

**Thursday, April 24,  
2008, Chandigarh,  
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**TERCENTENARY  
CELEBRATIONS**

## 2 die in Jalgaon communal riots

Mumbai, April 23

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### Panchayat Elections

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Kolkata, April 23

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### Meghalaya Politics

## Sangmas make it a family affair

Guwahati, April 23

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Bhopal, April 23

A petition was filed today in the Supreme Court challenging the Bombay High Court order staying the criminal proceedings against Bollywood actress Sridevi Kapoor in a cheque bounce case.



**WOMAN POWER? A policewoman 'in action' during a protest by students of diploma in education against the Maharashtra government outside Mantralaya in Mumbai on Wednesday.**

— PTI

## 2 die in Jalgaon communal riots

Tribune News Service & UNI

Mumbai, April 23

Simmering tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities in the town of Jalgaon boiled over after clashes forced the police to open fire on Tuesday night which resulted in the deaths of two persons. Fifteen others were injured in the incident, according to information available from the police.

According to sources in Jalgaon, tension between the two communities had heightened with so-called leaders from both sides issuing provocative statements for the past month. The latest incident was sparked off when a marriage procession passing outside a mosque was attacked by people who had gathered for prayer.

With the tension showing no signs of abating, the authorities clamped curfew at the Chopda tehsil. The police had to fire more than 25 rounds to disperse the stone-throwing mob. Several shops were burnt in the violence, the police said.

The local administrative officials say teams of paramilitary forces have been rushed to the area to prevent further escalation of violence.

The Maharashtra government today ordered a CID inquiry into the riots and subsequent the police firing. Making a statement in the Assembly in response to an adjournment motion notice sought to be tabled by Gulabrao Patil (Shiv Sena) deputy chief minister R.R. Patil said the families of the dead would be given compensation of Rs one lakh each.

He defended the police action and said they were forced to open fire as both the communities came face to face and even the policemen were beaten up.

However, leader of the Opposition Ramdas Kadam objected and said the policemen were at fault in firing the bullet in the head and stomach.

Earlier this month, at the Raver tehsil nearby the police had to fire in the air to disperse rioting mobs when members of a Ram Navami procession threw gulas on a mosque along the way. The situation worsened a few days later when one of the persons injured in the violence died in hospital, according to the police.

Even in the earlier incident, the authorities had to clamp a 12-hour curfew in order to bring normalcy in the area.

"The riots are a handiwork of politicians and the local officials, who are involved with them," says a local resident. According to him, the administration allowed the hot-heads from both the communities to carry out their propaganda without any checks on them. "Usually, the authorities form a peace committee with members from both the communities and work out a peaceful solution. But this time no one was interested in maintaining peace," the source from Jalgaon said.



## Panchayat Elections Nandigram people to fight CPM on their own

Subhrangshu Gupta  
Tribune News Service

Kolkata, April 23

The people of Nandigram today defied both Mamata Banerjee and state Congress president Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi and unanimously decided to fight together against the CPM in the coming panchayat polls on their own.

The BJP, the SUCI, the CPI (M-L), the RJD, the Samajwadi Party and all other anti-CPM forces have agreed to lend their support to the Nandigram people.

The RSP, one of the major partners of the Left Front, would these parties against the CPM.

The local leaders of all anti-CPM parties took the decision at a meeting at Nandigram today. The panchayat elections would be held in three phases beginning May 11.

Candidates of the CPM and other Front parties had already filed their nomination papers for contesting zila parisad, panchayat samiti and anchal pradhan elections.

Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee today met chief secretary A.K. Deb, home secretary Ashoke Mohan Chakraborty and DGP Anup Bhora at the Writers Buildings and discussed the preparations for the polls.

After the meeting, the home secretary said they had demanded one company of paramilitary forces from the Centre for its deployment in the state during the panchayat elections, but the demand was turned down.

He said the government was taking extra precautionary measures in the Naxalite-dominated areas of Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum, Midnapore and Burdwan, where several CPM workers and their supporters were killed by Maoists recently.

He said superintendents of police were told to identify specific areas where major disturbances were apprehended during the polls and accordingly the forces would be deployed.

CPM state secretary Biman Bose alleged today that there was an unholy alliance of communal and reactionary forces against the CPM, but still the party would win the maximum number of seats in the three-tier panchayat polls.



## **Meghalaya Politics**

### **Sangmas make it a family affair**

**Bijay Sankar Bora**  
**Tribune News Service**

Guwahati, April 23

A chapter of dynastic politics is gradually unfolding in the northeastern hill state of Meghalaya, thanks to veteran Purno A. Sangma, general secretary of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the architect of the ruling Meghalaya Progressive Alliance (MPA).

The man, who had chosen to leave Indian National Congress, protesting the clout of Nehru-Gandhi dynasty in the party, has now found three of his wards wearing his shoes in Meghalaya politics.

While two of his sons, Conrad K Sangma and James K Sangma ensconced themselves in the state politics after getting elected to the Meghalaya assembly in the March election, one of his daughters, Agatha K Sangma has lost no time to follow the footsteps of her elder siblings.

A first timer in Meghalaya House, Conrad Sangma, who is armed with an MBA degree, has been entrusted with the responsibilities of the key cabinet portfolios, including finance and power in the MPA government, raising many eyebrows.

Whether the senior Sangma admits it or not, the Sangma dynasty is on the roll in Meghalaya politics. Thanks to his 'clout' in the hill state, especially in his fiefdom in Garo Hills as well as in the ruling MPA coalition, his brainchild.

A lawyer in the Delhi High Court, 28-year-old Agatha, has been chosen by the

NCP as its candidate to contest in May the 22 Lok Sabha byelection to Tura parliamentary seat in Garo Hills that fell vacant after her illustrious father resigned on being elected to the Meghalaya Assembly in March Assembly polls.

The Tura Lok Sabha seat that was represented by P. A. Sangma for several times. Agatha is expected to file her nomination papers on May 1 and she is sure to be supported by NCP's allies in the ruling Meghalaya Progressive Alliance (MPA).

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Sangma told the media that it was the party and people of Garo Hills, who wanted his daughter Agatha to contest the byelection to Tura Lok Sabha seat. Even as political rivals accused him of encouraging dynastic politics unbecoming of Meghalaya, the NCP stalwart dismissed the allegations saying that he hasn't groomed any of his five children — three sons and two daughters -to be his successor in politics and that three of them are now in politics on their own, abiding by the wishes of the people in Garo hills.



## **Wheat procurement to cross 150 lakh tonnes**

### **Pawar rules out wheat import**

**Vibha Sharma**  
**Tribune News Service**

New Delhi, April 23

Wheat procurement for Public Distribution System (PDS) in the country will cross the target of 150 lakh tonnes. Officials say to supplement the food stock; the government is prepared to procure an additional 20 lakh tonnes over and above the target of 150 lakh tonnes.

Agriculture minister Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said during the past 10 days of procurement, 86.25 lakh tonnes of wheat had been procured by government agencies for the PDS, thereby meeting almost 60 per cent of the estimated goal of 150 lakh tonnes.

At the beginning of the current Rabi marketing season, the government had set the procurement target at 1.5 million tonnes. Last year, it was able to procure only 1.1 million tonnes and was forced to import 1.8 million tonnes to augment buffer stock.

On Tuesday, the government also claimed that food grain production during 2007-08 had reached a record of 227.32 million tonnes in case of rice, wheat, oil seeds, cotton and coarse grains. While skeptics say that declarations about the bumper crop and adequate procurement are election-driven. But today's figures as well as yesterday's estimates of record food grain production during 2007-08 also mean that the country will not have to import wheat this year and prices will be stabilised. In fact, there is a heavy arrival of wheat in mandis and the agriculture minister had expressed confidence that the target for wheat procurement was likely to be completed within the next five to seven days.

From Punjab and Haryana, which fulfills the maximum needs for the PDS, ICDS, school noon meal programme and food security reserves, government has procured about 99 per cent of the total market arrivals of wheat so far. The two states contribute 80 per cent of the total wheat for the central pool.

While majority of 86.25 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured from Punjab and Haryana, the Center has appreciated steps taken by Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra governments to improve wheat procurement. It has asked other wheat growing states to take necessary steps to ensure enough wheat procurement by the government agencies.

In India wheat has now become national crop and its consumption is increasing in southern and northeastern states. Internationally there is a shortage of wheat due to variety of factors, including consecutive drought years in Australia

and bad weather conditions in other wheat producing countries. In the US wheat is being diversified towards animal feed as corn and maize is used to produce biofuel.

States have also been asked to take necessary steps for procurement of rice in the Kharif season. Inaugurating the Conference of State Agriculture and Agricultural Marketing Ministers, Pawar said rice-producing states that did not procure adequate quantities of rice should give special attention to procurement. He appealed to the states to make best use of initiatives taken in recent years to ensure food security.

Pawar called upon state ministers to give high priority to better water use efficiency, ensuring availability of quality seed and fertilisers, improving marketing infrastructure, introducing market reforms and disseminating new technology through the extension network.

He said conservation farming was required especially in Punjab, Hayana and western UP, where deceleration in productivity growth in food grains had been observed in post green revolution period due to unsustainable use of soil and water resources.

Calling upon the states to expedite market reforms, the minister said investments in post-harvest and cold-chain infrastructure were needed for which entry of the private sector was necessary to bring latest technology and expertise in marketing. Therefore, an appropriate regulatory and policy environment was necessary.

He said the states had been asked by the ministry of agriculture to amend their Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Acts for de-regulation of the agricultural marketing system. Twenty-two states had amended their APMC Acts, but had not yet notified APMC Rules. A draft of model APMC Rules had been circulated to states. The ministry is also putting forth a proposal to constitute an Empowered Committee of State Agriculture Marketing Ministers to facilitate faster implementation of marketing reforms.



## **Rural development: Govt doles out promises**

**Aditi Tandon  
Tribune News Service**

New Delhi, April 23

At a time when indicators of rural development are anything but heartening, the government today made lofty claims about the future of its schemes, including 100 per cent provision of toilets in rural areas by 2012 and self-employment for BPL families by 2015.

Though it admitted that lack of potable water in villages was a matter of serious concern, the only solution it offered was the statistic of Rs 39,490 crore, which has been earmarked in the 11th Five Year Plan for the cause.

Right now, 68 per cent Indian villages don't have drinking water facility -- a matter that bothered most of the 40 MPs who participated in the six-hour long discussion on demand for grants for rural development ministry in the Lok Sabha today.

### **MPs will be consulted**

Singh came in under pressure today from MPs who complained they were not being consulted by state bureaucrats in matters related to Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna. "It's a pity that the MP has no say in his area nor does he have the privilege of laying the foundation stone." Prasad said the government had written to states to consult MPs on the issue and give explanation in case they decide otherwise.

The government remained non-committal on the issue of raising minimum wages during the discussion.

"The interests of farmers have to be protected. We can't allow anything that will hit the agriculture further," said union minister for rural development Raghuvansh Prasad Singh. He further said he was "encouraged" by active participation of members. His speech, however, was more about statistics and how the UPA was spending more on rural development than its predecessor.

Singh did not give away much in terms of practical solutions to outstanding problems like 74 per cent people in villages still using firewood; per capita consumption expenditure in villages being less than Rs 12 and 45 per cent people being below poverty line (World Bank report). The government figure for BPL families is 26 per cent. About the review of BPL criteria, Singh said the government was awaiting the report of a committee appointed for the purpose.

The minister, however, admitted that discrepancies in the implementation of the NREGA was a serious issue. The government is now looking at institutes of excellence in rural development and IIMs to iron out wrinkles in the NREGA implementation. It also plans publicity campaigns in villages to see that actual beneficiaries are benefited.

Reacting to concerns on bogus job cards being issued under NREGA, Singh said that all payments would now be made through accounts in banks or post offices.



## **ISRO to launch 10 satellites at one go**

Chennai, April 23

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will create a record of sorts, when it launches 10 satellites, including eight nano satellites from abroad, in a single mission on April 28 from the spaceport of Sriharikota.

ISRO sources said today that the satellites would be launched by the 12th flight of ISRO's workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C9.

This was for the first time in the history of India's space programme that 10 satellites would be launched in a mission, after it successfully launched four satellites when PSLV-C7 carried CARTOSAT-2, Space Capsule Recovery Experiment (SRE-1), Indonesian LAPAN-TUBSAT and Argentina's PEHUENSAT-1 in January 2007.

The bunch of satellites to be launched from the second launch pad of the SHAR Range on April 28 included India's Cartosat-2A, weighing 690 kg, and Indian Mini Satellite (IMS-1), weighing about 83 kg, which would have new technologies, including miniaturisation technology.

It would be sent for remote sensing purposes. With a resolution of one metre, Cartosat-2A would be used for mapping purposes.

The other eight satellites were nano satellites and they together weigh about 50 kg. The satellites were from Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.

ISRO has fixed the launch time at 0923 hrs and the final countdown would be fixed soon.

The satellites will be launched by the core-alone 44-m-tall and 230-tonne PSLV, without the strap-on motors.

ISRO officials said it would be an international mission, as the sleek PSLV would

be placing 10 satellites in the intended orbit in one mission. "It will be a tricky mission as the satellites have to be put in the orbit at the right time and in right angle one after another", they said, adding that the role of the ejection mechanism would be crucial in the mission.

Of the eight-nano satellites, six form a cluster called NLS-4. Of the six, one each was from the University of Toronto in Canada, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, and two were from Japan.

The seventh one, named NLS-5, weighed 16 kg and was from the University of Toronto. The eighth, called Rubin-8, was from Germany and it weighed seven kg.

These satellites were built to learn the art of fabricating satellites by academicians and to test nano technologies for use in satellites.

The launch had more commercial value as Antrix Corporation, the financial arm of ISRO, would be charging money for carrying foreign satellites.



## Big B hits out at Shatrughan in blog

Mumbai, April 23

The old rivalry between Amitabh Bachchan and Shatrughan Sinha appear to have resurfaced with the Bollywood superstar lashing out at the star-turned-politician for his insinuations that the nomination list of the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) awards were 'fixed'.

Taking the war of words to cyberspace, Bachchan, in his newly created blog reacted to media reports where "my colleague, friend and neighbour Shatrughan Sinha" is purported to have said "Sab kissika beta hai, ya kissiki bahu, ya kissiki biwi" in regard to the nomination list of the IIFA awards.

The Big B, who is IIFA's brand ambassador, said: "I am surprised at this observation, especially since, during the time of the national award selection for best actress in one of the past years, when the award went to Raveena Tandon. It was alleged that Shatrughan Sinha's wife, the lovely and graceful Poonam, a great friend of Raveena's mother had recommended the appointment of MacMohan, brother of Raveena's mother, on the board of the jury to favour the actress."

He added: "If this alleged story is true then, I do value Shatrughan Sinha's statement (Sab Kissika) you are so right Shatru !!," said Big B in the blog. Reacting to Bachchan's outbursts, Sinha said he failed to understand the reason for him being overcome by anger.

Sinha said the superstar's comments on him were "unnecessary and bad in taste." — **PTI**



## Scandinavian diplomats on recce in North-East

**Bijay Sankar Bora**  
**Tribune News Service**

Guwahati, April 23

Ambassadors of three Scandinavian countries are on a visit to Northeastern states of India taking stock of the social, political and economic situation in the region besides gathering information about potential sectors for investment in the region.

Ambassadors of Denmark, Sweden and Finland, Ole Lonsmann Poulsen, Carl-G

Svensson and Asko Numminen, respectively, along with their spouses are on a tour to Northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur meeting people from different sections of society.

They are apparently here to take stock of the internal security scenario in view of the prevailing insurgency in the region, to have first hand information about incidence of HIV and AIDS cases in the region, especially in Manipur.

They are also in the job of identifying untapped sectors that hold key to rapid economic growth of the backward Northeastern states. The foreign diplomats have visited locations Arunachal Pradesh, including picturesque and snow capped Tawang located near the border with China. They also paid visit to enchanting Kaziranga National Park, the abode of one-horned rhinoceros in Assam.

During an interaction with a small group of mediapersons here, the diplomats tried to gather information about the conflict situation in the region and the cooperation, if any, extended by neighbouring Bangladesh and Myanmar to Indian authorities in rooting bases of insurgents from Northeast in those countries.

The ambassadors on visit are trying to figure out the key areas that could trigger rapid economic growth in the backward N-E region and the impact of Chinese made consumer goods, which have flooded the markets in hill areas of the Northeast through illegal trade channels, on the local economy of the region.

The ambassadors have evinced interests in assessing the HIV and AIDS scenario in the region and are visiting the worse-affected state of Manipur. They met the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) officials here today.



## 31 workers die of diarrhoea

Jorhat, April 23

At least 31 tea garden workers have died due to diarrhoea and hooch (country liquor) consumption this month and over 50 others are undergoing medical treatment in two tea gardens of Jorhat district in upper Assam, where the government has sounded a diarrhoea alert.

The district authorities, however, said only seven lives had been claimed by diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases.

Sources in Naginijan tea estate of state-owned Assam Tea Corporation Ltd (ATCL) said 16 persons had died, including five infants, from gastro-enteritis this month with the children dying in the last three days.

Tata Tea Ltd's Rajoi tea garden sources said 16 persons had died since the middle of the month due to hooch consumption.

Over 50 affected persons were undergoing medical treatment in various hospitals and primary health care (PHC) medical centres.

District deputy commissioner L.S. Changsang has called an emergency meeting of the tea estate authorities and the health department officials today to work out a plan to halt further spread of the disease on the eve of the monsoon season.

Consumption of contaminated water from a stream coming from neighbouring Nagaland had triggered the disease in Naginijan tea estate, he said. — **PTI**



## Abducted engineer's family in state of shock

Mangalore, April 23

The family of Sagrang Mohammad Naeem, abducted by suspected Taliban militants in Afghanistan on April 21, is in a state of shock, as his whereabouts are still not known.

Naeem, a middle-aged engineer working with a Dubai-based Afghan-Canadian private company, was in Adraskan district of Heart province in southwest Afghanistan when he was abducted by armed men along with a Nepali and a car driver. The Dubai-based company had been hired by an American company to execute some work in the area.

His home at Gurupura Kaimara, about 15 km from here, now had only aged people as youngsters had gone abroad, mainly to the Gulf countries for work.

Naeem's father Mohammad Hussain, who was badly shaken by the news of abduction of his son, has fervently appealed to the centre to take effective steps for safe release and return of his son from Afghanistan.

"We have spoken to the local police and the district administration. But our efforts to contact the Indian high commission have failed. We are really worried. A person working in the Gulf, whom we know, called up this morning and assured that Naeem will come back safely," said the septuagenarian father.

Mohammed Hussain said the family also received a phone call from a person, claiming to be the director of the Dubai-based company, last evening and he said the company was making all efforts to get Naeem released.

He said he knew something about the abductors and the company would negotiate and ready to meet any conditions to get them released. — **UNI**



## Cheque Bounce Case Plea filed against Sridevi in SC

Bhopal, April 23

A petition was filed today in the Supreme Court challenging the Bombay High Court order staying the criminal proceedings against Bollywood actress Sridevi Kapoor in a cheque bounce case.

Madhu Gupta, proprietor of M S Photofilms Industries, Juhu, Mumbai, in her petition filed in the apex court has contended that the Bombay High Court has committed a serious error of law by staying the proceedings pending in the Court of Judicial Magistrate for an offence under section 138 of Negotiable Instruments Act (NI).

Gupta had financed a film of Sridevi and the actress had issued three cheques of Rs 92.5 lakh, 8.41 crore, and 31.62 lakh, all dated March 2, 2007.

All three cheques bounced on account of insufficient fund when presented for encashment by Gupta.

The Judicial Magistrate had issued summons to Sridevi.

Sridevi's husband Boney Kapoor and her father-in-law Surinder Kapoor also have production houses namely Narasimha Enterprises and S K Films Enterprises.

In the meantime Boney Kapoor and Surinder Kapoor filed a criminal complaint with the police alleging that the cheques are forged and case of forgery should be registered against Gupta.

Sridevi moved the High Court for quashing of the proceedings under section 482 CrPc and learned single judge of the high court stayed the proceedings under section 138 of the NI act, till the investigation in the case of forgery were complete.

Gupta in her petition filed in the apex court has also contended that since the trial court was already seize of the matter, police cannot conduct parallel investigation and original cheques were already on the court record and the court will decide whether the cheques were forged.

The petition is likely to come up for hearing next week. — **UNI**



## **Vacate land, SC tells owner of Appu Ghar**

New Delhi, April 23

The Supreme Court today directed the owner of Appu Ghar at Pragati Maidan to hand over the possession of the land within three weeks to it.

A bench headed by Justice Arijit Pasayat was also informed by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) that it could not allot alternative land in Delhi to "International Amusement Park Private Limited", owner of Appu Ghar, for setting up of an amusement park.

The amusement park at Appu Ghar was set up in the seventies by an NRI with the permission of then Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi.

Appu Ghar had already been closed down under the orders of the Supreme Court, which had directed the DDA to hand over the possession of 12 acres of land to the Supreme Court for construction of administrative blocks and an auditorium.

With the stand taken by the DDA in the Supreme Court, the last hope of amusement park being shifted to some other place in Delhi has ended. — **UNI**



## **Neglect old parents, go to jail**

**Ramesh Kandula**  
**Tribune News Service**

Hyderabad, April 23

The neglect of aged parents will now attract imprisonment in Andhra Pradesh.

AP has become the first state in the country to bring into force the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, providing assurance of maintenance and security to senior citizens in the twilight of their lives.

The Department of Women Development, Child Welfare Disabled Welfare and Senior Citizens has issued an order to implement the central Act which allows parents, above 60 years of age, to move maintenance tribunals if their children do not take care of their needs.

Though the Act was passed by Parliament last year, no state has so far issued notification for its implementation. "We are the first to issue the notification which comes into force from the midnight of April 21," an official said.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which is the nodal agency for the Act at the central level, had written to all states last month to issue the notification at the earliest.

The Act lays the responsibility of taking care of elderly parents and grandparents on earning sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters.

In case there is no scope for the two generations to stay together, it is mandatory for the younger generation to provide sufficient means of maintenance to the senior members.

The act provides for imprisonment up to three months in case of neglect or payment of compulsory maintenance of Rs 5,000 per month or both. It also envisages establishment of old age homes in every district.

The maintenance tribunals would be set up at the revenue division level for speedy disposal of disputes involving senior citizens.

There are an estimated nine crore senior citizens in the country. Increase in average life expectancy has seen percentage of old people in the general population go up from 6.9 per cent in 2001 to 9 per cent now.

The collapse of emotional support structures of joint family system, emergence of nuclear families and all-pervading impact of materialistic culture have cast dark shadows on the twilight years of many parents.

The new law will serve as a boon to old parents who often suffer in silence the insults by their near and dear ones.



## **Dr Mitra to deliver Prem Bhatia Memorial Lecture** **Tribune News Service**

New Delhi, April 23

Eminent economist and former finance minister of West Bengal, Dr Ashok Mitra, will deliver the 13th Prem Bhatia Memorial Lecture at the India International Centre, New Delhi, on May 8. The theme of the lecture is "Growth for whom: Choice or dilemma?"

Meanwhile, the Prem Bhatia Award for the best political reporting for the 2008 has been given to Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu correspondent in Pakistan. Subramanian has been recognised for her sensitive and astute coverage of the major developments in Pakistan, including the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the lawyers' campaign for the restoration of the independent superior judges, the parliamentary elections and the induction of the new democratic government in Pakistan. She has written several analytical articles and editorials in the newspaper on developments in Pakistan.

The award for the best reporting on environment has gone to Keya Acharya, a freelance journalist based in Bangalore. Keya has been writing specifically on environment and development issues in Indian and international publications for the past 18 years. Her interest in the environment led her to pursue a freelance career in order to be able to pay attention to the subject in depth. She is the recipient of several awards, fellowships and commendations, including from the National Foundation for India, the ministry of environment and forests and the Press Institute of India, among others.

Dr Mitra was professor of economics at Indian Statistical Institute and the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and was on the faculty of the Economic Development Institute in Washington. He was subsequently chairman of the Agricultural Prices Commission and the chief economic adviser to the government of India. Still later, he was finance and planning minister in West Bengal and a member of the Rajya Sabha.

The award ceremony will be presided over by Dr Bimal Jalan, one of India's well

known economist. Dr Jalan was Governor of the RBI from 1997 to 2003.



## **BJP MP against sex education in schools**

### **Tribune News Service**

New Delhi, April 23

Reviving the debate on sex education, a BJP member of the Lok Sabha member Sumitra Mahajan put up stiff resistance to sex education proposed by the government as part of the nationwide Adolescence Education Programme (AEP).

The human resource development ministry, in reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha in May last year, had said that the AEP had been launched for secondary and higher secondary classes to empower the adolescents to develop life skills for addressing psychological, social and health concerns.

Raising the issue as a matter of urgent public importance during Zero Hour, Mahajan, former minister of state for human resource development, appealed to all members to "save our children from sex education."

Questioning the proposed inclusion of sex education in the school curricula, Mahajan voiced the apprehension that this would undo the values imbibed by the children. Mahajan said it was good to teach children biology, moral education, social science and civics but questioned the relevance of teaching students ways of controlling HIV/AIDS.



## **MEA to regulate aid to other nations**

### **Tribune News Service**

New Delhi, April 23

The ministry of external affairs is processing the government's proposal to set up an independent agency to regulate Indian funding and financial assistance to foreign countries for strategic and political goals.

The proposed agency will have adequate financial powers for taking immediate decisions on grants, loans and aid in case of natural disasters and other emergencies.

The MEA is working with other ministries to establish the India International Development Cooperation Agency to bring all activities relating to India's development cooperation with fellow developing countries under one umbrella, external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee told the Lok Sabha today.



## **Shramjeevi coaches derail**

Biharsharif, April 23

Altogether 14 bogies of the Delhi-bound Shramjeevi Express derailed at Soh-Sarai halt, between Bakhtiyarpur and Dina station of Danapur division under East Central Railways (ECR) in Nalanda district today.

Railway sources said there were no reports of any casualty or injury to anybody in the accident.

According to an eye witness, a loud sound was heard after which the bogies derailed with a lot of smoke billowing from the engine. — **UNI**

TOP

## Tusker runs amok, kills 3

Thrissur (Kerala), April 23

Three persons, including an old woman, were trampled to death and four others injured when an elephant ran amok at the Irrinjalakuda 'Koodalmanikya' temple in the district today.

The tusker, 'Unnikrishnan', was brought to the centuries-old temple as a part of the annual festival celebrations. The incident occurred just after the 'kazchashiveli' ritual in the afternoon.

Kausalya (75), and a boy, Nithin, both from Thrissur district, were among those dead. The identity of the third victim was yet to be established. The injured were admitted to the local Taluk hospital.

The tusker ran wild for nearly two hours, and it also destroyed the 'gopuravathil' and the doors of the 'koothambalam'. It was finally brought under control and chained by its two 'mahouts'.

The Chalakudy divisional forest officer will conduct an inquiry into the incident. The DC said any compensation for the victims would be announced only after holding consultations with the government. — **UNI**

TOP

## Ban on Indians travelling to Iraq

Tribune News Service

New Delhi, April 23

The emigration clearance to the Indian citizens travelling to Iraq has been suspended since April 15, 2004, in view of the deteriorating security situation in that country.

Since the security situation in Iraq continues to be grim, the above directive continues to be in place, minister of state for external affairs E. Ahamed told the Lok Sabha in response to a question from Ramdas Athawale.

Asked whether the services of Indian workers and drivers, who had gone to Kuwait, had been terminated by their Kuwaiti companies due to the ban on travel to Iraq, the minister said the ministry was not aware of such developments.

TOP

## JIPMER on par with AIIMS, PGI

Tribune News Service

New Delhi, April 23

The Rajya Sabha today passed a Bill for giving greater autonomy to the the Jawaharlal Institute of Post-Graduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Puducherry, which will be allowed to award its own degrees to students. This will bring it at a par with the AIIMS, Delhi and the PGI, Chandigarh.

The institute will be given an enhanced status as an institution of national importance. The Bill was passed with a voice vote.

TOP

BRIEFLY

**NALANDA TO IMPROVE TIES WITH BUDDHIST NATIONS**

**PATNA:** Nalanda, an ancient seat of learning, will soon become a gateway for improving ties with China and other Buddhist south-east Asian countries. Talking on the concept of cultural village in Nalanda, the Nav Nalanda Mahavihar vice-chancellor, R Pant elaborating on the cultural village, said that it would be spread over 64 acres of land for the tourists visiting from different countries. — **UNI**

**TWO STUDENTS DROWN IN BIRBHUM CANAL**

**SURI (WB):** Two students of the Birbhum Engineering College drowned on Wednesday morning in a canal nearby in Birbhum district. Gaurav Singh and Supratik Chakraborty along with two others went to the canal which was full to the brim. They slipped and fell and as they did not know how to swim drowned, the police said. — **PTI**

**MANIPUR REMEMBERS 1891 WARRIORS**

**IMPHAL:** People at Khongjom in Manipur's Thoubal district on Wednesday observed the Khongjom day to commemorate the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891 against the British empire. The Governor, S S Sidhu, the chief minister, O Ibobi Singh and other cabinet ministers laid floral tributes to the warriors at Khongjom war memorial. — **UNI**

**IT SLEUTHS SEIZE CASH, JEWELLERY**

**AHMEDABAD:** Searches carried out by the investigation directorate of the income tax here on two prominent city-based builders and a stockbroker have resulted in seizure of cash and jewellery worth Rs 1.47 crore. The stockbroker and his associates had so far disclosed unaccounted income of Rs 5.20 crore. A large number of documents were also seized, IT sources added. — **UNI**

**10-FT CROCODILE CREATES TENSION**

**CANNING (WB):** A 10-foot crocodile, which lost its way and entered a pond at a small village in the Sunderbans on Tuesday night, was captured on Wednesday morning by the forest department personnel. The officials of the forest department said that the pond's owner Nurul Islam noticed violent movement under water and guessed some large animal must have slipped into the pond. — **PTI**

**3 KIDS DIE AFTER VACCINATION**

**TAMIL NADU:** Three children died after being administered small pox vaccine in Pennalurpet village here on Wednesday. A medical camp for vaccination was held at the Primary Health Centre in the Kathcur area in Pennalurpet. Seven 10-month old babies were vaccinated. After consuming the vaccine, the children showed symptoms of allergy and were referred to the Tiruvallur district hospital. Three out of the seven died. — **UNI**



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