am local time.

Several hundred French riot police had protected the train overnight, and around 60 German officers and a French "RAID" team — a SWAT-style special weapons squad — were on board as it resumed its journey.

The train had left a yard operated by the French nuclear giant Areva in Valognes, in Normandy, on Wednesday, due to travel over 1,100 km across France



A poster reads 'Shutdown of all nuclear plants worldwide' is pictured at an anti-nuclear protest camp on Friday — AFP

and through Germany to the waste dump in Gorleben.

But violent anti-nuclear protests delayed its journey, and authorities halted it overnight while trying to keep demonstrators guessing about its eventual route across the border and back into Germany. On Friday, it finally

crossed the frontier in the border town of Forbach, just south of Saarbrücken, and entered Germany.

Last November a similar controversial shipment took 91 hours to arrive at its final destination, a day longer than planned, and it was dogged the length of the route by French and then German protesters.

Around 50,000 activists turned out in Germany to try to disrupt the train during that transfer, and protest organisers expect 20,000 to demonstrate against the convoy as it nears the central town of Gorleben later on Friday.

Some 19,000 German officers have been deployed, and tear gas and water canon were fired when clashes erupted overnight when a few hundred protesters tried to block the line around 20 km outside Gorleben. — AFP

'No dialogue with Taliban until it lays down arms'

Islamabad: Pakistan will not initiate a dialogue with the local Taliban unless they lay down their arms and give up terrorism, interior minister Rehman Malik said on Friday amid reports of secret negotiations between the government and militant groups.

Any move by the Taliban to end its war voluntarily will be welcomed, Malik said while speaking to reporters along with British home secretary Theresa May at the Police Lines Headquarters here.

Malik asked the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan to surrender their weapons and to refrain from "playing into the hands of the enemy". Pakistan had suffered losses of billions of dollars in its war against terrorism and the international community should realise this war was being fought to protect the world from the ravages of terrorism, he said.

Pakistan and Britain share a powerful interest in fighting extremism and terrorism that threaten people in both countries and across the world, he said. Responding to a question about the activities of Jamaat-ud-Dawah chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed who has been blamed by India for masterminding the 2008 Mumbai attacks, Malik said Saeed had been freed by a court.

Though Saeed was put under house arrest after the 26/11 attacks, he was freed about six months later on the orders of the Lahore HC. — PTI

Prince Charles to become King of Romania?

London: Speculation is rife in central European media that Prince Charles could become the next King of Romania if the country's monarchy is restored, and give up the British throne in favour of his eldest son, William.

The 63-year-old British King-in-waiting could stake claim to the throne in Romania because of his "ancestral links" with historical Romanian ruler, Vlad the Impaler, and the

country's deposed King, Prince Michael, according to the media. "The genealogy shows I'm descended from Vlad the Impaler, so I do have a bit of a stake in the country," the *Daily Mail* quoted him as saying in an interview.

In fact, the central European media also claim that Prince Charles's mother, Queen Elizabeth II, is a third cousin to the deposed King whose great-great-grandmother was Queen

Victoria, the British newspaper said. Vlad the Impaler was the bloodthirsty nobleman who inspired Dracula while King Michael, now 90, was the last Royal ruler of Romania who reigned from 1927 to 1930 and again from 1940 to 1947.

Michael was, however, forced to abdicate by the country's Communist leaders, who threatened to carry out mass executions if he refused to step down. — PTI



Prince Charles

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BENGALI

STAR JALSHA

- 19.30: Bou Katha Kou
- 20.00: Shedin Dujone
- 20.30: Bhalobasha.com
- 21.00: Koti Takar Baji
- 21.30: Aparajito Romonir Gune
- 22.00: Adwitiya
- 23.30: Ishti Kutum

ETV BANGLA

- 14.00: Palabadal
- 17.00: Shatru
- 18.00: Amar Bangla (News)
- 18.30: Rojgere Ginni (TV Show)
- 19.00: Bisarjan
- 19.30: Khola Hawa
- 20.00: Sholoyana
- 20.30: Binni Dhaner Khoi
- 21.00: Arakshaniya (TV Show)
- 22.30: News
- 23.00: Aaj Sara Din



▲ Watch **Sedun Dujone** at 20.00 on Star Jalsha

SANGEET BANGLA

- 12.00: Sb Supaarhitz
- 13.00: Tumi Je Amar
- 14.00: Tollywood Reporter
- 17.00: Howrah Bridge
- 18.00: Karaoke.. filmhitz
- 18.30: Tumi Je Amar
- 19.00: KFF -In festive mood
- 19.30: Karaoke.. filmhitz
- 22.00: SB Supaarhitz

AKASH BANGLA

- 14.00: Akash Superhit Matinee
- 18.30: Radhuni/ Cookery Show
- 19.00: Charitraheen
- 19.30: Saptapadee
- 20.00: CIB Bengal
- 20.30: Exclusive Akash
- 22.00: Biswa Barta
- 22.15: Khelar Akash
- 22.30: Akash Bangla news
- 23.30: Chalo jai

SPORTS

▼ Watch Australian PGA at 5.30 on Star Sports



STAR SPORTS

- 3.30: Asian Olympic Qualifiers : Round 3: Qatar vs. Korea Republic
- 5.30: Australian PGA Championships H/Is : Day2
- 11.30: Game
- 12.00: Barclays Premier League 2011/12
- 14.00: Barclays ATP World Tour Finals
- 17.00: Commonwealth Bank Tournament Of Champions 2011 H/Is : Event
- 18.00: V8 Supercars Championship Series 2011 : Round 13
- 19.30: Barclays ATP World Tour Finals : Semi Finals
- 22.00: FIA F1 World Championship Qualifying 2011
- 23.00: Full Time : Reaction
- 23.30: Barclays Premier League 2011/12 : Bolton Wanderers vs. Everton

NEO SPORTS

- 12.30: Bundesliga Preview
- 13.00: Weekend Kick Off : Bundesliga: FC Koln vs. Borussia M'gladbach
- 15.00: NASCAR 2011 : Sprint Cup Series: Ford 400
- 16.00: Chili Factor
- 16.30: Fuel TV
- 17.00: EPL Classic : Leeds United vs. Newcastle 1999/00
- 19.00: Chili Factor
- 19.30: WTCC H/Is : Macau

STAR CRICKET

- 8.00: Cricket Extra
- 8.30: Australia Cricket Weekly
- 14.00: Australia Tour of England 2005 H/Is : 1st Test
- 19.00: 2008 Commonwealth Bank Series H/Is : 11th ODI: Sri Lanka vs. India
- 22.00: India Cricket Weekly
- 23.00: Natwest ODI Series 2009 H/Is : 6th ODI: England vs. Australia

NEWS

CNN-IBN

- 1.00: Late Night Edition
- 7.00: IBN Morning
- 10.00: IBN News
- 13.00: Good Afternoon India
- 14.30: Now Showing
- 16.30: CNN-IBN Special
- 17.00: IBN News
- 18.00: Good Evening India
- 19.00: IBN at 7
- 19.30: The Last Word

TIMES NOW

- 15.00: News Now
- 15.30: Amazing Indians
- 18.00: News Now
- 18.30: Times Now Sport Weekend
- 19.00: Total Recall
- 21.00: News Now at 9
- 21.30: E Now
- 22.00: News Now
- 22.30: Amazing Indians
- 23.30: Times Now Sport Weekend

NDTV 24X7

- 15.00: Documentary 24x7
- 16.00: News
- 17.00: The Evening News
- 17.30: Mahindra Auto Quotient
- 18.00: 6 PM Prime
- 19.00: Bollywood Roots
- 20.00: The Big Fight
- 21.00: India Decides @ 9 pm
- 22.00: Truth vs. Hype
- 23.00: News
- 23.30: Saturday Night Fever

CNN

- 2.30: Back Story
- 3.00: World Sport
- 3.30: World Report
- 4.30: Piers Morgan Tonight
- 5.30: World Business Today
- 6.30: Piers Morgan Tonight
- 7.30: Anderson Cooper 360*
- 9.00: Inside Africa
- 9.30: World Report
- 10.00: Back Story
- 10.30: World Report
- 11.30: World Report

BBC WORLD NEWS

- 14.30: BBC World News
- 16.00: Newsnight
- 17.30: BBC World News
- 18.00: Talking Movies
- 18.30: BBC World News
- 18.45: Sport Today
- 19.00: Fast Track
- 20.00: Dateline London
- 20.30: BBC World News
- 21.00: Horizons
- 21.30: BBC World News
- 22.00: Final Score
- 22.30: BBC World News
- 23.40: World Features

KIDS SPECIAL

CARTOON NETWORK

- 6.30: Billy, Mandy aur Life Mein Haddi
- 7.00: Good Morning Scooby!
- 8.00: Marathon
- 15.00: Team Nirvan
- 17.30: Roll No. 21
- 18.00: Stuart Little
- 20.00: Ben 10: Ultimate Alien
- 21.00: Beyblade Metal Masters

NICKELODEON

- 11.00: Keymon Ache
- 12.00: Oogy & the Cockroaches
- 13.00: Ninja Hattori
- 16.00: Zig and Sharko
- 17.00: Chicken Stew
- 18.00: Ninja Hattori
- 19.00: Oogy & the Cockroaches
- 20.00: Power Rangers: Mystic Force
- 21.00: Khushi Ki Duniya
- 21.30: Barnyard
- 22.00: Penguins of Madagascar
- 23.00: Avatar
- 23.00: Sky Star Advertising

ANIMAX

- 11.00: Colourcloud Palace (Season 2)
- 12.30: Romeo x Juliet
- 13.30: Animax Musix
- 14.30: Samurai Champloo
- 17.00: Nura: Rise of the Yokai Clan
- 19.30: Last Exile: Fam, the Silver Wing
- 20.00: Last Exile: Fam, the Silver Wing
- 22.00: Romeo x Juliet
- 23.00: Last Exile: Fam, the Silver Wing

POGO

- 7.00: Anpanman Breadman
- 7.30: Anpanman Breadman
- 8.00: Mr. Bean: The Animated Series
- 9.00: Chhota Bheem
- 15.00: Chhota Bheem Movie 4: Journey To Petra
- 18.30: Chhota Bheem Marathon
- 21.00: Tara Sharma Show
- 23.00: Mr. Bean: The Animated Series

▼ Watch **Chhota Bheem** at 9.00 on Pogo



ENGLISH

FOX HISTORY & TRAVELLER

- 18.00: Twist of taste with Vineet Bhatia : Bhubaneswar
- 19.00: Cheese Slices (Season 3) : Soft Washed Rind Cheeses
- 20.00: X- Treme Trail
- 21.00: Word Travels : Canada
- 22.00: Life Mein Ek Baar : Kerala

BIG CBS LOVE

- 13.00: Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas
- 15.00: Greatest American Dog
- 19.30: Canada's Next Top Model
- 21.30: Bollywood Tonite
- 22.00: BDr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas

WB

- 13.40: The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

HINDI

STAR PLUS

- 6.00: Teleshopping
- 7.00: Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai
- 7.30: Mann Kee Awaaz Pratigya
- 8.00: Superstar Preview
- 10.30: Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon?
- 13.00: Saath Nibhana Saathiya
- 15.30: Diya aur Baati Hum
- 18.00: Ek Hazaron Mein Meri Behna Hain

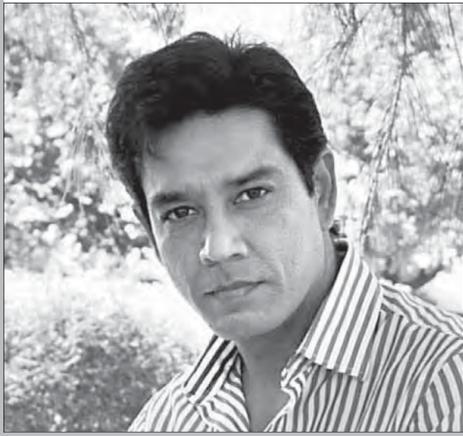
ZEE TV

- 7.00: Teleshopping
- 9.00: Mrs. Kaushik Ki Paanch Bahuein
- 13.45: Hitler Didi
- 16.45: Gold Awards 2011
- 19.30: Shobha Somnath Ki
- 20.30: Star Ya Rockstar
- 22.00: Hitler Didi

SONY TV

- 9.00: Aadaal
- 12.30: Bade Achhe Lagte Hain
- 15.00: Kuch Toh Log Kahenge
- 18.30: C.I.D
- 20.00: Aadaal
- 21.00: Comedy Circus Ka Naya Daur
- 22.00: C.I.D
- 23.00: Crime Patrol: Dastak (Season 4)

▼ Watch **Crime Patrol Dastak** at 23.00 on Sony TV



KNOWLEDGE

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

- 8.00: Year in the Wild
- 14.00: Man vs. Wild (Season 3) : New Zealand South Island
- 16.00: Clash of the Dinosaurs : Extreme Survivors
- 17.00: The Greatest Ever : Tanks
- 18.00: Echo And The Elephants of Amboseli
- 18.30: Predators' Prey : Armies
- 19.00: Curiosity : Can I Live Forever?

DISCOVERY TURBO

- 8.00: World's Most Expensive Rides
- 13.00: Speed Capital of the World: Bonneville
- 17.00: Rides (Season 4) : Bad Check
- 18.00: Street Customs 2008 : 67 Barracuda
- 19.00: Fifth Gear (Season 9)
- 19.30: Redline TV (Season 3)
- 20.00: Desert Car Kings : Young vs. Olds
- 21.00: Speed Capital of the World: Bonneville
- 22.00: Landspeed Shootout

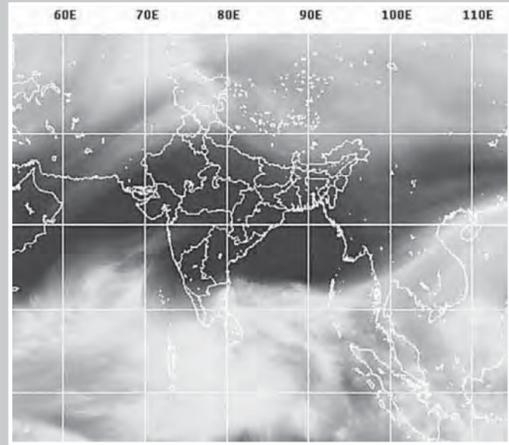
ANIMAL PLANET

- 9.00: Fooled By Nature : Incredible Iq's
- 10.00: The Smile of the Shark
- 11.00: Raw Nature : Raw Family
- 12.00: The Crocodile Hunter (Season 6) : Sidewinders of Arizona (Luke Air Force/Arizona Usa)
- 13.00: Infested! : Bedbugs, Rats and Scorpions
- 14.00: Mutant Planet : Madagascar
- 15.00: Wildwives of Savannah Lane : The Art of Motherhood

▼ Watch **Raw Nature** at 11.00 on Animal Planet



The Weather



Source: Indian Meteorological Department

City	National	
	Today min-max	Tomorrow min-max
KOLKATA	19-29	19-28
BHOPAL	15-28	17-29
DELHI	13-27	13-24
MUMBAI	26-34	27-34
CHENNAI	24-28	24-29
BANGALORE	20-23	20-25
HYDERABAD	18-31	19-31
GUWAHATI	15-27	15-27
AGARTALA	16-29	16-29
SHILLONG	04-22	04-22

City	International	
	Today min-max	Tomorrow min-max
NEW YORK	09-17	09-16
LONDON	11-12	00-13
PARIS	05-11	07-13
BANGKOK	25-34	25-34
BEIJING	(-05-06)	(-02-10)
WASHINGTON	03-10	00-09
GENEVA	15-26	12-24
FRANKFURT	03-10	02-09
TOKYO	08-14	11-18
SINGAPORE	25-31	24-30

Helpline

Hospital/Nursing Home

- Amri (Dhakuria) - 24612526/2626
- Amri (Saltlake) - 23357710
- Amri Clinic (Southern Avenue)- 24644594/95/4948
- Anandalok - 23592931
- Apollo Gleneagles - 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
- Bm Birla Heart Research Center-24567777/7890/70019,24567890,245678004
- Calcutta Medical College And Hospital - 224149012
- Howrah General Hospital - 22604738-39/5695/2813
- Kothari Medical Center - 24567049-52
- 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 Gleneagles Hospital - 1066
- Arambogh General Hospital - 953211255095
- Asia Rescue Medical Services - 9831008900/9830365276/393
- Aswini Nagar Ch. & Welfare Society - 24112323/28673030
- Bandhab Sangha - 26624682
- Barasat Citizen Forum - 25525595
- Basudebpur Five Star Club - 26797315
- Bharat Relief Society - 22342670/22359952
- B.M Birla Heart Research Centre - 24567777
- Calcutta Medical Research Institute Critical Care - 24567777
- 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
- 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
- Latentight Chemists - Dhanwantary - 24495594
- Chemist Corner (Behala) - 24780334
- Jibandeep(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 26669161/62, Serampore 26524585, West Suburban 23591896
- Wbseb Emergency 23591896
- Railways
- Howrah Station - (Old Complex) 1310/1331/1332, 26387412/35422581, (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
- Swissair - 22884643/0291/4644
- Thai Airways - 22801630/35
- Gmg Airlines - 29592569, 30969077
- Domestic
- Indian Airlines Helpline Number - 1407 (Toll Free Helpline), From Landlines - 16001801407, Enquiry Manual Airport - 25119637
- Enquiry Manual Airlines House - 22114433
- Tele Check In Airport - 25119633/25118564
- Air Deccan - 08039008888(Toll Free), 9831677008
- Jet Airways - 22922277/2237/2214/2813
- Air Sahara - 22822786/8969/9075
- Airport Enquiry - International: 25118787, Domestic: 25118787
- Police
- Lalazar Control Room

22143230/3024 PBX 22505000

- Jorabagan 22184094, 22700428
- Butolla 25557599, 25335579
- Burrabazaar 22687554, 22683802
- Posta 22595606, 5536
- Jorashank 22697279, Kolshaks
- 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
- Exide Battery Mobile Helpline - 22844564/570
- Women's Hostels
- City Working Women's Hostel - 65/C Ramakant Bose Street
- Shabari Ladies Hostel - 40, Mg Road
- Animal Helpline
- Compassionate Crusaders - 24647030, 22104365
- Wildlife Control Room - 30958798

The Bengal Post

The Knowledge Hub, DN-23, Salt Lake City, Sector - V, Kolkata - 700 091. Ph:4015 7408-10, Fax:

BRIEFLY

RBI hopes FDI in retail will reduce inflation

Chandigarh: The Reserve Bank has expressed hope that foreign direct investment in multi-brand retail will help in bringing down inflation. "It would help improve supply chain and should reduce inflation," said D Subbarao, governor, RBI. — PTI

Zoomlion inks pact with ElectroMech

Kolkata: Construction machinery manufacturer, Zoomlion has announced its plans to establish a strategic alliance with industrial crane manufacturer ElectroMech, to manufacture and sell tower cranes in India. — BP

RBI allows Iranian bank to open accounts

Kolkata: The Reserve Bank of India has given permission to the Central Bank of Iran to open rupee accounts with two Indian banks, namely UCO and IDBI, to resolve payment crisis. — PTI

Ketchum Sampark enters new biz

Kolkata: Ketchum Sampark has announced the launch of its digital media business Ketchum Sampark Digital. The new business will offer full-service interactive strategy, web design, video production and multimedia development. — BP

Dion Global acquires Investmaster

Mumbai: Dion Global Solutions has acquired the entire issued share capital of Investmaster Group (Investmaster), the UK based specialist provider of wealth management and stock-broking software. — BP

Hiranandani to invest on realty projects

New Delhi: Hiranandani Constructions will invest up to ₹3,000 crore next year on realty projects across the country. The company may also hike prices of its housing units by 10-15 per cent to offset rising input costs. — PTI

India received \$56 billion in remittances

New Delhi: India received \$55.9 billion in remittances in the year 2010-11, an increase of \$2 billion over the previous year. India received \$53.9 billion in remittances in the year 2009-10, while in 2008-09, the amount was \$46.9 billion. — PTI

Govt hopes things will shape up for AI

New Delhi: With a financial restructuring plan for cash-strapped Air India been approved by the Reserve Bank of India, the government expressed hope that things will move in a positive direction for the carrier. — PTI

FinMin clears 18 FDI proposals

New Delhi: The finance ministry has approved 18 FDI proposals, including that of Dish TV and MCX, envisaging foreign investment of ₹2,126 crore, while referring the application of Unitech Wireless to Cabinet, following recommendations of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB). — PTI

Unitech, DLF to build more malls

Our Correspondent

New Delhi / Kolkata: Anticipating increase in demand for space with improved supply chain following opening up of FDI further in retail sector, realty majors like Unitech will invest up to ₹4,000 crore to develop 13 shopping malls over the next four years. While DLF, the largest realty player will invest up to ₹3,000 crore over the next five years to develop shopping malls across India by planning to develop 3.5-4 million sq.ft.

Unitech is also scouting land for another five malls in the metros and state capitals.

"We have nine malls under construction at present and we have bought land for another four malls. The total leasable area in these 13 malls will be four million square feet (sq. ft.). The total project cost will be between ₹3,500 crore and ₹4,000

India Inc. hails FDI in retail while political parties debate

Our Bureau

Kolkata: While the opening up of the retail sector has sparked off protests with no political consensus, India Inc. has hailed the government decision to allow 51 per cent FDI in multi brand retail and 100 per cent in single brand formats in India and feels that this will be a game changer for the economy.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) feels that FDI in retail will greatly boost organised retail in India and drive inclusive growth. Chandrajit Banerjee, director general, CII, said that the biggest beneficiary of FDI in retail will be small farmers, who will be able to improve productivity and realise higher remuneration by selling directly to large organised play-

ers and thereby shorten the chain from farm to consumers.

"It will enable the sector to realise its true potential of \$260 billion by 2020 and shift the benefits to smaller towns and cities. Large sub-sectors like food and grocery, which has been lagging, will see greater penetration", a CII statement said.

The beneficiaries of this move will include all stakeholders in the retail value chain — producers, consumers and employees, the industry body added.

Govind Shrikhande, customer care associate & managing director, Shoppers Stop said, "The positive feedback and experience in telecom, automobile and insurance sectors, clearly showcases the success of the FDI policy."

If rolled out in phases and with proper

Brand Equity

Retail Majors in India	Waiting in the wings
■ Future Group	■ Walmart : USA
■ Reliance Retail	■ Carrefour: France
■ Bharti Retail	■ Tesco: UK
■ Spencer Retail	■ Target: US
■ Aditya Birla Retail	■ Metro AG: Germany
■ Trent	■ Target: USA

checks and balances — the policy will directly impact both multi-brand outlets and small retailers with a balanced approach, he said.

"It will remove structural inefficiencies in the supply chain", he added.

The RP-Sanjiv Goenka group, one of the leading retailers is keen in tying up with a foreign retail major once FDI in multi-brand is in place.

"However, we are not going to give up control," group chairman Sanjiv Goenka said. According to Goenka, back-end operation was crucial for the profitability of front-end retail stores. The retail major operates in both front-end and back-end operations.

There could be a possibility of hiving off the back-end operations into a separate entity. Multiple companies can join in this venture and back-end services can also become separate profit centre," Goenka said. He said it would take at least 18

months for any foreign retail store to get operational. The group said their cafe venture 'Au Bon Pain' in India was also open for FDI.

"FDI in retail is a welcome move as there will be more choices available to the consumers at a competitive price point. However, for small traders it will become difficult to compete," said Sanjay Jain, vice president, Federation of Hosiery Manufacturers Association of India.

A retail report by Boston Consulting Group, India, (BCG) and CII, said that the current size of organized retail in the country stands at close to \$28 billion or 6-7 per cent of total retail. The total retail market is estimated to grow to \$1,250 billion by 2020, of which organized retail is 21 per cent.

Bharti ends talks with RIL for stake sale in insurance JVs

New Delhi: Bharti Enterprises and Reliance Industries have terminated talks for the stake sale in Bharti AXA insurance companies due to differences over issues related to long term vision and joint governance.

"AXA, Bharti, Reliance Industries (RIL) and its associate Reliance Industrial Infrastructure (RIIL) announced on Friday that they have mutually agreed to terminate their negotiations on the proposed acquisition by RIL and RIIL of Bharti's shareholding of 74 per cent in Bharti AXA Life Insurance and Bharti AXA General Insurance," Bharti said in a statement.

In a separate statement, RIL said that talks were terminated as parties had failed to "reach agreement on long-term vision and joint governance of the ventures."

After nearly five years of its association with France's AXA, Bharti had in June announced it would exit from the financial services JVs and sell its entire 74 per cent stake in both general and life insurance businesses. Industry experts had valued the deal at around ₹5,000 crore.

"Bharti AXA Life and Bharti AXA General Insurance will continue to develop their operations in India, as they have successfully done over the past years, and build a sustainable and long-term business by tapping the significant growth potential offered by the Indian market," it added.

The company had entered into these joint ventures with the AXA group in 2006 and held 74 per cent stake in both these ventures — Bharti AXA Life Insurance and Bharti AXA General

Bharti Telecom buys Airtel shares

Mumbai: Bharti Telecom, the majority stakeholder in the country's largest private telecom operator Bharti Airtel, has purchased a total of over 14.93 lakh shares of the company for ₹54.51 crore, through open market transactions.

Bharti Telecom has purchased a total of 14,93,046 shares of the telecom firm through four market transactions worth a cumulative ₹54.51 crore, Bharti Airtel said in a disclosure to the BSE. Prior to the acquisition, the promoter group firm held a 45.55 per cent in the company, which has now increased to 45.58 per cent, as per the filing. The promoter group firm acquired the shares on November 23 and November 24, 2011, it added.

As per the shareholding pattern available on the BSE for the quarter ended September, Bharti Telecom held a 45.54 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel. Recently, two top executives of Bharti Airtel sold a total of 1.15 lakh shares of the company worth ₹4.60 crore through open market transactions.

Shares of Bharti Airtel were trading at ₹377.90 on the BSE, down 0.07 per cent from their previous close.

Insurance.

The AXA group is a global player in insurance and asset management, with 214,000

employees serving 95 million clients. In 2010, its revenues amounted to 91 billion euros. — PTI

Sensex slides back to 2-yr low; down 163 pts

Mumbai: After a day of gains, the BSE Sensex slid back to fresh 2-year low of 15,695.43 on selling in key stocks amid weak global markets on persisting investor worries over euro-zone debt troubles and slow growth in world's leading economies.

IT, metals, tech, refinery and auto segments suffered heavily, but gains in realty and capital goods stocks cushioned the fall somewhat. Retail stocks gained as the government approved FDI in multi-brand retail.

The BSE 30-scrip Sensex opened lower but recovered, touching a high of 15,891.05. However, it fell back following weak openings in the European markets and settled at 15,695.43 — down 163.06 points or 1.03 per cent. On Thursday, it had gained by 158.52 points or 1.01 per cent. On Wednesday, it had closed at 15,699.97 — lowest since November 3, 2009.

The NSE wide-based 50-issue Nifty also dropped 46.40 points or 0.98 per cent to 4,710.05. "Global negative cues led to a gap down opening in the market. However, sentiments were bolstered by some policy reforms announced on Thursday evening like FDI in retail segment and cabinet approval of the companies bill," said Shanu Goel, senior research analyst, Bonanza Portfolio.

"But, selling pressure intensified during the last one hour of trade. Weak opening in European markets further aided the downturn," he added.

Besides, offloading by foreign funds

fanned the sluggish trend. FIIs have pulled out ₹5,395.90 crore in the last eight trading sessions since November 15, including yesterday's ₹1,106.40 sell-off as per Sebi data.

Dip in RIL, Infosys, HDFC, TCS, ICICI, HUL, Hero MotoCorp and Maruti Suzuki kept the market under pressure. However, rise in L&T, SBI, BHEL, Coal India and DLF cushioned the fall to some extent.

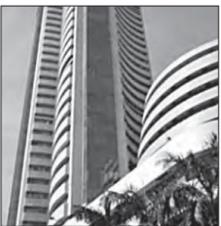
Pantaloon Retail, Shoppers Stop and Trent made gains following the Cabinet's approval of 51 per cent FDI in multi-brand retail. It also removed the FDI cap of 51 per cent in single-brand retail.

Globally, Asian stocks ended lower, as key indices in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan closed up to 1.37 per cent down. In Europe, The CAC, the DAX and the FTSE were down by about a per cent each.

Back home, 22 of the 30 Sensex scrips closed with losses.

Maruti Suzuki tumbled 3.89 per cent, Hindalco (3.73 pc), Sterilite Ind (3.29 pc), Tata Steel (2.82 pc), Hero MotoCo (2.70 pc), RIL (2.61 pc), HUL (2.51 pc), Infosys (2.48 pc), Jindal Steel (2.42 pc), TCS (2.41 pc), Sun Pharma (2.11 pc), HDFC (1.90 pc) and ICICI Bank (1.47 pc).

However, BHEL rose 3.45 per cent, L&T (3.40 pc), DLF (3.24 pc), SBI (2.27 pc) and Coal India (1.51 pc). Among the sectoral indices, BSE-IT dipped 2.06 per cent, (Metal 1.65 pc), Teck (1.63 pc), Oil&Gas (1.62 pc) and Auto (1.29 pc), while Capital Goods firmed 2.64 per cent and Realty by 1.32 per cent. — PTI



New Offering



■ Actress Rituparna Sengupta with the new Apple iPhone 4S that comes with Airtel connection — Prabir Bhattacharya

Himalaya Optical may invest ₹2,760-cr on retail expansion

Soumity Kanungo

Kolkata: Himalaya Optical is lining up investments of around ₹2760 crore as part of its plans to strengthen its retail presence nationally. The company is eyeing a phase-wise expansion plan and is expected to inject nearly ₹1,260 crore in the first phase that will see opening of 21 additional outlets by 2015, thus taking up the store count to 75.

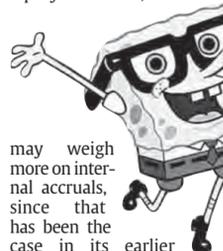
City-based Himalaya Optical nationally has 54 outlets, which it intends to scale up to 100 by 2018. These outlets will come up largely in metros, tier I and tier II cities with a few in tier III cities as well.

"Though we have not decided on the locations, but to create standard mid-sized outlets, an investment of ₹50-60 lakh per outlet will be required," Sarat Binani, managing director, Himalaya Optical, told *The Bengal Post*.

By end-2012, the company plans to open 10-12 stores nationally, of which 4-5 stores will be in West Bengal. The funds, required for the expansion plan, will be through a mix of debt and equity. However, it

high streets, while the rest is in shopping centres," he said. Himalaya Optical, one of the largest players in an estimated ₹1,800 crore industry, expects a revenue growth of 20-25 per cent by FY12. Of its total earnings, around 60 per cent comes from prescription business (spectacles and lenses), 25-30 per cent from sunglasses while the remaining 9-10 per cent is from sales of contact lenses.

The multi-brand retailer, apart from its private label, houses high-end brands such as Bvlgari, Prada and Cartier, among others. It plans to introduce new generations of anti-reflection lenses, anti-fog lenses and anti-fatigue lenses in the market soon. It has also set up an optometry school, Krishnalaya School of Optometry, in collaboration with Srusut Eye Foundation and Research Centre in 2010.



may weigh more on internal accruals, since that has been the case in its earlier expansion models.

The upcoming stores will be in a combination of large, medium and small formats, depending on the city and will be a mix of both stand-alone properties on the high streets as well as outlets in malls. "Almost 60 per cent of our current penetration is on

ICAI asks state to return 15 cottah land

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: The Eastern India Regional Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has requested the state government to return around 15 cottah of land near Kasba Ruby connector which the erstwhile government had taken over. The land for which ICAI is on the lookout, is adjacent to its 15 cottah building where the construction work is on. The building is expected to be inaugurated next month for its members and students.

"We have paid around ₹200 crore to the state government for the 30 cottah of land. Since we could not start the construction work on 15 cottah, it was taken over by the erstwhile government. We have requested the state government to return that land," G Ramaswamy, president, ICAI told *The Bengal Post*, on the sidelines of a regional conference on "Accounting Profession - Changing Dimension" organised by ICAI on the occasion of Diamond Jubilee Year 2011-12 in Kolkata on Friday.

Partha Chatterjee, state commerce and industry minister and Sovan Chatterjee, mayor, Kolkata Municipal Corporation inaugurated the programme.

ICAI also plans to write a letter to the state chief minister, Mamata Banerjee requesting the state to utilise the accrual system of accounting process in the government vertical. "We want to send the letter to chief minister, Mamata Banerjee requesting to utilise the accounting process as we want to involve accounting professionals to implement accrual system in government accounting," Ramaswamy added.

In order to lure industries to set up base here, ICAI plans to arrange a chief financial officer (CFO) meet in Kolkata in January. "CEOs of other countries will also be invited so that big companies can foray in West Bengal," he added.

Market Snapshot

Index	Open	High	Low	Close	Chg %Chg
BSE-100	8185.54	8250.82	8130.88	8157.03	-0.97 -0.73
BSE-200	1920.67	1936.55	1909.18	1914.89	-12.35 -0.64
BSE-500	6021.34	6074.77	5989.44	6008.93	-31.06 -0.51
BSE AUTO	8397.71	8518.79	8324.19	8368.36	-108.91 -1.29
BSE BANKEX	9702.39	9843.96	9675.98	9778.7	26.2 0.27
BSE-CD	5416.71	5897.07	5616.29	5719.9	33.29 0.58
BSE-FCMG	3917.76	3937.46	3891.65	3899.57	-28.73 -0.73
BSE-HC	5947.29	5992.89	5921.08	5972.02	-20.9 -0.35
BSE-IT	5501.27	5566.51	5388.88	5403.55	-113.7 -2.06
BSE MID-CAP	5595.57	5606.87	5570.71	5612.63	21.3 0.38
BSE METALS	9665.14	10032.02	9840.27	9874.97	-165.44 -1.65
BSE OIL & GAS	8005.19	8011.21	7893.75	7992.64	-130.37 -1.62
BSE-PSU	6657.28	6738.77	6606.39	6659.29	39.54 0.59
BSE SMALL-CAP	5998.85	6089.72	5990.44	6049.33	-50.51 -0.84
SENSEX	15812.25	15891.05	15645.78	15693.43	-163.06 -1.03
BSE-TECH	3329.12	3329.12	3277.3	3286.11	-54.3 -1.63
CXN 100	4623.65	4661.8	4591.55	4603.83	-36.1 -0.78
CXN MIDCAP	6586.4	6660.45	6554.1	6597.1	11.2 0.17
S&P CNX 500	3749.15	3782.52	3729.75	3742.65	-20.65 -0.55
S&P CNX 100	8438.2	8558.6	8360.55	8488.6	16.1 0.19
S&P CNX NIFTY	4731.3	4767.3	4693.1	4710.05	-46.4 -0.98

Listings are in this order: Company, Open, High, Close, % Change. The last column gives dividend on Tuesday, Value on Wednesday, P-E ratio on Thursday, Face Value on Friday and EPS on Saturday. BSE prices in regular style, while NSE prices are italicised.

BSE GROUP ANSE

Company	NSE	BSE	Chg %Chg	52-wk H	52-wk L	EPS
ABB	612.2	612.5	4.39	907.51	62.0	
ACC	1120.3	1119.4	0.93	1233.97	57.8	
ACC Entel	230.9	231.1	1.13	269.27	29.1	
ACC Infra	893.6	892.4	0.84	1000.78	82.1	
ACC Infra Hilo	20.9	21.3	1.13	23.11	2.3	
ACC Infra L&L	2173.3	2173.3	0.00	2444.11	70.3	
ACC Infra P&G	187.2	187.2	0.00	210.11	24.1	
ACC Infra S&C	17.6	17.6	0.00	20.11	2.1	
ACC Infra T&E	41.5	41.5	0.00	45.11	4.5	
ACC Infra W&A	14.5	14.5	0.00	16.11	1.6	
ACC Infra X&Y	28.5	28.5	0.00	31.11	3.1	
ACC Infra Z	11.5	11.5	0.00	12.11	1.2	
ACC Infra AA	17.6	17.6	0.00	19.11	1.9	
ACC Infra AB	18.5	18.5	0.00	20.11	2.0	
ACC Infra AC	19.5	19.5	0.00	21.11	2.1	
ACC Infra AD	20.5	20.5	0.00	22.11	2.2	
ACC Infra AE	21.5	21.5	0.00	23.11	2.3	
ACC Infra AF	22.5	22.5	0.00	24.11	2.4	
ACC Infra AG	23.5	23.5	0.00	25.11	2.5	
ACC Infra AH	24.5	24.5	0.00	26.11	2.6	
ACC Infra AI	25.5	25.5	0.00	27.11	2.7	
ACC Infra AJ	26.5	26.5	0.00	28.11	2.8	
ACC Infra AK	27.5	27.5	0.00	29.11	2.9	
ACC Infra AL	28.5	28.5	0.00	30.11	3.0	
ACC Infra AM	29.5	29.5	0.00	31.11	3.1	
ACC Infra AN	30.5	30.5	0.00	32.11	3.2	
ACC Infra AO	31.5	31.5	0.00	33.11	3.3	
ACC Infra AP	32.5	32.5	0.00	34.11	3.4	
ACC Infra AQ	33.5	33.5	0.00	35.11	3.5	
ACC Infra AR	34.5	34.5	0.00	36.11	3.6	
ACC Infra AS	35.5	35.5	0.00	37.11	3.7	
ACC Infra AT	36.5	36.5	0.00	38.11	3.8	
ACC Infra AU	37.5	37.5	0.00	39.11	3.9	
ACC Infra AV	38.5	38.5	0.00	40.11	4.0	
ACC Infra AW	39.5	39.5	0.00	41.11	4.1	
ACC Infra AX	40.5	40.5	0.00	42.11	4.2	
ACC Infra AY	41.5	41.5	0.00	43.11	4.3	
ACC Infra AZ	42.5	42.5	0.00	44.11	4.4	
ACC Infra BA	43.5	43.5	0.00	45.11	4.5	
ACC Infra BB	44.5	44.5	0.00	46.11	4.6	
ACC Infra BC	45.5	45.5	0.00	47.11	4.7	
ACC Infra BD	46.5	46.5	0.00	48.11	4.8	
ACC Infra BE	47.5	47.5	0.00	49.11	4.9	
ACC Infra BF	48.5	48.5	0.00	50.11	5.0	
ACC Infra BG	49.5	49.5	0.00	51.11	5.1	
ACC Infra BH	50.5	50.5	0.00	52.11	5.2	
ACC Infra BI	51.5	51.5	0.00	53.11	5.3	
ACC Infra BJ	52.5	52.5	0.00	54.11	5.4	
ACC Infra BK	53.5	53.5	0.00	55.11	5.5	
ACC Infra BL	54.5	54.5	0.00	56.11	5.6	
ACC Infra BM	55.5	55.5	0.00	57.11	5.7	
ACC Infra BN	56.5	56.5	0.00	58.11	5.8	
ACC Infra BO	57.5	57.5	0.00	59.11	5.9	
ACC Infra BP	58.5	58.5	0.00	60.11	6.0	
ACC Infra BQ	59.5	59.5	0.00	61.11	6.1	
ACC Infra BR	60.5	60.5	0.00	62.11	6.2	
ACC Infra BS	61.5	61.5	0.00	63.11	6.3	
ACC Infra BT	62.5	62.5	0.00	64.11	6.4	
ACC Infra BU	63.5	63.5	0.00	65.11	6.5	
ACC Infra BV	64.5	64.5	0.00	66.11	6.6	
ACC Infra BW	65.5	65.5	0.00	67.11	6.7	
ACC Infra BX	66.5	66.5	0.00	68.11	6.8	
ACC Infra BY	67.5	67.5	0.00	69.11	6.9	
ACC Infra BZ	68.5	68.5	0.00	70.11	7.0	
ACC Infra CA	69.5	69.5	0.00	71.11	7.1	
ACC Infra CB	70.5	70.5	0.00	72.11	7.2	
ACC Infra CC	71.5	71.5	0.00	73.11	7.3	
ACC Infra CD	72.5	72.5	0.00	74.11	7.4	
ACC Infra CE	73.5	73.5	0.00	75.11	7.5	
ACC Infra CF	74.5	74.5	0.00	76.11	7.6	
ACC Infra CG	75.5	75.5	0.00	77.11	7.7	
ACC Infra CH	76.5	76.5	0.00	78.11	7.8	
ACC Infra CI	77.5	77.5	0.00	79.11	7.9	
ACC Infra CJ	78.5	78.5	0.00	80.11	8.0	
ACC Infra CK	79.5	79.5	0.00	81.11	8.1	
ACC Infra CL	80.5	80.5	0.00	82.11	8.2	
ACC Infra CM	81.5	81.5	0.00	83.11	8.3	
ACC Infra CN	82.5	82.5	0.00	84.11	8.4	
ACC Infra CO	83.5	83.5	0.00	85.11	8.5	
ACC Infra CP	84.5	84.5	0.00	86.11	8.6	
ACC Infra CQ	85.5	85.5	0.00	87.11	8.7	
ACC Infra CR	86.5	86.5	0.00	88.11	8.8	
ACC Infra CS	87.5	87.5	0.00	89.11	8.9	
ACC Infra CT	88.5	88.5	0.00	90.11	9.0	
ACC Infra CU	89.5	89.5	0.00	91.11	9.1	
ACC Infra CV	90.5	90.5	0.00	92.11	9.2	
ACC Infra CW	91.5	91.5	0.00	93.11	9.3	
ACC Infra CX	92.5	92.5	0.00	94.11	9.4	
ACC Infra CY	93.5	93.5	0.00	95.11	9.5	
ACC Infra CZ	94.5	94.5	0.00	96.11	9.6	
ACC Infra DA	95.5	95.5	0.00	97.11	9.7	
ACC Infra DB	96.5	96.5	0.00	98.11	9.8	
ACC Infra DC	97.5	97.5	0.00	99.11	9.9	
ACC Infra DD	98.5	98.5	0.00	100.11	10.0	
ACC Infra DE	99.5	99.5	0.00	101.11	10.1	
ACC Infra DF	100.5	100.5	0.00	102.11	10.2	
ACC Infra DG	101.5	101.5	0.00	103.11	10.3	
ACC Infra DH	102.5	102.5	0.00	104.11	10.4	
ACC Infra DI	103.5	103.5	0.00	105.11	10.5	
ACC Infra DJ	104.5	104.5	0.00	106.11	10.6	
ACC Infra DK	105.5	105.5	0.00	107.11	10.7	
ACC Infra DL	106.5	106.5	0.00	108.11	10.8	
ACC Infra DM	107.5	107.5	0.00	109.11	10.9	
ACC Infra DN	108.5	108.5	0.00	110.11	11.0	
ACC Infra DO	109.5	109.5	0.00	111.11	11.1	
ACC Infra DP	110.5	110.5	0.00	112.11	11.2	
ACC Infra DQ	111.5	111.5	0.00	113.11	11.3	
ACC Infra DR	112.5	112.5	0.00	114.11	11.4	
ACC Infra DS	113.5	113.5	0.00	115.11	11.5	
ACC Infra DT	114.5	114.5	0.00	116.11	11.6	
ACC Infra DU	115.5	115.5	0.00	117.11	11.7	
ACC Infra DV	116.5	116.5	0.00	118.11	11.8	
ACC Infra DW	117.5	117.5	0.00	119.11	11.9	
ACC Infra DX	118.5	118.5	0.00	120.11	12.0	
ACC Infra DY	119.5	119.5	0.00	121.11	12.1	
ACC Infra DZ	120.5	120.5	0.00	122.11	12.2	
ACC Infra EA	121.5	121.5	0.00	123.11	12.3	
ACC Infra EB	122.5	122.5	0.00	124.11	12.4	
ACC Infra EC	123.5	123.5	0.00	125.11	12.5	
ACC Infra ED	124.5	124.5	0.00	126.11	12.6	
ACC Infra EE	125.5	125.5	0.00	127.11	12.7	
ACC Infra EF	126.5	126.5	0.00	128.11	12.8	
ACC Infra EG	127.5	127.5	0.00	129.11	12.9	
ACC Infra EH	128.5	128.5	0.00	130.11	13.0	
ACC Infra EI	129.5	129.5	0.00	131.11	13.1	
ACC Infra EJ	130.5	130.5	0.00	132.11	13.2	
ACC Infra EK	131.5	131.5	0.00	133.11	13.3	
ACC Infra EL	132.5	132.5	0.00	134.11	13.4	
ACC Infra EM	133.5	133.5	0.00	135.11	13.5	
ACC Infra EN	134.5	134.5	0.00	136.11	13.6	
ACC Infra EO	135.5	135.5	0.00	137.11	13.7	
ACC Infra EP	136.5	136.5	0.00	138.11	13.8	
ACC Infra EQ	137.5	137.5	0.00	139.11	13.9	
ACC Infra ER	138.5	138.5	0.00	140.11	14.0	
ACC Infra ES	139.5	139.5	0.00	141.11	14.1	
ACC Infra ET	140.5	140.5	0.00	142.11	14.2	
ACC Infra EU	141.5	141.5	0.00	143.11	14.3	
ACC Infra EV	142.5	142.5	0.00	144.11	14.4	
ACC Infra EW	143.5	143.5	0.00	145.11	14.	

Djokovic left sweating by Tipsarevic



■ Janko Tipsarevic of Serbia during a Group A singles match of the ATP World Tour Finals in London on Friday. — AFP

London: Novak Djokovic was left sweating for a place in the semi-finals of the ATP World Tour Finals on Friday after losing for the first time in his career to fellow-Serb Janko Tipsarevic.

Meanwhile, Rafael Nadal bowed out of the ATP World Tour Finals on Thursday as for the second time in 48 hours, the Spaniard had no answer against an inspired opponent, this time in the imposing form of French powerhouse Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

World No. 1 Djokovic looked on course for victory when he cruised through the first set of his final Group A match but was outplayed after that in a 3-6, 6-3, 6-3 defeat. Djokovic ended with one win and two defeats in round-robin play and needs Spain's David Ferrer, who is already guaranteed a place in the semi-finals, to beat Tomas Berdych later at the O2 for him to scramble into the last four. If Berdych beats Ferrer, the Czech would win the group with Ferrer as runner-up.

Knowing he required a handsome win to put maximum pressure on Berdych later, Djokovic locked straight into his rhythm from baseline and broke to lead 3-1 on his way to the opening set.

World No. 9 Tipsarevic, playing his second match after stepping in for the injured Andy Murray, managed to stay with his Davis Cup teammate in the second set although he was made to work overtime on his service games.

Djokovic, who labelled his poor showing against Ferrer his "worst match" of an incredible season, treated another large crowd to

some trademark winners from impossible positions, including one perfect topspin lob.

Tipsarevic, who lost to Berdych on Wednesday despite having a match point, began to strike the ball with more venom and broke for the first time to lead 4-2 when an ambitious Djokovic dropshot attempt landed in the net.

Suddenly, a match Djokovic appeared to have firmly under control began to unravel and, although he broke back immediately, Tipsarevic seized on some errors in the next game to regain the advantage and then held serve to set up a deciding set.

Tipsarevic carried his momentum into the third set and broke with an angled winner after dragging Djokovic to the net with a drop shot. Djokovic never looked like recovering and by the end he looked almost uninterested, ending the contest when he buried a forehand into the net.

While Roger Federer's thrashing of Nadal was a masterful demonstration of the sport's classical arts, Tsonga's 7-6, 4-6, 6-3 victory in the final match of Group B was a sustained barrage of heavy artillery that eventually overwhelmed the former world No. 1. Tsonga, 26, joined group winner Federer in the semi-finals after the Swiss maintained his 100 percent record with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 defeat of American Mardy Fish in a dead rubber. Defeat extended Nadal's mediocre record at the season-end.

In the five years he has qualified he has only made the final once, losing to Federer at the O2

Arena last year. This year he never looked like adding the prestigious title to his 10 Grand Slams from the opening day when he laboured past tournament debutant Fish in three sets.

"I think I didn't play well tonight (Thursday)," the 25-year-old, who since winning the French Open for a sixth time in June has not won another title, told reporters. "The first two sets I didn't play bad, but I didn't play well, and to win these kind of matches you have to play well. I played without anything special tonight (Thursday)."

While Nadal was clearly disappointed with the level of his performance it would be harsh to take anything away from Tsonga who produced one of the best performances of his career to reach the semi-finals of the event for the first time. "Tonight (Thursday), I just played amazing tennis," Tsonga told reporters, adding that he spent the day before the match looking at the video of his run to the Australian Open final in 2008 when he also beat Nadal. "I was looking at that and I thought, 'Wow!' Before I had lots of energy and I was running faster, hitting harder, but I was crazy on court. This year, maybe I've improved this, but I'm better in my head."

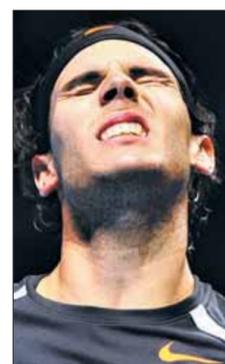
Crunching huge groundstrokes off both wings and storming the net to pound down smashes and some silky volleys, Tsonga continually worried the Nadal serve without being able to engineer the break his play deserved. — Reuters

Passion has been missing: Nadal

London: Former world No. 1 Rafael Nadal admitted he has struggled of late to rekindle his passion for tennis on Thursday after defeat by Jo-Wilfried Tsonga sent him spinning out of the ATP World Tour Finals at the group stage. The 25-year-old Spaniard ended 2010 as the dominant force in men's tennis after completing his career Grand Slam but apart from a sixth French Open crown in June, this year has been a disappointing one by his sky-high standards.

His 7-6, 4-6, 6-3 defeat by French powerhouse Tsonga came just two days after he was thrashed in an hour by great rival Roger Federer and the zip and spark is clearly missing from his game. Nadal, who has played just three tournaments since losing to Novak Djokovic in the US Open final, one of several painful defeats this year by the Serb world No. 1, offered an explanation in a packed news conference. "Seriously I could talk for one hour about that," the 10-times Grand Slam champion said. "It's because of lots of things. Because probably I was little bit less passionate for the game, probably I was a little bit more tired than usual."

"I'm happy how I practised the last three weeks. But to compete I wasn't in the right way. We can find excuses, we can find problems, but it's not the moment to say that."



■ Rafael Nadal reacts after losing a point against Tsonga in London on Thursday. — AFP

"In your career you have moments where you come back, then you go down. Today is not my best moment."

While one Grand Slam title and defeats in the Wimbledon and US Open finals would be rated as a massive achievement by mere mortals, 2011 will certainly not be one he looks back on particularly fondly. However, he said after trying to win the Davis Cup for Spain in Seville next weekend he would get himself ready to come back firing at the Australian Open in January.

"I'm going to continue with the right practice like I had the last three weeks," he said. — Reuters

In The Spotlight for first Classic

Our Racing Correspondent

Kolkata: The first Classic of the ongoing season — the Calcutta 1000 Guineas — will be the star attraction at races here on Saturday. Nine fillies, all three-year-olds, will face the starter for the 1,600m contest.

With some of the best riders coming down for the event, the contest has all the incentives to draw a decent crowd. The experiment of substantially increasing the stake money that began at this centre a couple of years back looks to be paying dividends now.

This has been revealed in the fact that despite clashing with Bangalore, 1000 Guineas on the same Saturday afternoon, Kolkata has not been at a loss in the bargain.

Notwithstanding the presence of seven other runners in the pack, the Classic boils down as a straight contest between In The Spotlight and Secrecy. The former is a Bangalore challenger trained by Padmanabhan.

In The Spotlight, the Alnasr Alwasheek filly, has won the Mysore 1000 Guineas and the Hyderabad Derby on her way to Kolkata.

Local hope Secrecy will be sporting Khaitan colours and the Vijay Singh-trained China Visit filly will be ridden by local champion C Alford. Though she is yet to win a classic, she is already the winner of four races from six starts.

So in the contest on Saturday, In The Spotlight is expected to prevail over Secrecy to win the first classic of the season.

Selections

12.15 p.m.: ACCREWS 1, Isle Of Capri 2, Hurricane Star 3.

12.45 p.m.: SONGSTRESS 1, Secret Gloss 2, Sumangala 3.

1.15 p.m.: LAKE SUNRISE 1, Gods Creation 2, Hadrian 3.

1.45 p.m.: ALBARELLO 1, Artemisia 2, Mama Morembo 3.

2.15 p.m.: ABRIELLA 1, Speed Angel 2, Classical Romance 3.

2.45 p.m.: ROYAL BLUE STAR 1, Alienation 2, Alexander 3.

3.15 p.m.: CON ARTISTE 1, Welcome Smile 2, Amor Amor 3.

3.45 p.m.: IN THE SPOTLIGHT 1, Secrecy 2, Two In One 3.

4.15 p.m.: WHISLING STRAIT 1, Bavaria 2, Phlox 3.

Day's best: Lake Sunrise

Fantastic Federer plays down fuss over hectic schedule

London: Roger Federer still looked as fresh as a daisy as he polished off Mardy Fish to post a 100 percent record in the group stage of the ATP World Tour Finals on Thursday which is more than can be said for most of his main rivals. No wonder then that arguably the greatest player ever to wield a tennis racket is perfectly happy with the schedule and dismissed the distant prospect of a players' strike as "nonsense".

Andy Murray, the man who jumped above Federer to third in the world rankings this year, pulled out of the London showpiece with a groin injury, world No. 1 Novak Djokovic looks jaded after struggling with a shoulder problem and great rival Rafael Nadal has lacked spark for a few months. At 30, the Swiss 16-times champion is the oldest of the nine players at the season-end in London this year, but judging by the way he is ending the season his sell-by date is clearly some way off and, for him at least, the crowded nature of the ATP Tour calendar is not a major issue. Murray sparked talk of a strike in September when said those organising the Tour were not sympathetic to the demands on the players' bodies, although the Scot later said there had never been a meeting to propose any kind of boycott.

Meanwhile Federer, who ended the year without a Grand Slam title for the first time since 2002, rolled past 800 Tour wins and claimed



■ Roger Federer

back-to-back titles in Basel and Paris. On Tuesday he thrashed Nadal for the loss of three games and is favourite to win the season-end for a record sixth time. Asked about the gruelling season and talk of strikes, Federer dismissed them out of hand. "Next year's season is going to be shortened by two weeks," he told reporters after a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 defeat of Fish — a useful warm-up for Saturday's semi-finals.

"That's I think as much as we can squeeze it really because otherwise a lot of tournaments would have to go or we would have four tournaments the same week, which I don't think is a very smart idea, to be honest, for the game."

Practice-less India face Belgium in opener

Johannesburg: Forced to play the event after losing out on an automatic spot in next year's Champions Trophy hockey tournament, erstwhile champions India would be desperate to open their Champions Challenge campaign on a perfect note against a tricky Belgium here on Saturday.

As hosts, earlier India were to feature in the eight-nation Champions Trophy, before the tournament was shifted to New Zealand by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) citing problems with the governance of the sport in the country amidst the ongoing rift between two national bodies — Hockey India and Indian Hockey Federation.

New Zealand thus got the hosts slot in the Champions

Trophy in place of India, who were drawn in the second-rung Champions Challenge tournament, whose winner would get an automatic qualification to the next year's elite FIH tournament.

But since landing here four days ago, all is not going well for the Indians as they go into their tournament opener without any practice game, courtesy inclement weather.

Pune Strykers unveiled for WSH

Pune Strykers, to be owned by Sai Grace Sports and Events Private Limited (SGSEPL), became the third team to be unveiled for the controversial multi-million dollar World Series Hockey starting next month. — PTI

Anand scores yet another draw

Moscow: World Champion Viswanathan Anand's hope of winning the Tal Memorial chess championship is all but over after the Indian played out a draw against Hikaru Nakamura in the penultimate round here.

With his eighth consecutive draw in as many rounds in the 10-player round robin tournament, Anand is almost out of the reckoning for a top finish as he has only four points in his kitty out of a possible eight. Anand will face his world championship challenger Boris Gelfand of Israel in the next round.

Levon Aronian displayed immaculate technique and great determination to beat Peter Svidler of Russia and surge ahead in the points table with one round still to go. On a day when the other games ended in draw affairs, Aronian took his tally to five points in all and is now followed by Russian duo of Sergey Karjakin

and Ian Nepomniachtchi, Vassily Ivanchuk of Ukraine and Magnus Carlsen of Norway, who all have 4.5 points apiece.

Anand holds the sixth spot while Russians Vladimir Kramnik and Peter Svidler are tied on the seventh spot on 3.5 points each. Sharing the last spot are Gelfand and Nakamura of United States. Against Nakamura, Anand tried to make his last white count but missed the opportunity. Nakamura employed the King's Indian defense and faced the Saemisch variation and Indian ace was soon in control after an unwarranted pawn advance by the American on the queen side.

Another inaccuracy by the American left the pawn hanging but Anand missed the opportunity and the game ended in a draw after 33 moves. Aronian was in control right through a positional squeeze against Svidler. Not going for

topical variations, Aronian chose a subtle line that gave white a minimal advantage and the grind was on for a long time. Svidler went for passive defense when he should have been looking for counter play in the queen and minor pieces endgame and that cost him dearly.

With a remarkable knight sacrifice, Aronian created passed pawns that the Knight was unable to stop. The game lasted 54 moves. In other games of the day, Magnus Carlsen could not avoid an equalising break through in the centre against Nepomniachtchi from a Sicilian Rossolimo and subsequent exchanges led to a draw by perpetual checks.

Vladimir Kramnik could not make headway after Karjakin defused the tension and drew in 43 moves while in a Semi Slav defense, Gelfand found a piece sacrifice to force a draw with Vassily Ivanchuk. — PTI

Ireland join Oz at top spot

Haikou (China): Ireland lived up to their billing as the tournament's title favourites when they charged back into contention with a four under-par 68 to take a share of the second round lead with Australia at the Omega Mission Hills World Cup here on Friday.

Australia's Brendan Jones and Richard Green could not maintain their overnight advantage after they marked their card with three birdies, three bogeys and an eagle to sign for a two-day total of 13-under-par 131 at the Mission Hills Resort in Hainan Island.

Scotland, led by Stephen Gallacher and Martin Laird, are single shot behind the Australians and Irish after they carded a 69 to take third place on 132. The Irish partnership of past and present US Open champions, Rory

McIlroy and Graeme McDowell, dropped two shots on the 11th and 13th holes after they three-putted for bogeys.

However, the Major winners showed their credentials when they responded impressively with six birdies on holes four, six, seven, 12, 14 and 16. "I think both of us are very pleased about the score that we ended up shooting today (Friday). I think anything in the 60s in the foursomes format is a very reasonable score out there," said McIlroy.

"There's still a lot of golf to be played this week, so it'll be nice to get out there tomorrow (on Saturday) again and enjoy the fourballs and be aggressive and make a few more birdies," added McIlroy.

McDowell was full of praise for his playing partner who is the highest ranked player at

world number two this week. "Alternate shot is a very difficult format. We struggled to find our rhythm a little bit on the front nine. Rory really putted well today (Friday), which kept things together. I've struggled a little bit on the greens the last couple of days, but I was happy the way I swung the club in general today (Friday) again and Rory is playing lovely," said McDowell.

Australia stunned the field with their blistering 61 on the opening day but were made to labour hard for their 70 in the testing foursomes format. "The important thing for us is that we are still at the top, and everybody is chasing us and we are chasing Ireland now. We can't win the tournament today (Friday), but we sure could have fallen back in the field," said Jones. — PTI

Inclement weather may force cancellation

Chennai: After being shifted here from Buddh International Circuit in Delhi, the fifth and final leg of the JK Tyre National Road Racing Championship starting on Saturday may end up a non-starter due to inclement weather conditions.

The shifting of the two-day event was necessitated as BIC authorities in Delhi closed it for "maintenance". The championship contenders may have to deal with more back-markers and fewer overtaking chances as races will be run over a short loop rather than the full track due to waterlogging. After overseeing preparations to get the track practice ready, Clerk of Course Amit Arora told drivers that the races will be run over 15 laps on the 2.1 km short loop instead of 10 laps over the full length of 3.71 km "in the interest of safety".

Coimbatore's V Rajivirah of Prime Racing has virtually won Indian Touring Cars (Super Saloon) title with 174 points with two more races to go. Veteran Leela Krishnan has 126 points. Perhaps for the first time, the field is wide open as top three contenders are close on point tables for individual titles in all but one class of five category races.

In Formula Swift category, Mars Racing teammates, Chennai lad R Deepak and Mumbai's Ameya Walawalkar are locked in a tussle for the title, with the former leading by five points. Deepak hopes to maintain his form. "I was unable to secure any points after someone or the other made contact with my car in the first race in September and October," he said. — PTI

Riot-hit London gets makeover

London: The charred buildings damaged in last August's riots stand out like black teeth on Woolwich's central square, a stark image made all the more gruesome as the area in east London has been given a makeover in time for next year's Olympics.

The burnt shops lie in walking distance of the Royal Artillery Barracks, one of three Olympic venues in the borough of Greenwich. But while the scars inflicted three months ago remain, locals are already turning their attention to next summer. "It will help the area forget the riots," said Errol Briscoe, a 51-year-old thinly-built former builder wearing a black baseball cap. "Anything will help Woolwich forget them."

When rioters smashed windows, looted shops and burned down businesses during four days of rampage in the capital, much of the focus was on Hackney, north of the river, and Croydon, to the west.

Market trader John Hadden sug-



■ A man cycles along a canal near the Olympic stadium in east London on Thursday. — Reuters

gested Woolwich, south of the river Thames and the main Olympic Park, had been deliberately underreported by the media because of its Olympic sta-

tion. "Every window was smashed, the area was devastated," he said. "I wonder whether if it was kept out of the newspapers deliberately." — Reuters

Short Takes

Webber fastest, Hulkenberg 8th

Sao Paulo: Red Bull's Mark Webber, with one last chance to win a race in a year dominated by teammate Sebastian Vettel, lapped fastest in first practice for the season-ending Brazilian Formula One Grand Prix on Friday. Force India's Nico Hulkenberg set the eighth fastest time while his teammate Paul di Resta was 9th fastest in the first free practice session.

Santosh Bose passes away

Kolkata: Former footballer Santosh Bose, who had been suffering from fever for the past few days, passed away on Friday at the age of 57 shortly after he was discharged from Peerless Hospital. He was the custodian of East Bengal, Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting. According to reports, he was about to be shifted to AMRI hospital but a while after he left Peerless, he succumbed to cardiac arrest.

IFA to clash with JCT in final

Kolkata: IFA Academy inched past TFA by a solitary goal in the first semi-final of the All India Inter Academy Football Tournament organised by Mohun Bagan Sail Football Academy at Durgapur on Friday. In the other match, JCT emerged as the winner against Mohun Bagan in the tie-breaker (4-2) after the score-line ended in a draw (1-1) in the regulation time. The finalists will now lock horns on Sunday for the title.

Salem, Madurai win YMCA group matches

Kolkata: Salem YMCA defeated Delhi YMCA 3-1 in the Men's first group league match of the 30th All India Inter-YMCA Table Tennis Championships here on Friday. Meanwhile in the women's team event, Madurai got the better of Salem 3-0.

East Bengal fall for low total

Kolkata: East Bengal were bundled out for 193 by Sporting Union in an A N Ghosh tie at the Jadavpur University Salt Lake ground. Rishi Sharma and Sourav Mondal had three wickets each. Sporting were 33 for one at stumps on Day 1. At the Kalyani stadium, Laxmi Ratan Shukla and Wriddhiman Saha hit centuries as Mohun Bagan scored 395 for eight in their 85 overs against Mohammedan Sporting.

Summarised scores
■ East Bengal 193 (D Chakraborty 55; R Sharma 3/32). **Sporting Union** 33/1. ■ Mohun Bagan 395/8 (L Shukla 128, W Saha 138; Asrafuddin 5/75) v Mohammedan Sporting. ■ Shyambazar Club 335 (K Kumar 63; I Saxena 3/70) v Kalighat Club. ■ BNR 334/9 (A Das 167 n.o.; H Pandey 3/69) v Bhowanipore Club. All matches to continue.

Khalil replaces injured Junaid

Lahore: Pakistan left-arm pacer Mohammed Khalil will join the national cricket team as a replacement for injured Junaid Khan in Bangladesh for the One-Day series, kicking off with a Twenty20 next week.

Pakistan court bars Zee deal

Lahore: A Pakistani court on Friday barred the state-run broadcaster from concluding a deal with Ten Sports regarding sub-licensing of the broadcast rights for ICC cricket during 2012-15 following insinuations that the sports channel is owned by an Indian entity.

Humpy draws, Yifan victorious

Tirana (Albania): Grandmaster Koneru Humpy settled for a draw in the must-win eighth-round game as defending champion Yifan Hou became the women's world champion by triumphing 5.5-2.5 against the Indian here.

— Our Correspondent & Agencies

Brazil opens drive against racism, Blatter's remarks

Sao Paulo: World Cup 2014 hosts Brazil appeared to publicly slam Fifa chief Sepp Blatter when they launched a campaign against racism in sports on Thursday. The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) named this weekend's penultimate round of matches in the Brazilian championship the "Round against Racism".

"The message the body wants to give... is of protest against the intolerance many players suffer on the pitches of various countries and which ought to be vehemently condemned by the whole football universe," the CBF said in a statement. "Racism is not resolved with a handshake and none of those who suffer it forget it the next day," CBF president Ricardo Teixeira said in the statement. The statement appeared to rebuff Fifa president Blatter, who said in an interview last week that incidents of racist abuse during a match should be settled with a handshake after the final whistle. Blatter, surprised by the widespread outrage of his remarks, later apologised publicly.

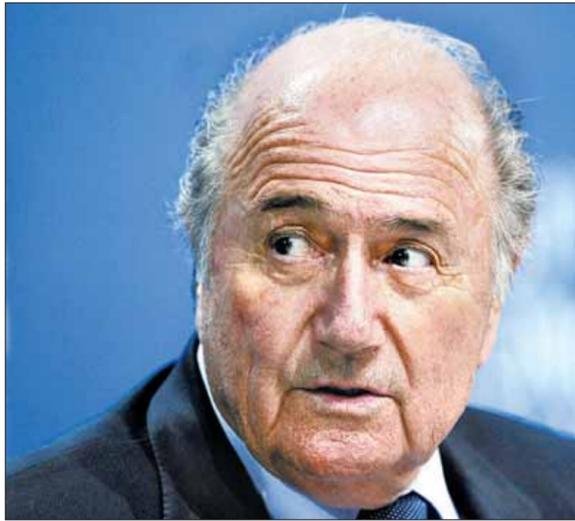
The CBF, listing several instances of Brazilian players being the object of racism,



■ (Left) A Manchester City fan displays a banner during a match against Newcastle United and Sepp Blatter after his re-election as the Fifa president in June, 2011

said in 2011 alone former Brazil internationals Gilberto Silva and Roberto Carlos and present Brazil players Marcelo and Neymar were among many who had suffered racist insults from fans or opponents. "It cannot be justified in the heat of a match nor interpreted as the gesture of a fan. It's something intolerable that doesn't mix with the sport," Teixeira added. "People who don't understand football is for everyone and not just for one race should be banned definitively from the sport."

Brazil coach Mano Menezes said there should be strong punishment for people guilty of racism. "It's very easy for a person to shake another's hand after a match to say sorry for an insult towards what (the other) holds most sacred and significant. The solution is to find in existing laws a means to



give out a very strong punishment," he said. Blatter's remarks were strongly criticised in Britain where Sports Minister Hugh Robertson and English Professional Footballers' Association chief executive Gordon Taylor called for his resignation. — Reuters

Feuding Ajax to opt for Cruyff or Van Gaal

Rotterdam: Ajax Amsterdam must decide next month whether the great Johan Cruyff or Louis van Gaal, who coached them to their last European Cup triumph 16 years ago, will be chosen to try to lead them back to the summit of the European game. The decision will be made following an internal political war that has dragged on for months and has even involved allegations of racism against Cruyff which he has denied. The Dutch maestro, one of the finest players to grace the game, is a man with strong views who has never got on well with Van Gaal and has alienated others with his opinions.

The tensions underlying attempts to restore the Dutch champions to their former glory have simmered for months and they exploded on Sunday with racism allegations on Dutch TV. Edgar Davids, another former Dutch

international who had two spells at Ajax, said in a television interview that he had been racially abused during his time on the club's board. Although Davids did not name the person involved, Ajax supervisory board chairman Steven ten Have later said on Dutch TV that Cruyff had told Davids: "You are only on the board because you are black."

Cruyff has strongly denied the racism allegations, saying in his weekly De Telegraaf newspaper column on Tuesday: "Ajax is a multicultural club and we have found that many talented immigrant players quit when they reach puberty. So we wanted to tackle this problem with someone from the same background who had come through it. And that was Edgar Davids. During one of our fights I pointed that out to him. But it had nothing to do with his skin colour." — Reuters



■ Johan Cruyff



■ Louis van Gaal

'Unauthorised bonuses before IPL 2'

Pretoria: Cricket South Africa executives could have been getting "unauthorised" bonuses even before receiving the controversial payments for hosting IPL's 2009 season currently the subject of an inquiry ordered by sports minister Fikile Mbalula, a former Cricket South Africa member has claimed. Former chairman of the Remuneration Committee of CSA, Paul Harris, made the claim on the first day of open hearings at the inquiry headed up by Judge Chris Nicholson. The hearing was closed to the media when it started on Wednesday, but Nicholson later moved it to a bigger venue and allowed them access.

Harris had blown the whistle on huge bonuses that CSA paid to CEO Gerald Majola and other executives without the sanction of the board for IPL 2 which was hosted in South Africa two years ago due to security concerns in India at that time because of elections. Harris was subsequently dropped from the board. Harris told the inquiry that similar unauthorised payments could have started already when the Twenty20 World Cup was hosted in South Africa in 2007. He said the director of the tournament Steve Elworthy, who has since left CSA, got a bonus for the event. "The money was meant to come to CSA and then be dispersed. I believe that it created a precedent of non-disclosure of payments," Harris said. — PTI

Aussies face injury crisis before Test

Sydney: Australia's new head coach Mickey Arthur faces a major injury crisis for next week's first Test against fierce rivals New Zealand, with five players including three pace bowlers out of action. For his opening match in charge the 43-year-old South African, the first non-Australian to be handed the job, will be missing all-rounder Shane Watson and batsman Shaun Marsh for the December 1 show-down at the Gabba in Brisbane. Also out with injury are pacer Mitchell Johnson, Ryan Harris and youngster Pat Cummins. The team will be announced on Saturday. Harris, who returned home early from the tour to South Africa, remains sidelined by pelvis trouble and Watson, has a hamstring injury which he picked up in the second Test against South Africa in Johannesburg earlier this week.

Marsh has yet to return to training from the back injury he sustained in South Africa, while Johnson hurt his left foot while batting in the second innings of the second Test in South Africa. Exciting teenage fast bowling discovery Cummins has a painful left heel and despite scans clearing him of serious injury, Cricket Australia said on Friday he is unlikely to recover in time for Brisbane. "We unfortunately suffered some injuries during the recent Test series against South Africa," Cricket Australia general manager Pat Howard said in a

statement. "With such a short turnaround time between series, five players who were involved in the (South Africa) series will not fully recover in time to play the first Test against New Zealand."

Australia team physiotherapist Alex Kountouris said injury-prone Harris had yet to bowl after returning home from South Africa. "Ryan Harris is recovering from the pelvis injury that kept him out of the second Test against South Africa," Kountouris said. "He is making good progress but has not returned to bowling as yet and is therefore unavailable to play the first Test against New Zealand."

Kountouris said a decision on his return to training will be made early next week. The team physio said Watson's condition will also be reviewed next week. Watson said he could not risk aggravating his hamstring.

"Even playing as a batsman I could still reinjure it, so it meant that it would really put my summer back in a big way if I did reinjure it," Watson said. Kountouris said he was hopeful Marsh will return to training next week and possibly could be available for selection for the second Hobart Test. Cummins, 18, who was Man of the Match in his debut Test in Johannesburg, is to be reviewed early next week to check on his progress from his heel injury, Kountouris said. — AFP

Snehasish strikes brace in Bagan's win

Our Correspondent

Kolkata: Mohun Bagan's winning streak in the Calcutta Football League was extended to three on Friday when they got the better of Peerless SC at their home ground 3-1.

Though Peerless dominated the first half, it was the green-and-maroon brigade who drew first blood in the 23rd minute, through midfielder Snehasish Chakraborty. For Peerless, Waheed pulled one back to draw level in the 32nd minute. But Mohun Bagan regained the lead when Snehasish struck again in the 76th minute, and Odafe Okolie completed the tally in the 81st.

Both sides tried to score repeatedly, but mispasses in the midfield marred the game. For Mohun Bagan, it was again the old warhorse Jose Ramirez Barreto who spearheaded the attack. He was supported well in his efforts by Gouranga Dutta and Odafe.

Adeunle Owolabi Waheed almost singlehandedly took the fight to the Mohun Bagan camp. Peerless looked up to him for most of the action and it was through him that they got their lone moment of glory. Off a free-kick, he struck to bring some consolation to his team.

Till half time scores were

level at 1-1. But Mohun Bagan got back into the game later in the second half. Peerless goalkeeper Sanjib Mondal failed to fist over Snehasish's shot off a corner. Odafe headed in the final goal for Mohun Bagan, off a picture-perfect free-kick from Gouranga.

Three yellow cards were shown on Friday. Goutam Thakur and Souvik Chakraborty were the offenders from Mohun Bagan, while Peerless' Danny Lal Dhusaka got one.

Mohun Bagan will next play BNR at their home ground on November 28.



■ Snehasish Chakraborty after the match at the Mohun Bagan ground on Friday. — BP

No panic, says Chelsea manager

London: Under-pressure manager Andre Villas-Boas resisted suggestions he may need the help of a more experienced man as he finalised struggling fifth-placed Chelsea's preparations to host Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday.

Asked if he would welcome assistance from former boss Guus Hiddink, he refused to comment, but conceded a crisis meeting took place following Wednesday's Champions League defeat at Bayer Leverkusen. He said changes were necessary, but not to his tactics or philosophy. After four defeats in seven league games, Villas-Boas hopes to welcome back England left-back Ashley Cole, after injury.

Wolves, hovering above the drop zone in 17th place, will be without midfielders Jaime O'Hara and Stephen Hunt as they seek a win at Stamford Bridge for the first time since 1979.

Striker Peter Crouch has a groin strain and is one of three injured Stoke City play-

ers struggling to play against 19th placed Blackburn Rovers. Winger Matthew Etherington and midfielder Rory Delap have back injuries, but defender Jonathan Woodgate has overcome a calf strain.

Blackburn are expected to be without key defenders

Chris Samba and Martin Olsson, with hamstring injuries, and Ryan Nelson, back in training, but not match-fit. Midfielder David Dunn is suspended after nine defeats in their opening 12 league games, 18th-placed Bolton Wanderers need defensive solidity as they seek a third successive home



■ Andre Villas-Boas (right) watches on as Ramires gestures during the match against Liverpool at Stamford Bridge on Sunday

Underdogs ready for an African safari

Margao: Goa XI will not start as favourites when they clash with Zambia on Saturday in the first friendly in celebration of the golden jubilee of the Goa Football Association at Nehru Stadium here. Given that the 80th-ranked visitors are much higher compared to India in Fifa rankings, home team coach Armando Colaco knows that it will be tough to compete against the Africans, especially with the cream of Goan players out on national duty. He has five foreigners in the starting line-up to match their rivals' attacking game.

"It's been a long time since we played against a foreign team. We're going to start as underdogs. It's going to be a learning experience for our boys and I am happy that our boys will get a chance to play against the highly-skilled foreign team," Colaco said. "My boys are all geared up and will put up a good fight and play entertaining game to keep the crowd happy."

The visitors, who have had two practice sessions since arriving in India, would take both the friendlies seriously as they want to select the right combina-

tion for the Africa Nations Cup 2012 to be held in January in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

The Chipopololo coach Herve Renard, who carried Zambia to the quarter-finals of the 2010 Africa Nations Cup where they lost to Nigeria, said many of their players could not come as they are busy playing in leagues across the world, notable among them are Chris Kotongo and James Chamago, who play in the Chinese top League, and Felix Kotongo, who plays with the famous Asia club Al-Ittihad. — PTI

Pakistan pocket T20 victory

Abu Dhabi: Pakistan snatched victory from Sri Lanka with three balls to spare in their lone Twenty20 international at Sheikh Zayed Stadium here on Friday. Misbah-ul Haq, on an unbeaten 48, guided his team to a fulfilling five-wicket win after bagging the ODI series 4-1 earlier in the week.

Earlier, Fast bowler Aizaz Cheema claimed four wickets while giving away just 30 runs in the four overs he bowled as Pakistan bowled Sri Lanka out for 141 in 19.3 overs. Sri Lanka won the toss and made a flying start thanks to openers Tillakaratne Dilshan (28) and Upul Tharanga (12), who added 30 for the first wicket off 3.2 overs.

Cheema removed Tharanga but Dinesh Chandimal struck 56 off 44 balls to continue the Sri Lanka surge. He combined with Dilshan to add 31 for the second wicket. Sri Lanka were well-placed at 91/3 at the halfway stage, but the innings crumbled in the final 10 overs. Saeed Ajmal (1/22) and Shahid Afridi (1/20) stifled the scoring before Cheema and Umar Gul (2/16) returned to wreck the lower order as Sri Lanka lost its last six wickets for eight runs.

Brief scores
■ Sri Lanka 141 (D Chandimal 56; A Cheema 4/30). **Pakistan** 142/5 (M Haq 48, A Shafiq 33). **Pakistan won by 5 wks.** — Agencies



■ Ricky Ponting at the launch event of the 2011/12 international Test cricket series in Sydney on Friday. — AFP

Ashwin lifts India on Day IV



West Indies players congratulate Ravichandran Ashwin on completing his century on the fourth day of the third Test at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Friday. — PTI

Mumbai: Sachin Tendulkar fell agonisingly short of his 100th international century once again before off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin lifted India's spirits with his maiden test century on the fourth day of the third Test against the West Indies on Friday.

India finally reached 482 all out in reply to West Indies' 590 and left-arm spinner Pragnan Ojha sent back Adrian Barath on three and Kirk Edwards (17) early to raise India's hopes of an unlikely victory. However,

Kraig Brathwaite (34 not out) and Darren Bravo (27 not out) then thwarted the visitors to take the West Indies to 81 for two at the close.

Ashwin, who took five wickets in the West Indies' innings, scored 103 to bring the smiles back to the faces of the Mumbai crowd after the disappointment of Tendulkar's latest near miss. Ashwin hit 15 boundaries and two sixes in his 118-ball knock and steered paceman Ravi Rampaul to the third man boundary to bring up his century. He departed to the next ball, miscuing a pull

shot to leave India trailing by 108 runs.

Tendulkar, unbeaten on 67 overnight, hit three boundaries and a six in the first session and looked set to secure the century that has eluded him since he last reached triple figures against South Africa during the World Cup in March.

With the whole of India celebrating every run as he closed on the landmark, Tendulkar's innings came to an abrupt end on 94 when he edged Rampaul to West Indies captain Darren Sammy

at second slip.

Virat Kohli (52) brought up his maiden half-century in Tests, and with Ashwin took India past the follow-on mark. Kohli and Ashwin stood firm and added 97 runs for the seventh wicket after India were reduced to 331/6 and needed a solid partnership in the wake of Tendulkar's shock departure.

The tail hung in with Ashwin to help him complete his 100 after Kohli hit leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo straight to Fidel Edwards at mid-on.

India had resumed on 281/3 and Sammy was rewarded for taking the second new ball immediately when VVS Laxman (32) fell to the first ball of the day's second over. Laxman was dismissed when he drove the first ball he had faced, bowled by paceman Fidel Edwards, straight to Marlon Samuels at gully after he and Tendulkar had added 63 runs for the fourth wicket.

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni did not last long either, clean bowled by Sammy for eight to expose the home team's tail. — Reuters

Scoreboard

West Indies	
First innings 590	
India	
First innings (Overnight 281/3)	
Tendulkar c Sammy b Rampaul	94
Laxman c Samuels b Edwards	32
V Kohli c Edwards b Bishoo	52
M S Dhoni b Sammy	8
R Ashwin c Barath b Rampaul	103
I Sharma c Bravo b Samuels	5
V Aaron b Samuels	4
P Ojha	not out 0
Extras: (b-1, w-4, nb-5)	10
Total: (in 135.4 overs)	482
Fall of wickets: 4/287, 5/322, 6/331, 7/428, 8/455, 9/463	
Bowling: Edwards 28-4-116-1, Rampaul 24.4-3-95-3, Sammy 26-3-90-2, Samuels 17-0-74-3, Bishoo 40-6-106-1	
West Indies	
Second innings	
A Barath c Laxman b Ojha	3
K Brathwaite batting	34
K Edwards st Dhoni b Ojha	17
D Bravo batting	27
Total: (for 2 wks in 34 overs)	81
Fall of wickets: 1/6, 2/30	
Bowling: Ojha 15-2-27-2, Sharma 5-2-12-0, Aaron 3-0-14-0, Ashwin 8-0-20-0, Sehwa 2-0-3-0, Sachin Tendulkar 1-0-5-0	

Tendulkar dashes hopes, fails to script history

Mumbai/Melbourne: A cricket-crazy nation waited with bated breath but was left disappointed when iconic batsman Sachin Tendulkar once again failed to notch up perhaps his most eagerly-awaited hundred after promising to do so brilliantly at his home ground — the Wankhede Stadium.

The Indian batting maestro was unbeaten on 67 when play commenced on day four of the third and final Test against the West Indies and was looking in supreme touch as he raced along to completing a 100 international centuries in his incandescent career.

But Tendulkar, whose journey with the three-figure knocks had begun on August 9, 1990 at Manchester against England when he became the youngest Indian Test centurion with a match-saving innings of 119 not out, was dismissed six short of his milestone by West Indian pacer Ravi Rampaul.

The bucket hands of visiting team skipper Darren Sammy



Fans disappointed after Sachin Tendulkar misses his 100th century at the Wankhede on Friday. — AFP

were waiting with anticipation at second slip and pounced the edge from the Indian ace when he eagerly reached out to drive Rampaul to stun the 15,000-strong crowd which had trooped in to witness history being created.

The day began like a dream as the batting maestro opened his account by manoeuvring the fourth ball to the outside using his wrists for a two. The last ball of the first over by Rampaul was flicked past the square leg for a boundary.

Laxman was dismissed off the first ball he faced on Friday but it had no effect on Tendulkar, unlike on Thursday when he slowed down his rate of scoring after Rahul Dravid was castled by part-timer Marlon Samuels.

Meanwhile, Australia's new-found pace sensation Pat Cummins considers Sachin Tendulkar the "rockstar" of Indian cricket and says he can't wait for a possible duel with the batting icon in the Test series next month. — PTI

Sachin & Dhoni rested for ODIs

Our Correspondent

Mumbai: Sachin Tendulkar's wait for his elusive 100th international ton will get a little longer as the selectors on Friday decided to rest him and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni from India's ODI series against the West Indies.

Virender Sehwag was named captain of the 15-member squad which will not include Yuvraj Singh who has declared himself unfit.

There was again no place for out-of-form spinner Harbhajan Singh while Parthiv Patel will replace Dhoni in the squad announced by the Board of Control for Cricket in India secretary Sanjay Jagdale after a meeting of the selection committee here.

According to the media release issued by BCCI, Yuvraj has declared himself unfit and so was not considered for selection. According to reliable sources, Yuvraj might undergo a surgery for his lung problem.

The squad has been announced for the first three ODIs

to be played in Cuttack (Nov 29), Vizag (December 2) and Ahmedabad (December 5).

The decision to rest Dhoni was on the cards as the Indian captain has been playing in all formats of the game for long while Tendulkar has not played in the ODIs since the World Cup final. They were rested keeping in mind the gruelling tour of Australia in December.

"Dhoni has been rested for all five matches as he has played a lot of games," chairman of the selection committee Kris Srikkanth said.

About Tendulkar playing the last two games, Srikkanth remained non-committal. It is unlikely that Tendulkar will play in the last two games considering that top Indian batsmen will leave a week earlier for Australia.

The squad Virender Sehwag (capt.), Gautam Gambhir, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, Suresh Raina, Ravindra Jadeja, Parthiv Patel (wicketkeeper), R Ashwin, Praveen Kumar, Vinay Kumar, Umesh Yadav, Varun Aaron, Rohit Sharma, Manoj Tiwary, Rahul Sharma.

Cricketers hurt by Master Blaster's miss

Mumbai: The chairman of the senior selection committee Krishmachari Srikkanth on Friday expressed his disappointment on Sachin Tendulkar, who missed out on his 100th international century by six runs, saying that every Indian would be feeling bad about it.

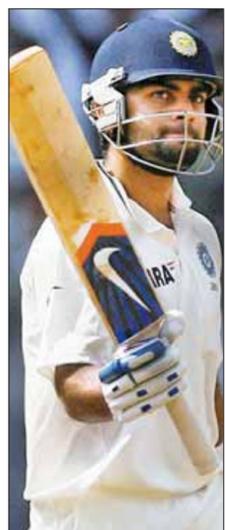
"Definitely yes, who would not be?" the former India captain said when asked whether he was disappointed to see Tendulkar miss his 100th century. "Every Indian, every cricketer would be disappointed. To make 100 international centuries is a great achievement. He played good shots and had good timing today (Friday), unfortunately he got out. Let us not talk about it."

Tendulkar's young teammate Virat Kohli, meanwhile, felt that the senior pro was being needlessly pressurised by the media to reach the milestone. "A lot of people

have put unnecessary pressure on him. I don't know why. He has achieved so much and people are making such a fuss about it," said Kohli, adding that Tendulkar was relaxed on returning to the dressing room after his dismissal on 94.

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly, who is on his Ranji Trophy assignment for Bengal, stopped the nets session to catch the landmark moment on TV, only to return. "It's really disappointing. Mumbai would have been the best place for him to get to that 100th ton," Ganguly said. The southpaw, however, said it is just a matter of time.

'Played with clear mind'



Virat Kohli after his half-century at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Friday. — PTI

Mumbai: After struggling to get going in his debut Test series in the West Indies earlier this year, Virat Kohli said he had decided to approach his next Test with a mind not clogged with doubts.

"I was tagged as someone who cannot play the short ball after the West Indies tour. When I went in today (Friday) I knew they will throw the short balls at me. I had a blank mind before playing every ball, which helped," said Kohli, after the fourth day's play of the third and final Test against the West Indies here.

"Test matches are mental mind games and the more clear I leave my mind the better decision I can make," he added. Kohli hit his maiden half-century by scoring 52 off 111 balls, besides putting on 97-run stand for the seventh wicket with Ravichandran Ashwin (103), to help India avoid follow-on. "To a certain extent I thought I got the WI call because so many people took rest. Not having done

well there (in the Caribbean), scoring runs again in a calendar year and getting back into the team was satisfying.

"It was a better feeling that you are included as that way you know the selectors and the team management are showing faith in you in doing well in that format. It's a confidence booster," said Kohli.

Meanwhile, West Indian fast bowler Ravi Rampaul said getting the wicket of the Indian batting maestro was special and the feat was achieved with some good planning.

"Leading up to this morning, the coach and I had a chat during warm-ups about how I am going to bowl at him. Best way is to get close to the wicket and angle the ball away from him and he nicks it. It's a good feeling. The ball bounced a lot. He was batting out of his crease to get the ball a little fuller. I realised that and altered my length. It was just a right ball at the right time," said Rampaul. — PTI

Ashwin's rare feat

Mumbai: Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin achieved a rare feat becoming only the third Indian cricketer to score a century and take five wickets in an innings in a Test match.

The other two were Vinoo Mankad and Polly Umrigar who achieved the commendable feat against England and West Indies respectively.

Ashwin had taken five for 156 his second five-for in Tests before scoring his maiden century against West Indies on the fourth day of the third and final cricket Test on Friday. Ashwin achieved the milestone by cutting pacer Ravi Rampaul for a boundary.

In fact it's after 49 years that an Indian cricketer has achieved the feat in a Test match. — PTI

Ponting says he's not ready to retire

Sydney: Ricky Ponting says he'll quit Test cricket before he's dropped from the Australian team, but is not considering retirement at the moment. "I totally understand why I'm being asked these questions but I believe I'm good enough," he said. — AP

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To be fat and fashionable is no longer an oxymoron. You can flaunt your curves with style if you follow these simple and handy suggestions

Priyadarshini Chatterjee

Of course you remember the numerous times you have been driven to salty tears in sultry trial rooms of plush shopping malls, when that gorgeous top you had given your heart to, stubbornly refused to fit, threatening to split apart with your last try at pulling it down. Outside the trial room, you tell your accompanying friend that it simply didn't look good when put on. And there are the innumerable times the shopkeepers have written you off with a dismissive flick of hand or the svelte shop assistants have raised their eyes brows and even twist their mouth in an insulting smirk, at your audacity in wanting to be fashionable with that figure of yours. Besides, most of the apparel shops will tell you that don't have clothes of your size. And the few which do cater to, let's say plush women, do not have a sizeable plus size inventory. But, let these miserable and infuriating encounters be a thing of the past. Put your fashion foot forward and get ready for a brand new winter wardrobe. And if shops don't have what you want, get your outfit tailor-made, the really fashion conscious would do that anyway. Just that you have to keep a few things in mind.

Cuts and silhouettes: Empire-line cut is the best and safest pick, but A-line is a good option too. But first and foremost the clothes should be well cut and the size should be perfect. "If you are opting for a blazer, make sure it is not oversized and tops should be somewhat on the looser side," says fashion designer Agnimitra Paul. "Again, in case of ethnic wear, even a plus size woman can opt for an anarkali, but make sure that there is not too much flare. While someone who is slim can wear an anarkali with 20 *kalis*, the ones on the heavier side should go for only four *kalis*," she adds. If you thought being overweight means you have to turn your eyes away from that little black dress, you might be wrong. "A plus-size woman can also wear short dresses considering there are no frills. Besides, stick to the A-line cut," suggests fashion designer Devipriya Guha.

Necklines: Show a bit of skin! Scoop-necks and moderately plunging V-cuts can be especially fetching. Devipriya insists on tasteful V-neckline and discourages polo necks.

Colours: This is one aspect of fashion you most assuredly know. Fat people wear dark colours. They make



you look slim. Alas! Not any slimmer than you really are. Besides, why should you miss out on all those wonderful colours and stick to browns and blacks and blues? Agnimitra says, "It is alright to wear dark shades during winter but during summer you cannot always wear dark colours. Besides, why should you restrict your palette? Of course, colours like black, blue and red would look good but you could also opt for supple peaches and baby pink. *mehendi* green, wine and magenta are my personal favourites when it comes to dressing up plus size women. According to Devipriya, red is the colour for this winter, especially wine red. And yes, avoid large prints!

Fabric: Avoid voluminous fabrics like organza, warns Agnimitra. Such fabrics add a lot of volume and make you look fatter. Instead Agnimitra suggests opting for handloom fabrics such as tussar, a mix of tussar and matka or even the typical Bengal tangail. "Avoid wearing fabrics like Lycra, which hug the body exposing the unsightly bulges; instead opt for materials like raw silk and even georgette, with a nice heavy lining," says Paul. Devipriya, however, favours fabrics like chiffon, georgettes and crepes which are flowy, rather than solid fabrics.

Designers pick: Team up a pair of well-tailored trousers with a shirt. Pick a kurta to go with it to pep up your look," says Guha

Follow these simple rules and you could be the head-turner when you walk into the mall or a party, and for the right reason. But most importantly be comfortable in what you wear, or wear what you are comfortable in. Do not be conscious and be confident of your body. And yes big is beautiful!



Men who are overweight can also look their best. Follow these tips to step out in style:

Avoid tops with sloped shoulders
Tops with naturally sloped shoulders are likely to draw the eye down to your midsection. Instead, check to make sure that all your tops have slightly squared shoulders as these will concentrate others' attention on your body to your chest and face.

Wear low-rise bottoms
Low-rise trousers have a shorter distance between the top of the waistband and the crotch of your pants than regular trousers. Also, ensure that the waistband of your pants is large enough to accommodate your midsection so that your

belly does not stick out over your pants. A stomach that protrudes over your pants lengthens your torso and shortens your legs -- not exactly the most attractive combination. Rotund individuals should also avoid pants with pleats as they will make your pelvic area look bigger.

Avoid baggage in your pockets
Emptying your pockets of unnecessary items like bulky cell phones, overstuffed wallets and electronic devices will take the focus off a large midsection. On your pants, have any bulky side pockets sewn shut or removed by a good tailor. Doing so won't cost much and it will make

your hips appear smaller.

Don't wear bold patterns
Avoid loud or bold patterns as they will make you stand out drawing attention to the upper half of your body. You should, however, wear pattern with vertical lines as they create optical continuity and will help elongate the look of your body. Dark, solid colors are also your new best friend as they are an instant figure fixer and will make you seem 10 pounds thinner.

Wear three-button not bulky blazers
Three-button blazers are just as classic

as two-button blazers, but they will elongate your body and make you appear taller, and therefore thinner. As well, always leave the top button on your blazer undone as it will stop your clothes from pulling, particularly in the area around your middle, and consequently, your movement will seem less restricted. Avoiding bulky fabrics means that chunky wool sweaters are a big no-no. To stay warm in the winter, go crazy for cashmere as it provides warmth without adding bulk to your figure. Or, try a dress shirt and V-neck sweater vest combination as the sweater vest will keep you warm while also smoothing

out your midsection and love handles. For suits, choose softer wools so that the fabric is as thin as possible. Invest in high-quality, lightweight wool suits if you can afford them as these will be the most flattering suits for your body and you'll feel and look like a million bucks when you put them on.

Wear pants with a longer hem
Long pants will make you seem taller and thinner. They should hit almost at the ground to really lengthen your body. If you're wearing shoes with a heel, the bottom of your pants should hit about a quarter to a half inch above the heel, no more.

Mixed Bag

Fortune Teller



ARIES

You feel positive about imbibing the ideas of spirituality today. This will make you open to the idea of accepting the responsibility for old mistakes, and it includes your relations with people in your neighbourhood. This will pave the way for your success in the future, says Ganesha.



TAURUS

You are not likely to take anything lying down today, says Ganesha. If you find anyone plotting and planning against you, you will not be too polite in dealing with them. Violent outbursts could make you lose the grace and dignity you are known for. You could end up regretting your actions and having second thought about your beliefs and principles. In the evening you could be prone to minor injuries. Avoid physical work.



GEMINI

You will need to curb your tendency to pay attention to the professional demands and needs of other people over your own. Your work-load today will demand creative solutions and will require some amount of brain-storming with your colleagues. People of the opposite sex will play an important role in your life today, says Ganesha.



CANCER

You will be attracted to the opposite sex and a love affair may ensue. You will turn more open and generous. You will have a realisation and handle issues with understanding. Ganesha is with you.



LEO

A beneficial day awaits those who are self-employed. You will find new and interesting projects. People working in the creative fields will also be able to make much progress. You will be filled with energy, enthusiasm and hope today, and will make efforts to achieve success, says Ganesha.



VIRGO

Ganesha warns that there may be a lot of problems brewing for you today. You will need to put in a lot of extra efforts in order to complete a lot of work that is pending because you have been procrastinating for a long time. You will feel inclined to share your most intimate secrets with your partner.



Bejan Daruwalla

Ganesha says today is a day when you will have to make important decisions so be careful before making them. Those of you who are working professionals may find themselves favoured by topmost officials who will be pleased with you and may give you promotions or a bonus. Ganesha says beware of people who wish to take advantage of your generosity and amiable disposition. Share your problems and mental stress and you will see it disappear.

Ganesha advises you to practice caution today. There may be a lot of people who may be green with envy as you are better than them in every way. Words of wisdom by you may not only change their opinion about you, but also win you accolades in social circles.

After a long long time, the day has finally come when you can your beloved on a date. Professionally, you are on a winning spree. However, keep less expectations from yourself and others and there will not be any occasion of disappointment.

Never judge a book by its cover. Same applies to human beings, also. And, you are one of them. At first, you may not be able to impress the other person with your looks, but once you display your communication power, you win him over, feels Ganesha. You are blessed with an art, the art to convince others. Ganesha advises you to maintain a calm head over your shoulders.

What you have been trying to hide in the corner of your heart, may come to the fore today. At work, you will be more patient and calm. Everyone will notice this change in you. Your friends and family members will also be surprised to see a different side of your personality, says Ganesha.

Ganesha advises you not to entertain the desire to remain secluded and to spend time with friends and family. If you manage to do this then you will have a happy and exciting day. You will have memorable moments with closed ones and may even end up organizing a small party for them. Ganesha says this might be a especially good day for artists.



LIBRA



SCORPIO



SAGITTARIUS



CAPRICORN



AQUARIUS



PISCES

Editor's Pick

FOOD



Thai High

Enjoy the best of Thai delicacies like Tom Kati Poo, Kaeng Pa Poteak-Seafood etc at Loi Krathong Festival
Venue: Benjarong, South City Mall
Time: Lunch & Dinner

Coastal Epicurean Fiesta

Savour the lavish spread of coastal delicacies such as Tamatar Tulsii Ka Rasam, Prawn Tikka, Maharashtrian Pomfret and Lamb Chops at the Coastal Food Festival
Venue: The Ivory Kitchen
Time: Lunch & Dinner

Global Grill Festival

Treat yourself to an array of lip-smacking kebabs and grills such as Heroine Chicken and Mojo Rojo Gulleets
Venue: Flame & Grill
Time: Lunch & Dinner

From the Kitchens of Kashmir



Unravel the flavours of Kashmiri Pandit Cuisine rich in aromatic spices and fragrant tastes at Poush
Venue: Eden Pavilion, ITC Sonar
Time: Dinner Buffet

Celebrating Thanksgiving

An array of traditional dishes such as Emince of Herb roast Duck with sour cherry jello awaits you as you gear up to celebrate Thanksgiving with your friends and family
Venue: West View, ITC Sonar
Time: 7pm-11:45pm

Japanese Food Festival

Relish the traditional cui-

sine of Japan specially prepared by chef from Toyama City
Venue: Mythh
Time: Lunch & Dinner

Oriental Delight

Enjoy the taste of Authentic Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese cuisine dished out by expert chefs
Venue: China One, Indismart
Time: Lunch & Dinner



Nightlife



Music Magic

Kailash Kher and Leslie Lewis are all set to mesmerise Kolkata with their performance of fusion music
Venue: Calcutta Club
Time: 8pm onwards

Fusion Fair

India's electronica pioneers Midival Panditz will take the city music lovers on a memorable musical journey
Venue: Plush, The Astor Hotel
Time: 9pm

Jazz Jalwa

Experience an evening of unlimited Jazz over lip smacking snacks and refreshing beverages
Venue: Nostradamus, Fortune Select
Time: 9pm

Competition

Fun Time for Kids
 Funscool India Ltd is organizing Beyblade Metal Masters Competition for kids between 6-14 years of age
Venue: Crossword, Elgin Road
Time: 12:30-6:30pm

Book

Launch of Apni Tumi Roile Dure: Shongo Nishongota O Rathindranath, an untold story of Rathindranath Tagore by Nilanjana Bandyopadhyay
Venue: Oxford Bookstore, Park Street
Time: 4:30 pm onwards

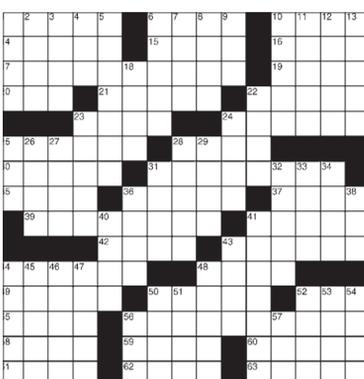
Archie



Rugrats



Daily Crossword



Across

1. Down the road
6. Family man
10. Mae West persona
14. Cocoon dweller
15. Zipped through
16. Dueler's weapon
17. Forest-floor find (2 wds.)
19. Coarse file
20. Fiesta cheer
21. ___ period (extension)
22. Show biz org.
23. Garish light
24. Campy
25. Spuds
28. Far East land
30. Persian mon-archs
31. Easy win
35. Tango comple-ment
36. Atacama Desert locale
37. ___be surprised!
39. Like whale fat
41. Melon throw-aways
42. Dregs
43. Early evening
44. Thug
48. Porcelain vase
49. Wedding acqui-sition (hyph.)
50. Monsieur's shout
52. Robert Morse role
55. Pronto 56. Relaxes(2 wds.)
58. Gael republic
59. Simple toy
60. Make laugh
61. Bulrush
62. Kyrgyzstan range
63. Mongol tents

Down

1. Mighty Dog rival (2 wds.)
2. Grab a cab
3. Seacoast eagle
4. Caesar's hello
5. Perils
6. Triumphant outburst
7. "Moneytalks" group
8. Volcano goddess
9. Lemon cooler
10. Doggerel
11. Briskly
12. Grand Canyon sights
13. Full of energy
18. Winged god
22. Chanre joinder
23. Indira's father
24. Fountain order
25. Salt meas.
26. Crazy captain
27. Mouse appendage
28. Strongholds
29. Confederate
31. Roller coaster cry
32. In contention
33. Vast ages
34. Discourteous
36. Trucker, often
38. It starts in Apr.
40. Squandered
41. Kind of inflation
43. Fodder storage
44. Skinflint
45. Loosen
46. Angry look
47. Like some communities
48. ___ Vanilli
50. Wiener schnitzel base
51. Clay pot
52. Sightseeing trip
53. Used-car worry
54. Arapaho foes
56. Exec's degree
57. Dallas campus

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

GARTER	REL	BAHS
PIERRE	ADO	AVON
ADMIRE	NIB	CARA
AMES	BODYST	OCKING
PAPER	EOS	ELLES
NIP	DOS	BELGIAN
ISS	RUT	ORO
CHICORY	SRS	ARI
OWS	STY	ANIL
OPALS	APO	EPEES
FENDER	BENDER	
TETE	EOE	EROICA
EVES	ADD	WINDOW
NEST	DIEY	SEISAME



Sudoku

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

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★★★★

Open Space

Going Places



Photographer Debolina Dubois talks about her tryst with the cold climes of Andermatt

With the onset of winter, we Bengalis often fantasise about romantic gateways in the mountains covered with snow. How little do we know about the biting blue fingers, chapped lips, and bone shivering cold?

I live in Switzerland. Yes, a beautiful country, the Alps and the lakes, the perfect place for honeymoon. But last winter, the Christmas market, the Glühwein, and my thick goose feather jacket couldn't keep me warm, especially when I went up in the high Alpine valley—the Ursern Valley—in the Adula Alps, to work on a short video documentary project on land survey by 'Hochschule für Architektur, Bau und Geomatik' in the tiny village called Andermatt.

Located in the Canton of Uri, with a population of 1270 people, this garrison village of the Swiss Federal Army is the main stop to the two ski slopes, Naetschen and Gemsstock. Hence the Andermatt village centre has plenty of shops selling/renting ski equipment, homely chalet restaurants, along with tiny art and craft stores.

As a project in association with 'Hochschule für Architektur, Bau und Geomatik', my teammate and I were to be driven up by our associate from this 'Hochschule' in Basel. It was around two degrees at 7am in my city and like any good Bengali, I reached our meeting point two minutes too late. The Swiss are reputed for their punctuality. They often say that if someone is late, she is either not wearing a Swiss watch or riding a Swiss train. Ironically, I did both.

No matter the quizzical eyebrows raised, I was told that

Andermatt has always been an isolated little village up in the mountains. Also, that it starts snowing quite early in that region compared to the rest of non-mountainous Switzerland. Hence we were trying to reach early to avoid unnecessary snow traffic, if any. The roads would be winding, so the summer tyres of our equipment van had to be changed into winter ones.

What a dreadful thought for anyone who suffers from motion sickness! However, my discovery and experience of that place started with my first drive to the Canton of Uri. Being motion sick, I was almost afraid to go up the winding roads similar to Darjeeling and Ooty. Preconceptions can be very deceiving, especially when Swiss drivers don't receive their licences as easily and when the government spends millions in continuous upgrading roads for their

mountainous extreme-temperature-enduring highways. Accurate road signs, camera monitored speed limits are always a welcome plus, which remains imposed by law.

The drive almost lasted for an hour and forty-five minutes. When we reached Andermatt, it was unbearably cold. At minus six degrees, with very little to hardly any snow. Apparently this was a boon as the land scan with the machine 'Leica Scanstation 2' would not be possible with snow-covered terrain.

Here I discovered that the mountain settlers of Switzerland are very welcoming. While walking around planning my shots, I got offered Glühwein by a local restaurant owner. This observant man had noticed me shiver while shooting. After a while, we had a group of children selling Christmas cookies, randomly showing interest in our work. An old retired



'Suisse romande' or 'Swiss French' army officer came up with hot home prepared 'Rum Tee' or 'Rum Tea'. A general interest and kindness was felt despite the cold, a profound characteristic of villages; be it in Switzerland or anywhere else on our planet earth.

I stoutly deduce that breathtakingly beautiful locations or destinations are not just made out of nature's beauty, but the gesture of



its population. As beauty is only membrane deep, what remains remarkable is the approach.

Thus puffing warm air into my palms, the biting cold Alpine winter wind, a glass of hot-spicy-sweet-red-wine called 'Glühwein' cupped in hand, along with the craving for cosy warm room, nothing could stop me from taking the train up to Oberalp Pass to get a bird's eye view of this city. Neither did it stop me from taking off my gloves and filming the Andermatt that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe declared, as "of all the places I know, this is the dearest and most interesting to me".

Currently the celebrity for Egyptian billionaire Samih Sawiri's seven star resort project, Andermatt is also home to the infamous and mythical Devil's Bridge. A treasure hunter would tell you that on St. Patrick's Day 1608, in the Fight of the Earls, the Gaelic earls lost a fortune of gold down at the Devil's Bridge while crossing the ravine. This lost treasure has never been recovered and is known as the 'Lost Treasure of the St Gotthard Pass'.

Andermatt is the treasure of the Gotthard. A photographers delight.

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,

Fat and fashionable can go hand in hand. Find out how you could be a headturner despite those curves and bulges you loath. Eyes are more than just windows to your soul. With the right eye-makeup, your eyes could be what gets you noticed and coveted. Get ready to roll your eyes. This *Weekender* is dedicated to fashion and style. Keep writing to us with your suggestions and feedback!



Readers mail



More mail



Piyali Deb | Durgapur

The interviews of Vidya Balan and Tusshar Kapoor in *PostScript* were really entertaining. I am eagerly waiting for *The Dirty Picture* to release.



Sudeshna Paul | Lake Town

The article titled *Scripting a Baffling Visual Lexicon* was written creatively and was knowledgeable. It's true that creativity knows no bounds. An artist's mind is an unpredictable canvas itself.



Joseph Gomes | Park Circus

The interview of Chetan Bhagat made for an interesting read. He is my favourite author and I have read all his books. So, reading about him is always delightful.



Satish Mazhi | Bhowanipore

The article *Cause Nothing I Have is Truly Mine* on celebrities penning their autobiographies was magnificent. I read Shoab Akhtar's biography and it had struck me that the bowler has made a futile try to gain attention, as always.



Star Trek

Actress Alokanda Roy



Backpacking in the bylanes of Burma

My husband and I love travelling, and we keep planning short getaways. Back in 1998 I made a trip to Myanmar (erstwhile Burma) with my husband for a week. Myanmar as we all know is under a strict military regime. There are still quite a few Bengali families there and we found one such Bengali doctor by browsing through the telephone directory to satisfy our urge to know the travel destination the best we could. Dr Banerjee faced a bag full of questions from us and answered them in the most cordial way.

One thing unique of Myanmar is their national dress, lungi. From tiny tots to grandpas, everyone wears lungis under their shirts. Women too wear lungis. We also visited the Scott market which is a lot like our New Market. And what surprised me the most was the scene in the market. People were selling gold in baskets like we sell vegetable and fish here. The security is so tight that there is no threat of thefts and robbery. One particular incident that I would never forget is when I saw one security personnel at the airport changing into his lungi in one swift movement of his hand after his duty hours. He seemed relieved to get back in his comfortable national dress, finally out of his entrapping duty uniform. The priceless expression on his face still makes me go into splits.

Burma is famous for its lungis and also a certain wood dust a lot like sandal which is good for our skin. Many of my relatives had sent special requests our way to bring back this exotic skin care product for them. In search of it we went to the market and came across this interesting typically Burmese looking Bengali shopkeeper which is a rare feature. This man showed us around and also helped us buy whatever we needed and shared many anecdotes with us. He told us that Bengali girls mostly stay unmarried in Burma as they are not accepted by either community.

One thing that definitely left a lasting impact on me was the food there. We went to try Burmese food thinking it would be like Chinese, but it turned out to be a lot different. Food in Myanmar is spicy and for us would seem to have a bad and somewhat weird smell. But I have a keen interest in food and anything culinary. So, I made it a point to try it.

—As told to Samabrita Sen



A sight to behold



No matter what the shape of your eyes is, with a sleight of hand and a little imagination, you can make them look bigger and better. We give an easy guide to achieve the right look

Eyes are the mirror of your soul and they can speak a thousand words without any distortion as Abhijeet rightly sang *Aankhen bhi boti bain dil ki zubani* in the film *Haasil*. But for that silent conversation to flow uninterrupted and to ensure that your beloved never gets a chance to slip his gaze elsewhere, you need to make your eyes look good. And that is only possible through skillful application of make-up.



Wide-apart eyes

For those who have a broad nose and hence there is a considerable distance between the two eyes, the outer corner of the eyes needs to be worked on. Keep the eye shadow uniform and within the outer corners. It tends to give your face an open, youthful appearance. This look can be intensified by applying the strongest eye make-up near the outer corner of the eyes.

To make the eyes appear closer together:

- ☞ Use mascara generously on both upper and lower lashes.
- ☞ Use more intense eye shadow colours near the inner corner of the eyes.
- ☞ Line eyes completely – top and bottom – from inner to outer corners.
- ☞ Apply a medium-toned shadow to lids and creases, concentrating the colour on the inner corners.

Close-set eyes

Eyes which have less space between them can be given a dramatic and sultry look. And for them, it is the inner corner that needs more concentration. It can be enhanced by concentrating colour near the eye's inner corners. Extend smoky shadow beyond outer corners to exaggerate them. Brush the lashes out.

To make the eyes seem farther apart:

- ☞ Apply the most intense colour near the outer corners of the eyes.
- ☞ Line top and bottom of eyes in any colour, but begin drawing a quarter of the way out from the inner eye.
- ☞ Smudge lines.
- ☞ Dust a highlighter (or a lighter eyeshadow) just below the outer corners of the lower lashes to call attention to the outer corner of eyes.
- ☞ Brush mascara on upper and lower lashes.



Hooded eyes

The problem with hooded eyes is, one, the eye shadow is hardly visible and second, the make-up has a tendency of getting smudged. With these eyes, the natural crease in the eyelid is not readily seen. Highlighting the brow bone and lining the lash base gives hooded eyes an alluring look.

To enhance hooded eyes:

- ☞ Apply a medium to dark shadow on the crease and the hooded area.
- ☞ Sweep a lighter shadow on the brow bone and on the inside corner of the eyes.
- ☞ Draw a very thin line along the top lash line (to keep the eye looking open) and smudge with a cotton swab.
- ☞ Apply black mascara to upper lashes.
- ☞ Line upper lash-line only. Gradually soften shadow as you approach the brow.



Small eyes

Some people have small eyes and they are smaller in comparison to the rest of the facial features. One needs to enhance the outline of the eyes so that they achieve some prominence. You can even use a highlighter on the area around your eyes. Colourful eyeliner and shimmer eye pencil can be great tools. Curling the eyelashes can help a great deal in making the eyes look striking and bigger.

To enlarge small eyes:

- ☞ Apply a medium-toned shadow (such as soft grey or blue) to the crease.
- ☞ Use a soft-coloured liner (try taupe) on the top and bottom lash lines extending the top line across the entire lash line and the bottom line from just under the iris to the outer corner.
- ☞ Sweep black mascara on upper lashes.
- ☞ Apply light shadow on the eyelids.
- ☞ Apply more intense shades on the creases.



Evenly spaced eyes

For eyes which has about the right distance between them does not require much fussing over. A healthy balance of make-up between the outer and inner side of the eyes will be the easiest trick to open them up. Smudging the eye-shadow evenly towards the sides can help achieve a dramatic look.



Prominent eyes

These eyes which are set far forward in the face tend to dominate the facial features. Many actresses have such eyes, for example Aishwarya Rai and Celina Jaitley. Here, the eyelids are too pronounced. Medium to deep shades of shadow on the lids help to minimise their appearance. Liners applied to the lash bases from corner to corner can give prominent eyes a smoldering and mysterious look. One should avoid highlighting the outline of the eyes as it will make the eyes more prominent.



Deep set eyes

Eyes which are set deep into the socket are hard to make prominent. The eyelid crease is set back so the area from the base of lashes to brow bone seems hidden. The corners of the eyes recede at both ends making them look droopy. To enhance the deep-set eyes, line both upper and lower lids. Choose light shadows like pale pink, peach or beige. More intense shading on the brow bone also brings out the beauty of the eyes.



Almond eyes

These are the most common eye shape with their upswept lift at the outer corner. These eyes call for creativity. These eyes can be made to look deeper and more intense by concentrating on the inner side. A thick coat of mascara helps enhancing the almond shape. One needs to work in the brow line, opting a shimmer shade of copper, silver or nude.

Oriental eyes

These type of eyes have a distinctive lift at the corner and have very little lid. There is very little space between the outer corner of the eyes as it stretches towards the brow in a sharper note. Deep shades can help the eyes brighter. The depth of the eyes can increase by deep shades of eye shadow and the dimension can be increased by applying eyeliner as close as possible to the lash base.



Launch pad



Classic piece

Swiss watch initiator Raymond Weil unveiled yet another classic time-piece for men called Maestro Balancier. Priced at ₹74,360 this exquisite watch is a subtle blend of style, tradition and refinement.



Smart connect

Nokia launched Nokia Lumia family of smartphones based on Windows Phone. Stunning, Nokia Lumia 800 brings content to life with head-turning design and familiar Nokia elements like imaging capabilities and new signature experiences.



Shine and gloss

The latest offering from the Nivea fruity colour and shine range is Nivea cherry lipcare for those who wish to experience a sensational cherry scent and a divine, fruity shine on their lips. This attractive product is priced at ₹129.



Skin essential

The new Nivea body lotion moisturises dry skin and keeps it smooth 24 hours, thanks to the Hydra IQ the intelligent moisturiser.



Sweet seduction

Lotus Herbals has introduced five new shades of Seduction, a unique botanical tinted lip gloss. It is available in five hot new glossy shades of red, pink peach and purple that are suitable for every skin tone.



Tech-wonders

Wahl introduced battery chargers with Pro-lithium technology. Wahl products are backed by a two year warranty with a fast and efficient service network and easy availability of spares. This charger is priced at ₹6,500.

Compiled by Farah Khatoun

'I am in love with Salman Khan'

Rupsha Dasgupta gets up, close and personal with Nusrat Jahan



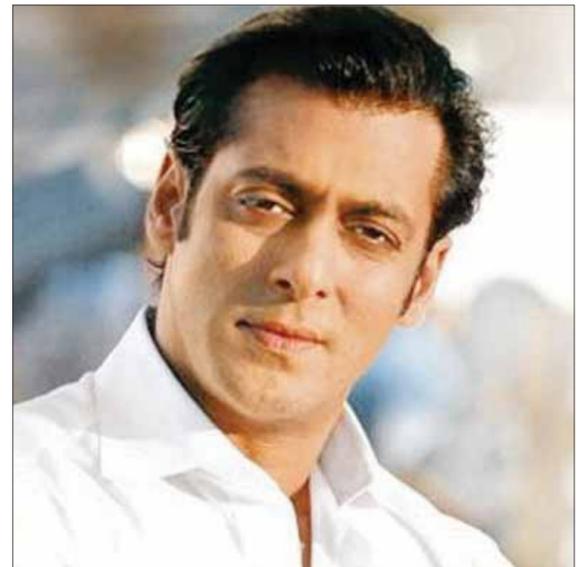
When did you first know you wanted to become an actor: From a very young age, I always had the desire to be a diva. I tried my mother's make-up and sported various looks to find out which would suit me the best. Somehow I knew I wanted to be a part of the glamour world, but was not sure how. When the opportunity came with *Shatru*, I just grabbed it.

First taste of celebrity: After the success of *Shatru*, I didn't feel like a celebrity. But then, I began to be treated differently. Honestly, the name, fame and recognition feels very good, particularly when it is hard earned. I would say it is fantastic, simply great!

Who do you idolise and why: I really don't idolise anyone as such, you know. I would say I am a self motivated person! But yes, I have always looked up to my parents and my own principles. But certain people have always inspired me. Orphan children especially have been a constant source of inspiration for me since my school days. The pain of being parentless, the agony and hardships they suffer denied love, care and basic rights have always moved me to make the most of the life that I have been blessed with.

An unforgettable moment with a fan: I came to know that I have a fan club on Facebook, which was created by one of my fans. He keeps track of all my activities, sometimes going out of his way to gather all the information. I have since been interacting with him and it was indeed a special moment for me when he visited me at my place.

Hobbies: You will probably laugh, if I say it's sleep. As I get so tired after work, whatever time I get I sleep. But, music certainly is very close to my heart and I enjoy



strumming on my guitar whenever possible. Painting also has also been a hobby which I have cultivated since childhood. I feel an urge from within to paint and then there is no stopping. If I get a long break from work, I will make the most of it by indulging in my painting proclivities.

Success is: When you can stand in front of the mirror and tell yourself with a broad smile that this is what you had always wanted to be, that feeling is success for me!

One person you would want to meet and ask: Salman Khan! I have always been a big fan or rather I would say I love him! So, I would definitely want to meet him. And as far as asking anything goes, I would be so awestruck and dumb founded that probably Salman will have to take the initiative to pose the question. But yes, a big hug from him would make the moment of the meeting.

First and last thing that you do every day: The answer is common for both, I pray. When I wake up in the morning, the first thing I do is to remember my God. Then I greet my parents. Similarly, before going to bed, I thank God for the beautiful day and keeping my loved ones safe. Moreover, its kinds of funny, but I am hell scared of ghosts. Praying helps me to keep my fears at bay.

Difficult scene till date: Well, I never faced any difficulty enacting any scene as such. I believe it's all in the mind. If you think something is difficult then it is. If you put in your best you are sure to come out with flying colours.

God is in: Everything. He is watching over us to reward us for our good deeds and punish our wrong doings. Also, children certainly embody God. Their smiles are simply divine.

Screen Saver



Prosenjit ready for Hindi films

Tollywood's Numero Uno has been venturing into new territories of late. With *Autograph*, *Moner Manush* and *22shey Srabon* doing well at the box-office, Prosenjit is on top of the world. And he has recently shot for his Hindi film *Shanghai*, after at least twenty years when he had acted in a film with Feroze Khan. "It was a great experience working with director Dibakar Banerji. If the script is up to the mark, I am open to doing more Hindi films," he has said recently. Way to go Bumbada.

Romeo a bumper hit

There's no stopping Dev. With *Paglu* becoming one of the biggest hits this year, his latest film *Romeo* is breaking all records. In fact, it has gone on to become a bigger hit than *Paglu*. Though the figures are not yet available but as of now, it has not only recovered its cost, and is earning more with time. *Romeo* stars Dev and Shubhashree and is directed by Sujit Mondal. The film has been produced by Shree Venkatesh Films.



Abir back in town

Abir Chatterjee is tired yet happy. He is back from North Bengal after shooting for Anjan Dutt's next *Byomkesh Bakshi*. "It was a great experience shooting in North Bengal. *Apuda* (Saswata Chatterjee) and me had almost made the place our home," says the actor. "We shot at various places right from Gorumara forest to Lataguri and other places which was an extremely fascinating experience for me and the crew," adds Abir.

Tollywood going to Morocco?



If everything falls into place, then the love story *Idiot* produced by ESKAY Movies might be shot in Morocco. Says a source from the production house, "Nothing has been finalised yet, but there is a high possibility that a song sequence will be shot in Morocco." If it does happen then this is first time that a Bengali film will be shot in the African nation. *Idiot* is directed by Rajib and stars Srabonti, Ankush and Bollywood star Aditya Pancholi.

- Compiled By Diganta Guha

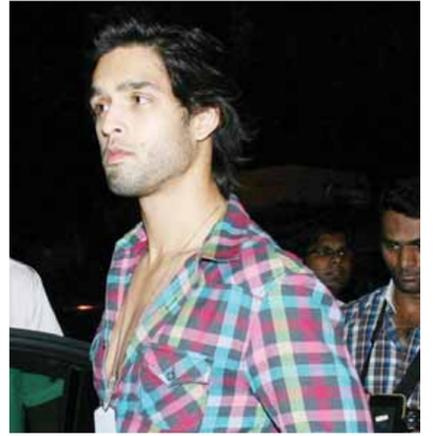
Mumbai Wrap



John Abraham, Deepika Padukone, Chitrangda Singh and Akshay Kumar
The starcast of *Desi Boyz* posed one last time to promote their upcoming film a day before the release. Get ready to watch Chitrangda in a completely different avatar as she lets her hair down and lends extra oomph to the film.



Krishika Lulla



Siddharth Mallya



Sonam Kapoor
The special screening of *Desi Boyz* caught a host of stars in the mood for some fun and frolic, driving down to watch the film. We spotted Krishika Lulla, Ranbir in his *Rockstar* avatar, Sonam Kapoor and Siddharth Mallya. Looks like Ranbir has settled his differences with Sonam Kapoor.



Emraan Hashmi



Actor Emraan Hashmi promoted his upcoming film *The Dirty Picture* at 91.1 FM Radio City studio before hopping into Parliament House for another quick promotion.



Ranbir Kapoor



Neetu Chandra
Actress Neetu Chandra posed for shutterbugs at the premiere of the Bhojpuri film *Deswa*. The film is Neetu Chandra's debut production venture which has been directed by her brother Nitin Chandra.



Meghna Malik

Sameer Soni

Kaishav Arora and Deepshikha
The big Marathi Awards ceremony saw a large number of stars from the Telly world attending the event. We caught a glimpse of Aparna Mehta, Sameer Soni, Meghna Malik and Deepshikha with boyfriend Kaishav Arora.

Aparna Mehta

The Woods

Reviews



Just misses the mark

Diganta Guha

Film: *Desi Boyz*
Director: Rohit Dhawan
Cast: Akshay Kumar, John Abraham, Deepika Padukone, Chitrangada Singh, Anupam Kher and Sanjay Dutt
Rating: Average

If you thought Akshay and John's chemistry was superb in *Garam Masala*. Wait till you watch *Desi Boyz*. The Bollywood machos once again create magic in Rohit Dhawan's film. *Desi Boyz* have struck a chord with the audience, especially those seeking a good laugh. However, the film shouldn't expect critical acclaim. The problem perhaps lies in the fact that debutant director Rohit tries to experiment a little too much with his first film. The treatment of the film lacks the subtlety it requires.

The story, set in UK, revolves around Nick Mathur (John Abraham) and Jerry Patel (Akshay Kumar) who are rendered jobless by the global recession. But their responsibilities are humungous – while Jerry has his orphan nephew to look after, Nick's girlfriend (Deepika Padukone) is pressing for marriage. In the absence of an alternative, Jerry opts to turn a male escort and is hired by Sanjay Dutt's company. Of course he tugs a reluctant Nick along. But when their

new identity is exposed, the two men find themselves in a sticky situation. Let's keep the rest in wraps right now.

Let's first count the film's merits. The director has dealt with a real life scenario, identifiable for many. The film wonderfully captures the emotions that bind John and Deepika and Jerry and his nephew Veer. The camaraderie between John and Akshay is definitely a winner and the fun quotient in the film is high. But Dhawan fails to keep it simple, unfortunately so. The climax of the film is somewhat imprecise, making one wonder why. The film also blurs the distinction between comedy and emotional drama. Such intricacies point to the director's flaws.

Performance wise, Akshay steals the show once again. He mixes comedy with emotions perfectly. John too has evolved as an actor and this time he matches Akshay with panache. Deepika is good and proves she is maturing as an actress. Chitrangada Singh, being the powerful actress she is, lets loose her oomph giving ample proof of her versatility. Her chemistry with Akshay is sizzling too. It is surprising however to see a senior actor like Anupam Kher continue to do inconsequential roles in films. He is under utilised.

With actors like these at his disposal, director Rohit Dhawan could have delivered a much better film. Pritam's music is average and some song sequences are quite unnecessary.



The immortal touch

Ayesha Sultana Mohiuddin

Film: *Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1*
Director: Bill Condon
Cast: Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner, Ashley Greene, Nikki Reed, Anna Kendrick and others
Rating: Good

Warning! Do not watch this film if you are not addicted to fantastical creatures like vampires, werewolves and half vampire babies. *Twilight*, a series of four novels written by Stephanie Meyer has at last managed to match up to the magic of fantasy films like *Harry Potter*, *X-Men* and *Chronicles of Narnia*. Directed by Bill Condon, *Breaking Dawn* might have captured some amazing cinematography very much like the rest of the *Twilight* franchise, but has failed to hide some of its studio effects. There are times when you would want

to ask Condon why he has maintained such bad lighting technique and others when you would want to ask him how he managed to let bad editing pass.

The film sticks to the story, going slow at times and at times too fast. Bella's story begins with the announcement of her wedding and Jacob losing all self-control. A few changed sequences here and there liven up the mood, but mostly, the film manages to keep you just about watch the screen (though at times you do tend to turn around and see what other people are up to because you are getting bored for the lack of energy in the film.) Robert Pattinson as Edward Cullen may have been the hottest guy after Daniel Radcliffe, but his hot body cannot excuse his flat and almost statuesque acting. Jacob (Taylor Lautner) on the other hand however, snorts and howls his way into the film asking for a little

more screen space in spite of the camera being relentlessly trained on a very pregnant and malnourished Bella (Kristen Stewart).

Produced by Bill Bannerman and cinematographed by Guillermo Navarro, *Breaking Dawn*, might not appeal to peace loving people as it involves a certain amount of blood, gore and a little bit of sadism. The best example being the removal of the baby from Bella's womb and Bella's wasted dying body lying in a bloody mess with Edward pumping away in vain.

Edward, Bella, Jacob, the little village of Forks, does take in a little time to sink in and you might want to watch all the films once more to refresh your memory. *Breaking Dawn*, the most awaited film ever since the release of *Eclipse* may not have lived up to its hype from every aspect, but who says we are perfect? After all we are just humans.

Buzzing Now...



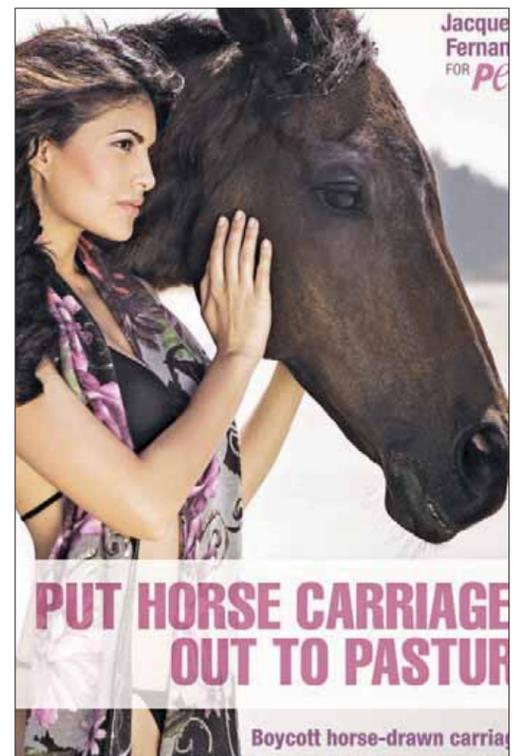
Dancing to Ricky Bahl's beats...

Ladies and gentlemen, *Ladies vs Ricky Bahl* has released all its tracks! The winning acting duo of *Band Baaja Baaraat* is back to make you groove to funkier songs that have been composed by Salim-Sulaiman.

The film's soundtrack encompasses four songs, one instrumental track and two remixes that include *Aadat Se Majboor*, *Jazba*, *Thug Le*, *Jigar Da Tukda*, *Fatal Attraction*, *Aadat Se Majboor* and *Jazba* remix. Looks like it is time for you guys to hit the dance floor!

India's Glam Diva contender

The darling of the industry, Priyanka Chopra is all set to host another television show called *India's Glam Diva* on BIG CBS Love. The actress who will be seen in *Don 2* opposite Shah Rukh Khan, won the Miss World crown while still a teenager. She has rubbed shoulders with Bollywood actors like Hrithik Roshan, Salman Khan, John Abraham, Abhishek Bachchan, Akshay Kumar and others. The *desi* girl who will be going international with her songs (yes she can sing) is all set to wade her way to the top spot in Bollywood. — IBNS



Say no to horse carriages...

Sri Lankan actress and model Jacqueline Fernandez will be seen in a PETA advertisement in a bikini standing beside a horse. "I have observed so many heartbreaking incidents that I can't be a silent spectator to this abuse anymore," writes Fernandez in a letter to the Municipal Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai. "Horses don't belong on the streets and they certainly don't deserve to be forced to pull carriages." What she wants to say is 'Put Horse Carriages Out to Pasture – Boycott Horse-Drawn Carriages.' The advertisement has been shot by ace photographer Anushka Menon. Fernandez has joined an increasing number of Hollywood and Bollywood actors including Hema Malini, John Abraham and *Glee* star Lea Michele – who have teamed up with PETA India to call for an end to horse-drawn carriages.