

Chinese Navy eyes Indian Ocean as part of PLA's plan to extend its reach

ON BOARD PLA SHIP YULIN, AUG 11 /- China's Navy wants to join hands with India to maintain security of the Indian Ocean, amid growing concerns in New Delhi over the increasing presence of the PLA fleet in India's backyard. Throwing open its strategic South Sea Fleet (SSF) base in the coastal city of Zhanjiang to a group of Indian journalists for the first time, People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) officials say the Indian Ocean is a common place for the international community. "It is my opinion China and India can make joint contributions to the safety and security of the Indian Ocean," Capt Liang Tianjun, Deputy



Chief of General Office of China's SSF said. His remarks came as China's Navy embarked on a massive expansion to extend its global reach. Liang also explained the growing forays of the Chinese warships and submarines into the Indian Ocean, where China for the first time established a naval base at Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. Defending the first Chinese overseas naval base against criticism that it would amplify China's growing influence, he said it will act as a logistics centre and support anti-piracy, UN peacekeeping operations and humanitarian relief missions in the region. The Djibouti base will also provide a resting place

for Chinese navy personnel, he said. But analysts fear the opening of the first Chinese military base abroad was in tune with PLA's ambitions to expand its global reach amidst China's growing economic and political footprint. "The Indian Ocean is a vast ocean. It is common place for the international community to contribute to the peace and stability in the region," Liang said. Interacting with the Indian media on the decks of the PLAN's frigate Yulin about Chinese growing presence at the Indian Ocean much to the disquiet of India, he said China's military is defensive in nature and not offensive. At the same time, he made it clear that China

AT A GLANCE

Nihalani sacked as CBFC chief

NEW DELHI: In a significant development, Prahlad Nihalani was on Friday removed as the chairperson of Central Board of Film Certification in India. As per a report, noted song writer and poet Prasoon Joshi is likely to take the charge. Nihalani took over the CBFC chairman's office in January 2015 and has been a subject of several controversies ever since. His three-year tenure was all set to end in January 2018. Last year, he raised objections to several scenes in the movie 'Uda Punjab' that chronicled the drug menace in the state. Nihalani also blocked Konkona Sensharma's Lipstick Under My Burkha on grounds of the film being 'lady-oriented' and recently, he objected to the word 'intercourse' which was used in one of the mini trails of Shah Rukh Khan-Anushka Sharma starrer 'Jab Harry Met Sejal'.

30 children die in UP hospital

GORAKHPUR: At least 30 children died in the state-run Baba Raghav Das Medical College here during the last 48 hours, district magistrate Rajeev Rautela said today. He said, he was aware of reasons for the deaths. He said 17 children died in the neo-natal ward, 5 in AES (acute encephalitis syndrome) ward and 8 in the general ward. To a specific question as to whether the deaths occurred due to shortage in supply of oxygen, Rautela said he found out from the doctors that no death occurred due to lack of oxygen.

ED quizzes Subrata in Narada scam

KOLKATA: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) today interrogated state panchayat minister Subrata Mukherjee at its office here in connection with money laundering aspect highlighted in the Narada sting operation. Sources in the Central agency said Mukherjee's response to the posers were "straightforward". The Narada tapes showed Mukherjee purportedly accepting money from a businessman. Posing as a businessman, Narada News CEO Matthew Samuels had conducted sting operations on several TMCs MPs, MLAs and ministers in 2011. Mukherjee left the ED office after questioning.

Sushma meets Bhutanese counterpart

KATHMANDU: External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj today met her Bhutanese counterpart Damcho Dorji here and is understood to have discussed bilateral issues, amidst the



standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in the Doklam sector of the Sikkim sector. Both the leaders are here to attend a meeting of foreign ministers from the countries of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), a grouping of countries in South Asia and South East Asia. Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal are members of the BIMSTEC.

Mother & daughter find their hair cut Rumour of evil-presence grips Harischandrapur in Malda



The housewife shows how her hair was cut during sleep to the health-workers and neighbours-EOI Photo

SOUMYA DE SARKAR

MALDA, AUG 11 /- /What had so far been mere gossip for them appeared as a horrific experience for Monjira Bibi and her eight-year old daughter Reba Khatun when they found bunches of their hair scissored this morning. In moments fear gripped entire Fatehpur village under Harischandrapur police station. Although police have assured to look into the matter and health personnel counseled the hair-losers, activists of science awareness organizations believe only the arrest of culprits would abolish fear of an 'evil spirit behind the game' from the mind of the people. According to sources, Reba, who slept with her mother last night, to her horror, found a bunch of her hair was cut and left on the floor. As she yelled, Monjira on examining her daughter's hair found her statement to be true. Fear of the family was further aggravated when Monjira Bibi too, to her dismay, found that her hair was cut too in her sleep. "I slept with my daughter on one room. My husband and I did not hear anything from another room. I simply could not understand

when our hairs were cut," Monjira Khatun told her neighbours. "We heard of similar incidents in Bihar and Jharkhand but never imagined that such thing would occur with us too," she added.

As minor Reba fell sick following the incident, she was rushed to Bhaluka primary health centre for treatment. Health workers later visited the mother and the daughter to counsel them. Locals largely believe some holy spirit played the hair-cut game with women as it had happened in Bihar. Sajal Das was, sub divisional police officer of Chanchal said. "We have heard of the incident. We are looking into the matter from our end." Panchayet officials have decided to launch a campaign at the locality to drive away fear from the minds of people. Officials of Malda Zilla Vigyan Manch, however, believe that a section of miscreants had deliberately cut the hair of women to strengthen the evil theory. "It was undoubtedly an act by some goons. Once they are arrested, the scare of evil would be extinct," said Sunil Sarkar, a science awareness activist and headmaster of a school in Malda.

Venkaiah Naidu sworn in as 15th Vice-President



NEW DELHI, AUG 11 /- /M Venkaiah Naidu was today sworn in as the 15th Vice-President of India. President Ram Nath Kovind administered the oath of office to Naidu, 68, at a brief ceremony in the Durbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhawan at

Ayodhya title dispute Final hearing in SC from Dec 5

NEW DELHI, AUG 11 /- /The Supreme Court today decided to hold the final hearing in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute from December 5 and made it clear that no adjournment shall be given in any circumstance. The apex court, after an intense deliberation for more than one-and-half-hours, reached a consensus on commencement of the hearing on the cross-appals filed against the 2010 judgment of the Allahabad High Court. The Allahabad High Court had ruled a three-way division of the disputed 2.77 acre area at Ayodhya among the

Indian Team members visit place of Sita's captivity ahead of 3rd Test



DETAILS ON PAGE-12

'Dhananjay': Reel is real? Ananda Apartment residents eager to know



Anand Apartment (right) where Hetal Parekh used to stay

KOLKATA, AUG 11 /- /The release of the film Dhananjay by Arindam Seal today that created a considerable flutter among film buffs as well as members of the general public, however, has evoked a mixed reaction from residents of Ananda Apartment at Padmapukur area in south Calcutta, where the gruesome incident of the rape and murder of 18-year old Hetal Parekh, a resident of the building, took place on March 15, 1990. Dhananjay Chatterjee, security guard of the residential building, who was accused and later convicted of committing the crime, was hanged at Alipore Central Jail on August 14, 2004. The film which was based on the incident, sought to question the propriety of handing down capital punishment to Chatterjee. While people like Nitin Thora, a resident of Flat No 2A on the third floor of the apartment, who claims to have witnessed the trauma and agony that the family of Hetal went through, says he was not interested in seeing the film, there are others like Romi Chaudhury, secretary of the residents association of the apartment, expressed his keenness to see the film. "What will they show? I have seen everything, I am least interested in the film," the young man told Echo of India. However Chaudhury said he was interested in watching the film. "I came to stay here a year before the execution of Dhananjay took place. That time a lot of people from the media came here and talked to us. What ever had happened was extremely heinous. Those who commit this kind of crimes should be severely punished," Chaudhury said. Ratna Ghosh, another resident of the building and a contemporary said that though she thought the film should not have been made at all, she expressed her desire to see the film. "I have seen how Hetal's mother sat inside the lift of the building with her daughter in her lap after the incident. The girl was of course, I saw her going to school and to the local temple with her mother. I believe this film should not have been made for it will again bring the families of Hetal and Dhananjay under focus. I pray that though this thing should not happen to anybody," Ghosh told Echo of India. At flat no 3A where Hetal and her parents who moved to Mumbai after the incident, lived, the Mehtas who are now living, refuse to talk about the incident. Said Hanti Mehta, 88, "I have heard about the incident but I don't want to hear more about this. Any discussion about this in our house is banned," the young girl said.

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