



HT IN KILINOCHCHI: GHOST TOWN
In LTTE's fallen capital P17

WEATHER TODAY: Less fog. Visibility will be around 300 metres. Partly cloudy sky. High 18°C, low 08°C, R.H. 95%
Detailed report on P6

SPORT: CLARKE'S HOMETOWN CENTURY
Scores ton to rescue Australia P18



DDA flats: Freeze after the scam

No allotment till allegations of fraud in draw are cleared, says minister

Moushumi Das Gupta
New Delhi, January 4

THE URBAN Development ministry has frozen the allotment of flats decided recently by a draw of lots by the Delhi Development Authority

till the process was cleared from allegations of fraud and rigging.

"Unless we are fully satisfied that the allotment process was free and fair, physical possession of flats would not be given to even a single successful allottee," minister of state for Urban Development Ajay Maken told *Hindustan Times* on Sunday.

The police are investigating complaints that a cartel of property dealers used forged documents to corner a large chunk of the flats reserved for those in the

scheduled caste and scheduled tribe categories. (See accompanying box and Page 2 for *Scam Simplified*)

The authority launched the scheme on August 3, 2008 and closed it on September 16. It received 12.64 lakh applications for 5,238 ready-to-move-in flats. These were allotted at a draw of lots on December 16.

Soon after, allegations surfaced of fraud and rigging. The urban ministry has now threatened to cancel the allotments — all of them — if the police found large-scale irregularities. "The police are investigating the case. If investigations unearth large scale irregularities in the allotment process, we will cancel the draw of lots and hold

it afresh," Maken said.

If the irregularities are of a minor nature, the ministry will merely cancel the allotment of the tainted flats, and put them up for a fresh draw of lots.

The allegations of fraud pertain mostly to the allotment of 25 per cent of the 5,238 flats reserved for those belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, war widows and those physically challenged.

The authority and the bank appointed by it to act on its behalf are accused of not scrutinising the application forms adequately.

Senior DDA officials said it was not possible to check each form in such a short time period.

Continued on Page 2

RELATED REPORTS, P2



Realty check

■ If the irregularities are of a minor nature, the ministry will only cancel the allotment of tainted flats and put them up for a fresh draw of lots.

■ The allegations of fraud pertain mostly to the allotment of 25 per cent of 5,238 flats reserved for people from the scheduled castes and tribes, war widows and the physically challenged.

The police are investigating the case. If investigations unearth large scale irregularities in the allotment process, we will cancel the draw of lots and hold it afresh

AJAY MAKEN, Minister of State for Urban Development

Batla House boys left photo trail

Found in Atif's mobile



A photo of one of the car bombs used in Ahmedabad, before the blast

'IM' spelt out with bombs, and 'Indian Mujahideen Ahmedabad' in Gujarati

Proof they were Indian Mujahideen was in their cellphones, say police

Tushar Srivastava
New Delhi, January 4

THE MOBILE phone of Atif Ameen, operations chief of the Indian Mujahideen (IM), has said it all. Ameen and another IM militant were shot dead in an encounter at Batla House with the Delhi Police's Special Cell following the September 13 serial blasts in the Capital.

From Ameen's mobile phone has emerged the most crucial evidence, which establishes the men shot dead and their associates subsequently arrested were no innocent men but hardcore militants belonging to the IM that carried out serial blasts across the country since 2005.

Police recovered photographs of the two cars used

as car bombs in the July 26 Ahmedabad blasts last year from Ameen's mobile.

The cars — a Wagon R and a Maruti 800 — were stacked with explosives and parked near the city's Civil Hospital and LG Hospital. Ahmedabad was jolted by 21 blasts that killed more than 55 people. The cars exploded nearly

30 minutes after the initial blasts. The maximum number of casualties was reported from these two blasts.

"The only person who could photograph the cars — which were badly damaged after the explosions — was someone who had them before the blasts. This connects Ameen and other IM members to the blasts," a senior investigating officer said.

Continued on Page 11

Relief for children as schools extend winter break

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 4

YOUR CHILD won't have to get back to the early morning school routine in this biting cold just as yet.

The nippy weather conditions have forced most private, municipal and govern-

ment schools to either extend their winter vacations or suspend classes by up to a week.

The Delhi government has asked its schools to keep classes up to VIII closed till Tuesday.

Schools run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi,

which briefly reopened earlier this week, were shut down again and will now open on January 12.

Most private schools, including branches of Delhi Public School, have also extended the winter break.

RELATED REPORTS, P4

18°C was Sunday's maximum temperature
8.1°C was minimum

Day temperatures will remain below normal at around 17 C, say the weathermen. There will be fog in the morning for the most part of the week, said both the Met department and the Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecast. The chill factor, too, is not likely to abate.

Accreditation will become must for all

Higher education institutes to be graded by government

Chetan Chauhan
New Delhi, January 4

IN THE next three years, all higher education institutions in India will have to get mandatory accreditation and grading done with government agencies, enabling people to judge the quality of education being delivered, the HRD ministry has decided.

The decision will mean that by end of 2011, all the institutions will be graded A, B and C on over 27 parameters of quality of education, physical infrastructure, on the pattern similar to the ones in the United States and Europe.

Accreditation at present is voluntary, resulting in less than 20 per cent of institutions being graded.

The University Grants Commission will issue a notification under the UGC Act in the next three months, mak-

ing accreditation mandatory for every institution, said UGC chairperson Professor Sukhdeo Thorat.

"The commission will have the power to stop funding institutions which are not accredited," he said.

Another senior UGC official, who was not willing to be named, said all institutions will have to be accredited with a grading agency like National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC).

To make all institutions come under the grading system, Thorat said, 14,000 colleges and state universities, which are not funded by UGC, will get one time grants to improve physical infrastructure and quality.

UGC's data says only 24 per cent of 18,000 colleges and 30 per cent of 417 universities are accredited.

QUALITY GRADING

Parameters for grade A institutions:

- Student teacher ratio should be 1:18
- A computer lab for 50 students and adequate books in the library
- Number of vacant faculty positions should be less than 10 per cent.
- Points are also given for high number of students enrolled for Ph.D., M. Phil and research facilities available in institutions

At present

Only 24% of 18,000 colleges and 30% of 417 universities are accredited

Only 9% of these colleges and 31% of universities are in grade 'A'

Huge disparity in quality of education in institutions graded 'A' and 'C'.

2009
INDIA CAN INDIA WILL
OPPORTUNITY FROM ADVERSITY

Telecom dials rural number

Increased rural telephony can help buffer the economy in these difficult times

FULL REPORT, P8

mustread

Israeli ground offensive on

Gaza: Israeli soldiers advanced in the northern Gaza Strip on Sunday. Israeli tanks and infantry battled Hamas fighters in a ground offensive launched after eight days of deadly air strikes. P17

Transporters go on strike

New Delhi: Supplies of essential commodities may get disrupted in the coming days with transporters going on an indefinite strike from January 5 midnight after their talks with the government failed. P11

New cure for malaria

Shillong: A plant found in the hills of northeast India could provide the most effective cure from Malaria. P9

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26/11 EFFECT BANGALORE IT PROS TRAIN IN ISRAELI SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES

Techies rush to take anti-terror lessons

B.R. Srikanth
Bangalore, January 4

SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS like Anoop Ramakrishnan, 24, and many others in the tech industry here are picking up new survival skills — not to endure the economic gloom, but to survive a terror attack or a hostage crisis.

Following the recent terror attacks, techies are queuing up to be trained in anti-terror and hostage survival techniques being imparted as part of Krav Maga, an Israeli school of self-defence and combat tactics.

They are being taught how to hold their nerve during a terror attack, ensure minimum injury, how



Software professionals are queuing up to be trained in survival techniques being imparted as part of Krav Maga.

to escape a fire, and avoid being trapped in a stampede during evacuation.

Said Anoop, software professional at Sasken Communications: "We are

here to minimise casualties through the concept of muscle memory — that is how not to panic but train our muscles to move quickly and save ourselves

during an attack." He has been urging colleagues and friends to take these lessons too.

Ditto with Ashish Puri, of Cisco Systems, who is also taking the training.

"I have persuaded seven-eight colleagues to join these workshops," he said.

Frank JW, the instructor and in-charge of Bangalore chapter of International Krav Maga Federation, said: "I am currently training 75 people in Bangalore. Most are from the IT industry."

Frank said the training sessions are not intended to make "everyone a Superman" but to teach techniques that can come handy — like lying flat on the floor to escape bullets.

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