

**Jobs for J&K border youth**

Two Reserve Battalions of Police are proposed to be raised exclusively for the youth living within ten kilometers along the International Border (IB) as well as the Line of Control (LoC). In this connection, the Union Home Ministry has accorded the necessary sanction paving the way for the recruitment of over 2000 border youth.

These two proposed battalions shall be wholly funded by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) expected to be raised at a cost of Rs. 105 crore. During the visit to LoC in Nowshera sector in September 2017 Home Minister Rajnath Singh had promised that courageous and valiant youth from the border belts of Jammu and Kashmir will be recruited in Police Battalions. The MHA was working on the proposal which stands approved and a formal decision to this effect has also been conveyed to the Jammu and Kashmir Government. It has, accordingly asked the State Government to set up the process in motion for raising of two Reserve Battalions, one each for Kashmir and Jammu regions. Both the battalions shall be having 1000 personnel from each division totaling a little over 2000.

It is fairly known to everyone how Pakistan is incessantly engaged in a proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir and how border violations, as a matter of routine, are made by them. Regular shelling and unprovoked firing by Pakistani army and Rangers on the LoC for quite some time have been resulting in the loss of precious human lives of the security forces and the civilians besides damaging of crops and houses etc. Through these border violations, they provide cover and other logistics to the infiltrators while crossing the borders. Rough geographical terrains and porous borders, many a time, are breached by these terrorists. It is, however, not mandatory that these battalions were going to be deployed on the borders but their services could be utilized anywhere in the state and the current mechanism of defending of the borders would remain unchanged. In other words, the Army would remain deployed as front line force on the LoC and the BSF on the IB. The Jammu and Kashmir Police will keep on playing its role on the borders.

It is pertinent to note that for treating people as border dwellers, the criteria is that they should be living within a radius of five kilometers but the Home Ministry, relaxing the norms, has covered the youth of the areas falling within 10 kilometers from the IB and the LoC for being eligible for the recruitment criteria.

A time frame of two years is, within which the entire recruitment process is to be completed and the criteria for recruitment of the youth will be the same as is applicable to the Reserve Battalions. It is important to note that the Ministry of Home Affairs has asked the State Government to keep it abreast of the developments in respect of raising of these two battalions and that complete transparency in the recruitment was to be maintained by the State Government.

**Unfinished Takanwari Bridge**

Six long years are of no significance for construction of a small bridge with a total length of 127 meters and that too a foot bridge at Takanwari area on the outskirts of Srinagar. Work started on it in 2011 and it is still incomplete. The estimated cost of the bridge immediately before the commencement of work was put at Rs.319.50 lakh but as per reports, Rs. 248 lakh only have been released and rest of the amount is yet to be released.

This bridge over river Jehlum would connect Takanwari with Panzinar but it became a casualty of callous slow pace of work. None bothers for the hardships faced by the residents in crossing the river and risking their lives by opting to cross the Jehlum in overcrowded boats in order to reach their destinations. Avoiding this available facility, the only other option is to tread long distance and cross the river through Maloora - Tengpora Bridge. The bridge, when built and ready would prove as a life-line for the residents, is what they speak. Just two pillars for the bridge have been built only to leave the remaining major work in a state of utter dormancy which is irking the residents of the area and justifiably so. Again, paucity of funds coupled with "other reasons" coming in the way of its construction is resulting in hardships to the public. 2014 floods stopped its work. It was resumed but again got suspended due to the delay caused in procurement of material for the bridge from Ranchi, Jharkhand etc. As if it was not enough, an unresolved issue with the Irrigation and Flood Control Department for issuing NOC for making anchor blocks etc have all worked together to affect the work on it.

The residents, however, hope that looking to the inconvenience faced by them the bridge would see the light of the day hopefully during the current year itself.

Dr Ganesh Malhotra

The Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, has succeeded in abolishing presidential term limits, a momentous political coup that paves the way for him to stay in power for years to come.

Nearly 3,000 members of China's National People's Congress voted highly controversial constitutional amendment through during a session at the Great Hall of the People - an imposing Mao-era theatre on the western fringe of Tiananmen Square.

Two other amendments designed to shore up Xi's supremacy were also approved through the same vote: the addition of a political philosophy called Xi Jinping Thought to the constitution, and the creation of politically driven Supervisory Commissions tasked with investigating party members and civil servants.

The parliament's chairman, Zhang Dejiang, told delegates it was time to get behind Xi's push to make China great again.

Since taking power in 2012 Xi has used an anti-corruption campaign to bring down a succession of heavyweight rivals includ-

**Chinese balloon will burst for sure**

ing more than 100 generals and admirals and six top party figures who were accused of plotting a coup. Here lies the extreme danger ahead for China. Unlike democracies, tight autocratic regimes cannot diffuse and scatter mass discontent. When society gets sullen or disillusioned in such systems, people's anger will be directed at the person at the pinnacle and the edifice that props him up. Excess concentration of power is a high-risk strategy that could backfire and sow seeds of revolution against the foundational principle of the CCP rule. Posters have started popping up in college campuses across the United States proclaiming "Not My President." Words directed not at Donald Trump, but at Xi Jinping.

The dual posters in both English and Chinese are part of a grassroots movement of overseas Chinese who are expressing their discontent with China plan for scrapping term limit for President, allowing Xi Jinping to potentially remain leader for life. "Xi Jinping is abolishing term limits of his presidency through

Chinese rubber stamp legislative body. It is time to let him know that WE DISAGREE," the posters read, carrying the hashtag #DISAGREE, a slogan that was blocked at weibo following the proposal's announcement last week.

The campaign has set up its own Twitter account, which now has more than 5000 followers.

The students organizing this campaign have chosen to remain anonymous; worried about what sort of consequences would wait them back home if the Chinese government discovered their identities. The single most important driving force behind China's growth in the past 30 years has been the check on the party leader's power on the institutional level. It's definitely not our wish that an unelected strongman become a de facto lifetime dictator."

Term limits on office holders were written into China's constitution in 1982 while Deng Xiaoping was in power as a reaction to the cult of personality that had developed around Mao Zedong.

The campaign's organizers say they are worried that the abolition of these term limits could "plunge us into another round of the Cultural Revolution."

Back in China, any online dissent over the proposal has been heavily censored with only a few dissidents choosing to speak to foreign media.

All these developments are leading to imminent collapse of china. Collapse is likely to be expedited as unprecedented crackdown against opposition and disappearance of lawyers and human right activists is causing massive chaos in the Chinese hinterland.

China is finally reaching at a point and Xinjiang, Manchuria, Hong Kong, Tibet, Chengdu, Zhangzhong and Shanghai could turn into free nations after a Chinese revolution. There was banning of the fast during Ramzan. In last few years the Chinese government has issued several policies targeting Muslims in Xinjiang, that is likely to explode soon. Tibet The Tibetan struggle

may be the most peaceful 'war' on the planet, but that shouldn't be taken as a sign of weakness. Moreover, the cause, headed by the Dalai Lama, enjoys sympathy of the broader international community. Ethnically and culturally, Tibetans have always been completely at odds with their Chinese neighbours.

In 1949 The People's Liberation Army of China marched into Tibet to 'improve' the region. Its victory at the Battle of Chamdo in 1951 was meant to bring Tibetans into line, but a large-scale uprising took place in 1959, and tensions have simmered ever since. Recent protests have again turned violent and sometimes deadly, most notably in 2008 and 2012.

It is important to remember that the Tibetan Autonomous Region as defined by the CPC represents only a fraction of the territory claimed by a fully-functioning Tibetan 'Government in Exile' operating out of Dharamsala, northern India. Much of the modern Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Sichuan were historically part

of Tibet proper, and are still primarily inhabited by Tibetans, this despite approximately 150,000 Tibetans joining the Dalai Lama in exile. They have all vowed to return.

Technically, China is not at war with this 'Taiwan' but that is only because Taiwan has never formally declared independence. As recently as March 2017 Taiwan's Defence Minister talked of warfare techniques necessary to combat threats from mainland China. With hostilities in the South China Sea steadily increasing, and USA regularly using Taiwan as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with Beijing, developments in Taipei could yet be a major catalyst for change on the mainland.

A regime with as many built-in contradictions as the People's Republic cannot endure and some kind of collapse is in the making. The red aristocracy will step-by-step and drip-by-drip, lead towards tighter controls and all-out totalitarianism. Can it thereby endure? Totalitarianism has always failed and same will be the case of China.

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Dr. Gopal Parthasarathi Sharma

With the assigning of Finance Ministry charge to Altaf Bhukhari as an interim measure, curtain seems to have finally been drawn over Haseeb A Drabu's stint as Finance Minister under present dispensation. Any reconciliatory scope ceases to be there now. An abrupt, unceremonial and outrageous ouster of an important minister from the State Cabinet has come as a big bombshell to the victim as well as to his well wishers. Those who considered him a daring finance minister known for taking bold steps directed towards transparency and better financial management of the state must be feeling devastated. The million dollar question remains as to what prompted Chief Minister to go for such an extreme step vis-à-vis a high profile minister of her cabinet? Neither Haseeb A Drabu nor his well wishers and fans would ever agree to the reasons being cited for his fall. How can a mere statement on Kashmir bring such a catastrophe for him?

Drabu's statement in a function organized by the PHDCCI in New Delhi that "people were barking up the wrong tree for the last 50-70 years" being trumpeted for his devastation may not have gone well with various stakehold-

ers to Kashmir Issue. As claimed by his own statement on his ouster he had been talking on these lines in the past too. The only probability of taking such a serious offence out of this statement is the decoding wrong meaning of the verb "barking" (which certainly is not the case).

Undoubtedly, most of the stakeholders to the Kashmir Issue want the "Kashmir pot" boiling for eternity as it ensures their financial as well as political survival. Any statement that trivializes their stated position and consequently puts there bread and butter at risk is poison to their ears. This hard reality must have put the party in a dock after Drabu's statement in Delhi. Moreover he was under severe criticism for his active role in GST implementation in the state. Most of the stakeholders feel that he facilitated financial integration of the state with the whole nation at the cost of erosion of special status of the state. His preference for pure economic sense over political considerations is yet another reason for his criticism across political spectrum.

Opposition, separatist camp, party cadre, local media and external stakeholders might have

pressurized Ms Mehbooba Mufti to act against him on different counts but there was no need to buckle down so easily. She should have bought more time by engaging Drabu and asking for some sort of softening his stance or clarification. The party and the government could have easily saved the day by reacting with a standard statement that "he was misquoted by media" or by simply disassociating from his statement calling it his "personal take" on the issue. Quite surprisingly, he was not even given a chance to defend and was thrown out without being informed about the decision.

Another possible reason for his fall seems to be his ever growing popularity owing to his revolutionary and change-oriented budgets one after the other. Right from his first budget speech till the last one in January this year, he was all out to fix the whole budgetary process for better. Systemic changes that he promised in earlier budgets actually saw the light in his latest budget. His bold revelations about GPF management, shortcomings of age old and redundant treasury system and financial mismanagement in certain

departments has certainly earned him more enemies than friends. His strict stance regarding financial discipline in the whole system has already jeopardized many departments in the state. Many of his budgetary experiments may have irked many politicians, bureaucrats, contractor mafia and business tycoons who are against transparency. His reluctance on giving any leverage on backdoor appointments, POA system, contractor liabilities and subsequent statewide stir by contractors is a testimony to this fact. Such people might have colluded and jointly pressurized the party leadership for some immediate action against Drabu and the statement in Delhi has just been used as a lame excuse for crucifying him. Things have been brewing up for quite some time against him.

Being a key person in coalition management he had close ties with Delhi and this might have created some sort of inconvenience for some quarters in the party and may have even triggered a sense of insecurity for the party high command too. She might have used his dismissal as a strong signal for all the possible parallel power centers in the

party. Party think-tanks must be worried about some possible political realignment in Kashmir politics in the light of ever-straining relations between coalition partners. His close equation with Delhi and active role in running the coalition in the state might have triggered a sense of insecurity among other forces within party. It's baffling that instead of using good governance to expand the party base, the party is on a losing streak with exit of big names like Karra, Vikramaditya Singh, and more recently MLC Surinder Choudhary.

The real reasons behind his removal have started unraveling with the POA being kept in abeyance by the new Finance Minister. It is quite evident now that the contractors and various employee lobbies wanted him to go. The way contractors were protesting and had virtually stopped developmental work across the state must have triggered this unwarranted action. With the Governor pressing for local bodies and panchayat elections keeping contractors out of favors would have been suicidal for the Government.

If more such reversals of Drabu's policies surface, it will

prove that there are many lobbies who wanted his head to roll down. Chief Minister's intriguing silence over the issue has added more element of suspense to it as she has evaded all media questions on the issue. Even the coalition partner BJP and its leadership is tight-lipped on the issue calling it an "internal matter of PDP". Whatever be the reason for Drabu's fall, the new finance minister must ensure that good decisions of his predecessor are not reversed for political considerations.

Dr. Haseeb A Drabu seems to have earned notoriety of being head strong. Even his flight from being a journalist to J&K Bank Chairman and finally state's finance minister might have made a lot of people envious. His large frame physique, high pitch voice, a careless gait and a seemingly egotistical work style might have brought him down for now but the question still remains unanswered - were his words so poisonous that they killed his relationship with the Government so abruptly? Whatever are the reasons, whoever behind his ouster he is sure to make a big comeback. The manner, the team, and the timing of his resurgence is bound to unsettle his detractors.

*(The views of the author are personal.)*  
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**Drabu's unceremonial ouster**

**Hosting of 8th World Theatre Olympics**

Jugal Koul

Mainstream theatre scenario appears upbeat and abuzz to welcome and celebrate. The World Theatre Day with a battery of academically equipped, quality seeking younger theatre directors, actors and activists, keenly addressing to the theatre space of our state, especially when the prestigious 8th theatre Olympics is happening in the city. Reactivation of well noted olden golden theatre groups, regular interactions with the visiting theatre personalities and performers, state/central govt or non govt. institutional support through schemes of sponsor, scholarships, festival remuneration, exposure through exchange and invitations for participation in wide spectrum of theatre fests across the country, are the factors for acceleration in the theatre activity and movement.

On its seventieth annual celebration, to identify with the diverse aspects of the global cultures and theatre, executive council of International Theatre Institute, this year has selected five different authors for the International message, from the respective UNESCO Regions: Africa, the Americas, Arab Countries, Asia Pacific and Europe. Renowned Indian Theatre Director, actor and Academician, Ram Gopal Bajaj has been chosen from the Asia Pacific region to author the International Theatre Message this year.

In the 9th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute at Vienna, on June 1961, President Arvi Kivimaa, representing Finnish Centre, had proposed the initiation of "World Theatre Day" duly backed and supported by the Scandinavian

centres. At the beginning of the Cold War, immediately after the second world war, on the main initiative of the first UNESCO Director General, Sir Julian Huxley, and the noted playwright and novelist, JB Priestly, International Theatre Institute had come in to existence, just fourteen years before the formal celebrations of World Theatre Day had commenced. First International message was authored by the French playwright and film maker Jean Cocteau in the year 1962.

Although Bhasa's Madhyama Vyoga, Mahendraverman's Mattavilasa, Bodhayana's Bhagavadajukam have been attempted on stage by the legendary theatre director Kavi Rattan Sharma in his active days, yet the Indian classical theatre plays, seem to be long forgotten and forgotten treasure, by the successive theatre exponents, especially in our part of the Himalayas. This is what, renowned theatre maestro Rattan Thyam during his interaction with the theatre community in Jammu, was seriously concerned about. Mahakavi Bhasa's Sanskrit play 'Urubhangam' in its dogri adaptation by Kumar A Bharti, designed and directed by Abhishek Bharti after a long time, came as a colossal surprise in this context. Adapted to the modern proscenium stagecraft, the construct and exposition of the play appeared purely in classical flavor and ambience. A special restraint in maintaining classically relevant abhinaya (acting), Rasa (sentiment) and Bhava (emotion) was the highlight of this honest creative effort. Waves of known rasas like Sringara (love), Bibhatsa (disgust), Raudra (Fury), Karuna (Compassion), Veer (Heroic) could be evidently felt by the

spellbound audience. Innovative usage of Rangpati, onstage live music drum beats, folk elements, masks, makeup and classical costumes, genuinely recaptured the saga of Sanskrit theatre.

Traditionally a certain amount of shyness has always persisted to approach western classics, Greek or Shakespearean theatre, although several adaptations of celebrated works of Chekov, Lorke, Brecht, Samuel Bracket, Authol

in form and substance is worth appreciating.

Present day world eagerly looks for the art work, that ushers in to real spiritual joy and bliss. Dark tragedies certainly have a role in equipping us with indelible treasure of drama and theatre-craft, but there is the other lighter side of these treatises, which our conditioned mind fails to access. Young theatre director Aarushi Thakur's insightful adaptation and directorial wonders of Shakespeare's



56TH WORLD THEATRE DAY

Fugard, Moliere, Sartre, Shaw and others have been dealt with, in varied connotations. Kavi Rattan was the first one to break the ice by staging one of his greatest directorial masterpiece, "Spartacus" in the decade of 1980s. Since few years one can surely discover a firm initiation and sustained effort in this direction. Young director Ravinder Sharma has meticulously employed his directorial skills in consistently exploring Greek tragedies and Shakespearean plays. Antigone, Hamlet, Macbeth, Tempest (For Children), Odipus Rex are the noted ones. His earned abilities of recapturing western classics

hilarious comedies, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Twelfth night' are the true milestones in this direction. Owing to her education, family background and attending on training workshops at RADA (London) and NSD her theatrical skills are amazingly original, fresh and dynamic.

It is a matter of great honour that Jammu has been chosen as one of the prestigious venues for the 8th edition of Theatre Olympics, the largest international theatre festival, being hosted in India by National School of Drama and co hosted by JK Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. Inaugural play,

Mihir Bhuta's 'Chanakya' directed by noted Film, television and theatre personality, Manoj Joshi, unfolds a captivating panorama of unparalleled acting skills by Manoj and his other co-actors. Joshi has spent half of his life playing 'Chanakya' and play has become a landmark in the history of contemporary Indian Theatre scenario. A pinnacle of realistic theatre craft and acting skills, 'Chanakya' besides entertainment, has several amazing aspects to educate and enlighten the theatre community with Jammu chapter of 8th Theatre Olympics will be witness to the work of eminent contemporary legends like, Girish Karnad, Rattan Thiyam, Nadira Babar, KK Raina, Prashant Khirvadkar, Sourabh Shukla, Deborah Merola and Gema Galiana.

India inherits an illustrious ancient legacy where great eloquent theatre performances commanded by Bharat Muni's 'Natyashastra', world's first dramaturgy, swayed over the entire oriental kingdoms. Classical age was testimony to the impressive paraphernalia and highly sophisticated yet popular theatre masterpieces from the legendary playwrights like Bhasa, Kalidasa, Shudraka, Bhavabuti and others. Eighth theatre Olympics in India could become a rare interface between our classical, present and forth coming times. Its inaugural edition held in Delphi Greece in 1995, had revolved mostly around the legacy of Greek tragedies. Through the celebrated international and Indian productions the exchange is expected to bring and integrate the cultural diversities to the contemporary ethos, through the enchanting prism of theatre.

Mounted on this basic thought, Greek theatre director, Theodoros Terzopoulos, had conceptualised "Theatre Olympics", seeking harmony between ideas, cultures, forms and practices.

Performed at marked international destinations, widely acclaimed, endearing theatrical Masterpiece, "Ghumayee" a colourful mosaic of touching folktales and cruel ecological challenges, interwoven through the ingenious and insightful imagery by none other than the legendary theatre director Padamshri Balwant Thakur, will yet again be a delight for the theatre onlookers of 8th theatre Olympics. Eminent theatre director and celluloid actor Mushtaq Kak who was conferred with Sangeet Natak Akademi award for his persistently long contribution to the quality theatre is also a participant in the 8th Theatre Olympics with his recent most acclaimed play 'Ishq Malangi' written by Khalid Hussain and dramatised by Pritam Katoch. Three other known plays selected for 8th theatre Olympics include 'Aal' by Arshad Mushtak, 'Akunandan' by Bhanuwan Bashir Yasir, Angeez Pathar by Manzoor Ahmed Mir.

In her thought provoking International Theatre Message, Maya Zhib the famous Lebanon based Theatre director, performer and writer, strongly envisages the role of theatre in liberating the present day human mind, caged by the vagaries of virtual space. "Theatre is here to remind us that we are made of flesh and blood, and that our bodies have weight. It is here to awaken all our senses, and to tell us that we don't need to seize and consume with our sight alone."

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**Paper Ballot over EVM**

Sir,

There were two notable features of the recent All India Congress Committee (AICC) plenary session in Delhi. One was about Sonia Gandhi demonstrating that she was a more aggressive speaker than her son, although the latter tried to make up any shortfall in this respect in his second speech. The other was the party's curious nostalgia for the past as was evident from its rejection of the electronic voting machines (EVMs) in preference to paper ballots.

The call for dispensing with EVMs is a retrograde step in a digital age when even 10/12-year-olds are more familiar with smart phones than their parents. If there are any doubts about the reliability of EVMs (which are usually mentioned by losers), the party should have called for their upgradation, especially when Indian progress in this particular field of technology is widely acknowledged.

The harking back to the days of paper ballots, therefore, will only reinforce the belief that the 133-year-old party has begun to show its age. It will be like going back to black-and-white TVs and Ambassador cars.

Yours etc...  
Amulya Ganguli  
on e-mail

**FB Apology**

Sir,

It's that good that after having realised his failure in protection data of millions of Facebook users, company CEO Mark Zuckerberg apologised for massive breach of trust and vowed to take steps to protect user data next time.

Merely trusting above-mentioned words of Mark Zuckerberg, is not sufficient the Union Minister of Information and Technology however, should leave no stone unturned to detect fake account users to be penalised on account of this crime and strive to put in place a sound cybersecurity system too.

Yours etc...  
Mohd.Abid  
Saharanpur, UP

**Readers Write**

**Politics over Mosul mayhem**

Sir,

It is really sad to know that these 39 people have died. May their souls rest in peace. It is equally disturbing that politics is being played over the announcements of their death. I am still wondering that benefit would BJP get by not announcing their death as being claimed by the opposition parties. It seems that whatever is done by ruling Government has to be opposed by the opposition.

However, it is a matter of shame that the Government still has no information about exactly when the workers had been killed. Even the manner in which they were killed would be known from Iraqi authorities later.

In fact, Sushma Swaraj gave a false hope to 39 families for 4 years and at last after four years she told the Rajya Sabha that all the 39 Indians abducted by ISIS in Iraq's Mosul in 2014 were dead, dashing hopes of families that were desperately hoping for their safe return.

Yours etc...  
Md Rustam Parwez  
on e-mail