

The public image of Muslims in Holland has improved in the last two years with some 20% of the population 'positive' about this group compared to 14% in 2006, according to a TNS Nipo survey conducted for RTL Nieuws. The percentage of people with negative feelings about Muslims has fallen to 24% from 40% two years ago. A possible reason for the improvement in intercultural relations is that there is more contact between various groups, said the researchers. In 2006, 61% said they had no contact with Muslims, today this has fallen to 33%.

Radiance, weekly

CHINA TO HOLD INTERNATIONAL HALAL FOOD FESTIVAL

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years with some 20% of the population 'positive' about this group compared to 14% in 2006, according to a TNS Nipo survey conducted for RTL Nieuws. The percentage of people with negative feelings about Muslims has fallen to 24% from 40% two years ago. A possible reason for the improvement in intercultural relations is that there is more contact between various groups, said the researchers. In 2006, 61% said they had no contact with Muslims, today this has fallen to 33%.

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Govt okays Chennai airport modernization

NEW DELHI: The modernisation projects for airports at Chennai and [Kolkata](#) was approved by the government today at a cost of over Rs 3,750 crore and the work is likely to be completed within three years.

As desired by the state governments led by DMK in Tamil Nadu and the Left Front in West Bengal, the entire modernisation and expansion activities would be undertaken by state-run Airports Authority of India, which would also retain ownership of the two airports.

"The AAI can create these two airports into models and compete with the private sector to develop world-class airports. They can even compete in the international arena," Civil [Aviation](#)

Minister Praful Patel told reporters here after the Cabinet

Committee on
Economic Affairs
approved the projects.

While the Kolkata
airport would be
developed at an
estimated cost of Rs
1,942.51 crore, the

one at Chennai would cost Rs 1,808 crore. The Kolkata project would be completed in 30 months of the award of the contract and the one at Chennai within 26 months.

Both the projects envisage large investments and would be completed in a time-bound manner, Patel said, adding that the upgraded airports would cater to the needs of Kolkata and Chennai for the next

two decades.

After completion, the two airports will be on par with those at Delhi and Mumbai. The issues of additional land for expansion plans of the two have been sorted out by

both the state
governments, he said.

Gujarat: Six years of mourning, but not a tear

AHMEDABAD:

The sufferings

haven't ceased for

many in his city -
with the July serial
bombings, the
increasing rift in
Gujarati society
and riot victims still
awaiting justice.
But Mohammed
Sharif is inured,

his tears cast in
stone after he saw
his wife and
daughters raped
and killed during
the 2002 carnage.

Sharif has been
waiting to cry since

that Feb 28 six
years ago when
murderous mobs
overran his home
in Ahmedabad's
upscale Gulberg
Society.

"I have not cried since Feb 28, 2002, the day my wife and two teenage daughters were raped and killed by a mob right in

my house. I
have tried but
could not,"
Sharif said
simply.

"My wife had
offered Rs.45

lakh (Rs.4.5 million) cash to the mob to spare them. But the mob took the money, then raped them and killed them,"

Sharif said,
sitting in his
apartment in the
Muslim-dominat
ed Juhapura
area here.

It was a day

after 59 people
were killed while
returning from
Ayodhya in
Gujarat's
Godhra town.
And the revenge
was swift and

brutal killing at
least 1,000
people, mostly
Muslims, in the
weeks that
followed.

Congress MP

Ehsan Jafri was among the nearly 70 people mercilessly killed in the massacre in Gulberg Society. Police arrested

39 people in
connection with
the incident, but
the trial is
pending while
the Supreme
Court decides
whether it

should be held
outside the state
as demanded by
some victims.

"Cases are
going on in the
sessions court,

but we have little
hope of getting
any justice. All
our hopes are
now pinned on
the Supreme
Court where our
petition to get

the cases
transferred
outside Gujarat
are pending,"
Sharif told IANS.

Sharif lived in
one of the

bungalows in
the posh
neighbourhood
of Gulberg and
owned eight
shops in the
Chamanpura
area. His home

and all his shops
were burnt.

He has worked
hard to rebuild
his business, but
can do nothing
to get back the

lives lost.

This is not the
first time that he
has faced
communal
hatred either.

"My family was
earlier ruined
financially during
riots in 1969 and
1986. But what
happened in
2002 was
beyond my

wildest
nightmares,"
Sharif said.

"Only my son
and I could
escape alive in
my family. I did

not lose hope
and with the
help of my
friends I have
been able to put
my life on track.
But the scar of
the tragedy

remains."

Sharif has been
unable to return
to his Gulberg
Society house -
where he spent
his entire life -

since that day in
2002.

"I saw many
people,
including women
and children,
being brutally

killed in front of
my eyes.

However, I was
the first one to
get my house
repaired in the
society. But no
other family was

ready to move in
and at last I also
decided to stay
in a minority
area for safety,"
said Sharif as
his 14-year-old
son looked on.

Sharif now owns
two shops
selling
electronics
goods.

"I have always
wanted to move

on in life. All my
friends are
Hindu. Even
though I have
suffered
irreparable loss
in the riots, it is
only because of

my friends that I
was able to get
together my life
and move on,"
he said.

But after six
years of

mourning, he is
still waiting to
shed a tear.