



THE ECHO OF INDIA



NOTICE
The Editor and all members of the Info Group of Publications extend their good wishes to the readers and advertisers for the Durga Puja and Dussera. On account of the festivities, there will, therefore, be no issues of the Echo of India on September 28, 29, 30 and October 1

Modi, Mamata wish ex-PM Manmohan

on his 85th B'day

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, SEPT 26 /- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday wished his predecessor Manmohan Singh on his birthday praying for his long life. "Warm birthday wishes to our former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. May he lead a long life filled with good health," Modi said in a tweet. Singh, who turned 85 on Tuesday, was the Prime Minister between 2004 and 2014 during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime. His political career began in 1991 when he was appointed as the country's finance minister under late Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao. It was the same year during which he helped usher in "liberalisation and privatisation" to the Indian economy. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee too wished the former Prime Minister on his birthday. "Birthday wishes and regards to Manmohan Singhji," Banerjee tweeted.

India, US discuss ways to deepen defence ties

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 /- India and the US today discussed ways to deepen their defence ties along with key issues such as Afghanistan, where New Delhi has ruled out a troop contribution, and terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Defence minister Manoj Siiharaman and her US counterpart James Mattis held comprehensive talks covering the entire gamut of the bilateral defence partnership. "The situation in our neighbourhood and the growing menace of cross-border terrorism were discussed in depth. There is growing convergence in the approaches of both our countries on this issue," Siiharaman said at a joint press conference. She said both sides recognise the importance of holding those who use terrorism as an instrument of state policy to account and to dismantle the infrastructure that supports terrorism on his part. Mattis said there can be "no tolerance to terrorism safe havens." He also welcomed India's contribution in war-torn Afghanistan in several development projects, however, he ruled out troops contribution amidst the US emphasis for a greater participation by the country in the conflict-ridden Islamic nation. "We have made it clear that there shall not be boots from India on the ground" (Afghan)," Siiharaman said while responding to a query on whether India will contribute troops in Afghanistan. The defence minister also said that Mattis has assured her that he will raise with Pakistan the issue of terrorism emanating from there.



Goddess Durga at Ajeya Sanhati — Debanjan Mukherjee

Gurung responds to Rajnath's call, lifts bandh in Darjeeling

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 /- GJM chief Bimal Gurung today lifted the ongoing bandh in Darjeeling responding to Union home minister Rajnath Singh's request. The home minister today appealed to the GJM to withdraw the strike in for a separate Gorkhaland state and asked the Union home secretary to convene an official-level meeting to discuss all related issues. In a statement, Singh said that in a democracy, dialogue is the only way out to resolve any problem and solutions can be found through restraint and mutual dialogue within the legal ambit. "I appeal to the GJM and its leader Bimal Gurung to withdraw the ongoing bandh and to help create a conducive atmosphere for allowing normalcy to return to the area, particularly in view of the festival season," he said as the indefinite shutdown in press for a separate state of Gorkhaland continued for 104th day. Singh said he has asked Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba to convene an official-level meeting within a fortnight to discuss all related issues. "Eleven precious lives have been lost so far, seven have been injured and the entire people of Darjeeling hills have suffered a lot since the strike. I have pained immensely by what has happened in Darjeeling hills," the home minister said. The indefi-



People of hills will not forgive 'betrayer' Tamang: Gurung

DARJEELING, SEPT 26 /- GJM supremo Bimal Gurung today said the people of the hills will not forgive expelled GJM leader Binay Tamang for "betraying" their aspirations. The West Bengal government appointed Board of Administrators (BoA) of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) met for the first time yesterday under the chairmanship of Tamang. The meeting had decided to carry out a special audit of GTA, that was headed by Gurung for last five years. The indefinite shutdown in the hills over the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland today entered its 104th day. "The Gorkhas will not forgive Tamang for playing into the hands of the state government and betraying the aspirations of the people of the hills. He has compromised with the cause of Gorkhaland,"

Gurung said in a message. The GJM chief warned that the agitation will turn violent if the Centre does not convene a tripartite talk within next week. "I will wait for one more week for the Centre to initiate talks. If it does not happen we will decide our next course of action and the agitation will turn violent," Gurung said. Meanwhile, in view of normalcy returning to Darjeeling hills the state administration last night decided to lift the restrictions on use of internet services in the hills, which was imposed on June 18. The internet ban was on in the hills for 100 days. Several shops and markets in the hills opened during the day despite threats and intimidation by GJM activists. Darjeeling district administration said that over 85 per cent of the shops in the hills opened.



File photo

Judicial probe ordered into BHU violence

Shiv Sena attacks PM on varsity row, questions performance

LUCKNOW/MUMBAI, SEPT 26 /- The Uttar Pradesh government today ordered a judicial inquiry into the violence on the campus of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). A number of students, including women, and two journalists were injured in a lathicharge by the police in BHU where a protest on Saturday night against an alleged eve-teasing incident turned violent. "A judicial inquiry has been ordered into the incidents," UP government spokesperson and cabinet minister Srikanth Sharma said here. He was speaking to mediapersons after a meeting of the state cabinet chaired by chief minister Yogi Adityanath. Sharma, however, did not elaborate as to whether the probe would be conducted by a retired or sitting judge. The violence erupted after some students, protesting against the incident on Thursday, wanted to meet the varsity's vice-chancellor at his residence. As Opposition parties tried to force the BJP over the police action on the campus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah yesterday spoke to the chief minister and asked him to address the issue at the earliest. Sharma said the government wanted that there should be communication with the students by the local administration, vice chancellor and other university officials. Sharma accused the Opposition parties of trying to vitiate the academic atmosphere. "If they wish to do politics, they should do it with us and not with students. They should keep away from holding agitations in campuses," he said. On lathicharge on girl students sitting on dharna against the alleged eve-teasing on the campus, he said, "We are identifying those 'outsiders' who are using the students to do politics and also identifying those who indulged in lathicharge." He said the government has asked the local administration to strengthen the security on the campus. "It has been decided to install CCTV on the campus," he added. Meanwhile, ally Shiv



are on fire and you are quiet. People are helpless in the name of system improvement and you are quiet," the Sena alleged in an editorial in party mouthpiece 'Dopahar ka Saamana'. "Daughters of the country are being lathicharged and you are quiet. Your party workers are creating a ruckus. Until when will you be quiet?" "Is this the 'saubhagya' of the country's daughters of you brought you to the top with a lot of aspirations?" the editorial said. The editorial, which referred to the PM in second person, wondered if anyone would lift the university administration received a "joir" after the students placed their demands. "They had only demanded that the Banaras Hindu University get CCTV cameras on its campus and the accused be arrested. Was it right to file an FIR against them?" it questioned. "You (Modi), without thinking twice, took steps that brought a storm in the nation, but, as far as people's questions were concerned, you only whip up 'jumas' (catch phrases). "You have told your workers, power is for happiness but to do 'seva' (service) of the people. But, what will you answer, if they ask you what 'seva' have you performed in the last three years," the Sena said. The Sena alleged that the daughters of Uttar Pradesh and Varanasi who elected Modi are being troubled and are facing the trauma of eve-teasing.

PM asks young IAS officers to work for creating India of dreams

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 /- Prime Minister Narendra Modi today asked young IAS officers to work with team spirit and strive towards creating the India of the dreams of freedom fighters by 2022. Addressing the IAS officers of 2015 batch here, he asked them to focus on subjects such as GST implementation and boosting digital transactions, especially via the BHIM App, according to a PMO statement. He urged the officers to work towards creating the India of the dreams of freedom fighters, by 2022, it said. The Prime Minister said the key aim of officers today is the welfare of the nation and its citizens, the statement said.

He urged the officers to work with team spirit, and make teams wherever they go, it said. Modi urged all officers to speed up the adoption of Government e Marketplace (GeM) in their respective departments, saying it would eliminate middlemen and result in savings for the government. Giving examples of open defecation-free (ODF) targets and rural electrification, the Prime Minister asked the officers to work towards 100 per cent achievement of the goals, the statement said. The IAS officers made presentations on various themes of governance such as rapid response for accident victims, tracking

individual carbon footprints, financial inclusion, improving rural incomes, data-driven rural prosperity, heritage tourism, railway safety, and central armed police forces, it said. Modi said it was indeed significant that the junior-most and senior-most officers are spending such a lot of time communicating with each other. He said the young officers must imbibe all the positives from these interactions, the statement said. He said the officers who have risen from humble backgrounds, should meet young students, and motivate them. Communication leads to compassion," the Prime Minister added. (PTI)

Puja pandal in north Kolkata driving home a message on social contradictions

KOLKATA, SEPT 26 /- At a time when the city is enamoured in celebrating Devi Paksha -- the time when Goddess Durga wages a battle against the demon Mahisasura and destroys evil -- a Durga Puja pandal in north Kolkata is quietly delivering a message on social how women empowerment still remains a far cry. For the Kankurgachi Mitali Durga Puja Committee, the timing couldn't have been better. Durga Puja is a time to celebrate "Street Shakti" or women power, but in reality, there is no respite for women as they remain chained to the chores. The Puja organisers have shot a three-part short film and are beaming it outside the pandal to catch the eye of the thousands of pandal hoppers. Titled 'Upachare Bandi' (bound

by rituals), the short film is a run-down of social contradictions. "This is a short film -- a three-part presentation before thousands of Puja revelers -- featuring three women belonging to different age groups who find their wishes dashed and movement fettered by certain societal norms and rituals. So, while on the one hand we are celebrating 'Street Shakti' we are not allowing women in the families to participate citing certain norms." "Upachare Bandi brings out this inherent hypocrisy in society where the invocation of the mother goddess follows a series of rituals which at times prevent women from participating in the festival in certain situations," one of the two directors, Artrik Bhattacharyya said. The film is a



Actor Raima Sen at Mudiati club puja pandal — Shyamal Maitra

collage. In one bit, a teen girl who has been counting down for the past several months to offer 'Pushpanjali' on Mahashanti day is suddenly asked by her mother not to visit the neighbourhood puja pandal as she had menstruated, the other director Arkamoy Datta Majumdar said. In the two bits -- a married woman is asked not to visit the pandal during the time of 'Pushpanjali' as the maid has not turned up and an elderly woman has to shelve her plans to meet other members of her group at the time of 'Pushpanjali' as the maid's daughter-in-law asks her to look after her child at the new flat. Somasree Barik, a woman visiting the pandal with her family, said "This shows how women are not free in real sense in this society." (PTI)