

French rightist convicted of racism

Highest Court Penalises Le Pen With A Fine For Remarks Against Muslims

Paris: France's highest court on Thursday convicted far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen of inciting racial hatred for telling a newspaper in 2003 that Muslims would one day run France and strike fear into the hearts of the non-Muslim population.

The ruling by the Court of Cassation came just over two years after Le Pen was originally convicted in the same case. In February 2005, an appeals court confirmed the 2004 ruling against the president of the National Front party. Le Pen was ordered to pay a \$12,700 fine for his remarks in the daily *Le Monde* and an additional \$6,350 in damages and interest to the League of Human Rights, which had filed suit.

Le Pen's party blames Muslim immigrants for an array of social woes in France, which has western Europe's



made it to the runoffs in the 2002 vote. In the interview, carried in *Le Monde's* April 19, 2003, edition, Le Pen urged the French to beware of "the day in France when we have 25 million Muslims, not 5 million," — the estimated population of Muslims in France today—because "it is they who will command."

"The French will lower their heads and walk the sidewalk with their eyes down. When they don't, they'll be asked, 'what are you doing looking at me like that—are you looking for a fight? All you can do is run away or you'll get it'" he told the daily.

Le Pen had told the appeal's court that he was simply expressing a political opinion. Le Pen has been convicted of racism or anti-Semitism at least six times in the past. AP

Le Pen's party blames Muslim immigrants for an array of social woes in France, which has western Europe's largest Muslim population.

The National Front contends, for instance, that Muslim im-

migrants are taking jobs from the French. The National Front leader is looking to run in next year's presidential election. He shocked the world when he

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'Mittal's is unfriendly bid'

HTC and Agencies
New Delhi, February 20

FRENCH PRESIDENT Jacques Chirac on Monday accused Mittal Steel of launching a hostile bid to buy Arcelor without unveiling any plan for the European steel-maker Arcelor.

The 18.6 billion euro bid was "hostile, what is called an unfriendly bid, purely financial, that is to say without any industrial plan being known or revealed and contrary to custom, without any prior consultation", Chirac told a press conference.

"It's his right," to make the surprise bid, Chirac said referring to industrialist Lakshmi Mittal, head of Netherlands-based Mittal Steel. "In fact it's also the right of the Europeans to be concerned about employment problems, technology problems," the French President said.

The comments came after Mittal told a TV channel on Sunday that he was "very sad" about "racist" remarks made about his bid to create a giant controlling some 10 percent of the global steel market. Arcelor has rejected the offer and enlisted the help of European governments. The Luxembourg-based company is composed of formerly national steel interests from France, Luxembourg and Spain, but also has activities in Belgium.

Chirac said he did not understand the fuss, adding, "We've nothing against an operation led by a foreign group against a European group but we'd like to know what the plan is." Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said he had discussed the bid with Chirac on Monday, but skirted the row.

Mittal, who still retains his Indian citizenship, told NDTV that the issue did not just affect him. "This isn't an issue of Lakshmi Mittal. It's a much larger issue," he said.



French President Jacques Chirac with Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi on Monday.

PTI

Major pacts and MoUs

- Defence cooperation agreement: France is only the third country after Russia and the United States, with which India has such an agreement
- Declaration by India and France on development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes
- Statement of intent on cooperation between Indian commerce and industry ministry and French ministry of economy, finance and industry on enterprises
- Memorandum of understanding on

- tourism cooperation
- MoU on cooperation in clean and efficient energy between Indian Bureau of Energy Efficiency and ADEME (French Agence de l'environnement et de la Maitrise de l'Energie)
- Agreement on promoting cultural relations between Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Sciences PO, Paris
- Agreement between Antrix Corporation and EADS Astrium for collaboration on a joint satellite by 2009

If Luxembourg plays dirty, India will respond

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 14

INDIA MAY not limit itself to watching from the sidelines if Luxembourg carries out its move to bring in a legislation to prevent Mittal Steel from taking over European steelmaker Arcelor. Well-placed sources say New Delhi may have to come up with a considered response.

In this context, the sources referred to MoS for External Affairs Anand Sharma's remark that India always raises its voice "whenever there's any instance of injustice and institutionalised discrimination against any section of people anywhere in the world". Luxembourg has said it is considering legislation to allow the boards of companies to decide on takeovers without referral to shareholders -- something which could thwart Mittal Steel's \$22.5-billion bid for Arcelor.

Asked about reports that the Mittal-EU standoff could prompt India to review its double taxation avoidance agreement with Luxembourg, a senior

foreign ministry official said the government had not taken any such position so far. "Let us first find out the reality, then we'll see," said the official. "As of now it's just a commercial dispute. But if there is a discriminatory regime, India could make a formal objection." On the issue of the proposed takeover, at least one source sought to make a distinction between Luxembourg's opposition and the French stance on the ground that the former had stakes in the company in question.

The EU, meanwhile, said on Tuesday that it was against racial discrimination and the Mittal-Arcelor issue should be treated only on commercial considerations. "The EU is of a clear view that nationality in such cases is not relevant and it should be decided according to the laws in place and commercial merits," said David O'Sullivan, director general (trade), European Commission in Delhi. "It's unfortunate that allegations of racial discrimination have crept in the issue." O'Sullivan made it clear that the EU would be concerned if there were any violations of competition rules.

Racial divide in British varsities a 'deadly threat'

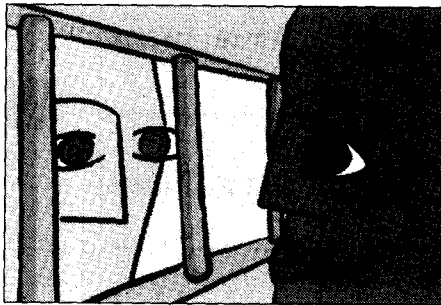
London: A racial divide has emerged between traditional British universities and former polytechnics, research shows.

Many ethnic minority undergraduates are concentrated in post-1992 institutions, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. However, they appear to be under-represented among the Russell Group which represents 19 elite institutions including Bristol, Oxford and Cambridge.

The findings were attacked by Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, who claimed that racial segregation in universities poses a "deadly threat" to society. He said that the best institutions may need to be given extra money to run "minority-friendly courses" Phillips said: "If we do not act now, our universities could add a lethal, irreversible twist to racial separation in Britain."

Figures from 2004 show that nine of the Russell Group have fewer than 30 students who are of black Caribbean origin. But of 11 institutions where white students are in the minority, seven are post-1992 universities.

More than 60% of London Metropolitan University's students are ethnic minorities compared to less than 7% at Bristol. The



London university has 1,575 students of black Caribbean heritage—more in the whole of the Russell Group of universities.

The Commission for Racial Equality is launching an investigation into the apparent segregation. "Its consequences are far-reaching for individuals and deadly for community relations," added Phillips.

Meanwhile the Higher Education Funding Council for England has called for the names of students applying to university to be withheld to avoid racial discrimination. It believes reform is needed because ethnicity can be identified through applicants' names. Daily Mail