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TRUMP KNEW HUSH-MONEY PAYMENTS
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SINDHU ADVANCES IN
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SC rejects Rafale probe demand

No occasion to doubt decision-making process, says court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday provided a major relief to the Modi Government by dismissing the demand for a court-monitored CBI probe into the Government-to-Government deal with France for the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets, saying there is no occasion to "really doubt the decision-making process" warranting setting aside of the contract.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi went into "three broad areas of concern" raised in the petitions — the decision-making process, pricing and the choice of Indian offset partners — and said there was no reason for intervention by the apex court on the "sensitive issue" of purchase of 36 fighter jets.

The apex court said the Indian Air Force (IAF) needs advanced fighter jets as the country cannot afford to be "unprepared" or "under prepared" in a situation where adversaries have acquired fourth and fifth generation fighter aircraft, "of which, we have none".

"In view of our findings on all the three aspects, and having heard the matter in detail, we find no reason for any intervention by this court on the sensitive issue of purchase of 36 defence aircraft by the Indian Government," the Bench, also comprising Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph, said in its 29-page judgment.

Attorney General KK Venugopal welcomed the verdict terming it as an "excellent" and "very good" judgment, which in his opinion has given "clean chit" to the Government by accepting all its arguments.

"I think a clean chit has been given to the Government on Rafale deal," he told reporters on the sidelines of a function to give farewell to Justice Madan B Lokur, who is set to retire on December 30.

The court said perception of individuals cannot be the basis of a "fishing and roving enquiry" by the court in such matters and it cannot "sit in judgment" over the wisdom of Government's decision to go in

for purchase of 36 aircraft in place of 126.

"We are satisfied that there is no occasion to really doubt the process, and even if minor deviations have occurred, that would not result in either setting aside the contract or requiring a detailed scrutiny by the court," the Bench said.

It noted that process for procurement of 36 Rafale jets was concluded on September 23, 2016 and no questions were raised at that time and the petitions were later filed after reported statement of former French President Francois Hollande with regard to selection of Indian offset partners.

The Bench said it was "certainly not the job of this court to carry out a comparison of the pricing details in matters like the present" and the material has to be kept in a confidential domain.

RELIEF FOR GOVT

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Anil Ambani welcomes judgment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani on Friday welcomed the SC order on the Rafale deal, saying it established the falsity of politically motivated allegations against him.

"I welcome the judgment summarily dismissing all PILs filed on the Rafale contracts, and conclusively establishing the complete falsity of the wild, baseless and politically motivated allegations levelled against Reliance Group and me personally," Ambani said.

Cong manufactured lies on Rafale: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Buoyed by the Supreme Court verdict on the Rafale fighter jet deal issue, the Government and the ruling BJP on Friday charged the Congress with manufacturing lies and compromising with national security and said truth always holds together while "falseness always fall apart."

Making this assertion here, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley without directly naming Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi said falsehood was manufactured by "one family", but they are not above the apex court.

Along with the Government, the ruling BJP also accused the Congress of making the Rafale deal look a suspect by telling lies. BJP president Amit Shah said here at a separate Press conference that the SC order was a slap on Congress chief Rahul's politics of lies and asked him to apologise to the country and its soldiers for putting national security at risk.



The BJP president said there is no occasion to doubt the decision-making process in the procurement of 36 Rafale jets from France, and the court has upheld that in its order on Friday. It is not the job of the court to deal with the comparative details of the pricing, he said. He also hit out at the Congress president for taking a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi by saying the "chowkidar" is a thief. "All thieves had gathered to call the 'chowkidar' a thief, but the country never believed it," Shah told reporters.

'Cooperate in making Odisha 100% smoke-free'

Dharmendra tells State Govt not to do politics on Ujjwala

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Responding to Minister Surjya Narayan Patro's complaint that the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) has failed in Odisha, Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday requested the BJD Government to cooperate with his Minister in making Odisha 100 per cent smoke-free State and not to do politics over the scheme.

In his letter, Patro had mentioned, referring to a news report, that while the Ujjwala scheme covered 35, 16, 384 households since its inception in May 2016, only 8,18,786 beneficiaries took a second refill in 2016-17 and the number of refill takers came down to 6,45, 265 till July 24, 2018.

Pradhan denied the allegation saying that the news report is factually incorrect and absolutely unsubstantiated, devoid of facts and completely misleading.

"I expect that the State Government extends wholehearted support in providing

LPG connections to all households and making the State smoke free," Pradhan wrote in his letter.

"The Ujjwala Yojana has been immensely useful in transforming the lives of underprivileged especially poor women and children by reducing pollution that causes of respiratory and lung diseases. Poor women of Odisha have been relieved from the drudgery of collecting firewood. A study conducted by the University of California have recognised the positive outcome of this flagship programme to make villages smoke free," mentioned Pradhan.

He informed that 41 lakh LPG connections have been provided to poor households till December 12, 2018, of which, 35.22 lakh connections have been given under PMUY. Further, the PMUY has played a critical role in significantly enhancing the total number of LPG consumers from 19 lakhs in May 2014 to 72.5 lakhs in 2018 in Odisha. The LPG coverage in Odisha has expanded from 22 per cent in 2014 to 69 per cent in 2018.



Congress president Rahul Gandhi with Rajasthan Congress president Sachin Pilot and senior party leader Ashok Gehlot at his residence in New Delhi on Friday

Rahul pulls it off: Gehlot Raj CM, Sachin deputy

Decision made for Chhattisgarh, announcement to be made today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday named Ashok Gehlot as Rajasthan Chief Minister and Sachin Pilot as his deputy after party president Rahul Gandhi successfully brokered a peace between the veteran leader and his younger colleague after several rounds of discussion lasting more than two days.

Congress observer to Rajasthan KC Venugopal made the announcement and said details of the oath-taking ceremony would be decided after a meeting Governor Kalyan Singh in Jaipur.

Addressing a Press conference, Gehlot thanked Rahul Gandhi for giving him the opportunity to serve the people of the State for a third time and promised that he and Pilot will give "good governance".

Rahul met Gehlot and Pilot thrice since Thursday. Hectic parleys were held between top party leaders, including Sonia Gandhi. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too is understood to be involved in the decision-making process. Senior party leaders Venugopal, Avinash Pande and Jitendra Singh were present during the meeting on Friday.

"The united colours of Rajasthan," Rahul tweeted on Friday afternoon along with a photograph in which the three leaders were seen in a jovial mood. Gehlot and Pilot welcomed with pomp and splendour at the Jaipur airport after the announcement.

Pilot, 41, exuded confidence that Congress' good electoral performance will continue, saying the party will get a big mandate in 2019 polls and form a Government at the Centre also. "Mera aur Ashok Gehlot ji ka jaadu puri tarah chal gaya hai (Gehlot and I worked our magic in the State)," Pilot said.

The Congress went from 21 seats against the BJP's 163 in 2013 to get 99 seats (plus one of the Rashtriya Lok Dal) in the

Assembly elections. Pilot said the party's manifesto will be implemented immediately.

However, the name of Chhattisgarh CM has been kept under wraps. The official announcement will be made on Saturday in Raipur. All the four contenders — TS Singh Deo, Bhupesh Baghel, Tamradhwaj Sahu and Charan Das Mahant — were called to Delhi.

They took turns to meet Rahul during the day after the name of Rajasthan CM was finalised. Rahul authorised AICC Central Observer for Chhattisgarh Mallikarjun Kharge to announce in Raipur the CM candidate after the CLP meeting on Saturday.

Gehlot will be the fourth leader to become Chief Minister of Rajasthan for a third time. Mohan Lal Sukhadia was the Chief Minister of the State for four times, while Hari Dev Joshi and Bhairon Singh Shekhawat were three-time Chief Ministers of the State. Both Sukhadia and Joshi were Congress leaders while Bhairon Singh Shekhawat was from the BJP.

NKS warns of non-cooperation stir from Feb 1

Holds padyatra in city

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NKS) yet again took to streets on Friday and launched a padyatra from Raghunathpur in the city towards the Raj Bhavan to submit a memorandum to the Governor regarding its long-standing demands of "price, prestige and pension".

However, like the earlier agitation when the NKS activists were prevented from entering the State capital by the Commissionerate police, a huge

posse of policemen stopped the agitating farmers at Nicco Park Square.

Later, the farmers sat on a dharna at the spot.

The NKS threatened to launch a non-cooperation agitation from February 1, 2019 if the State Government does not fulfill their demands.

The NKS alleged that despite several Ministerial committee meetings to resolve farmers' issues, nothing has been done so far by the Government.

"Through the memorandum, we have given an ultimatum to the State Government and if they do not fulfill our



demands before January 31, 2019, we would launch a non-cooperation agitation across the State from February 1," warned NKS convenor Akshaya Kumar, who had recently held a 13-day hunger strike demanding fulfillment of the farmers' demands.

Kumar also warned that if the State Government doesn't take steps to address their demands, it would meet the same fate like the BJP Governments in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh did in the recent Assembly elections in their States.

Amitav Ghosh honoured with Jnanpith award

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Noted English writer Amitav Ghosh has been honoured with this year's Jnanpith Award, a literary award given to an author for "outstanding contribution towards literature", Bharatiya Jnanpith announced on Friday.

"Amitav Ghosh is a path-breaking novelist. In his novels, Ghosh treads through historical settings to the modern era and weaves a space where the past connects with the present in relevant ways. "His fiction is endowed with extraordinary depth and substance through his academic



training as a historian and a social anthropologist," a statement from Bharatiya Jnanpith reads.

The decision was taken in a meeting of Jnanpith Selection Board chaired by eminent novelist, scholar and Jnanpith laureate Pratibha Ray.

Women reservation: BJD team meets Raja

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A delegation of the BJD on Friday met CPI national secretary and MP D Raja in New Delhi seeking his support for women in the Parliament and State Assemblies.

The team comprising MPs Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo and Kulamani Samal handed over a letter from BJD president Naveen Patnaik to Raja seeking support from his party for ensuring a 33-per cent reservation for women in the Parliament and State Assemblies.

Responding positively to the issue, Raja mentioned that



his party is very appreciative of the initiative taken by Patnaik.

As decided earlier by the BJD leadership, BJD delegations are visiting leaders of 22 national and regional parties across the country seeking their support on women's reservation.

Bird flu: Chicken culling begins in Puri dist

Minister announces aid for affected farmers

PNS ■ PURI

A day after carcasses of fowls tested positive for bird flu in Krushnaprasad block of Puri district, the local administration on Friday began culling of chickens in the four affected villages.

A total of ten Rapid Response teams have been formed for the culling. On the day more than 400 affected birds were culled.

Fisheries and Animal Resources Development



Minister Pradeep Maharathy said compensation would be provided to those being affected in the culling.

The culling of birds would

be carried out in all poultry farms in Sanasahi, Maluda, Alanda and Patharaganja villages of Krushnaprasad block. The district officials have been

asked to cull birds and dispose the carcasses and infected materials as well as restrict access to infected areas, said sources.

The operation will be carried out within one km radius of the affected villages and surveillance will be done within 10 km radius of the epicentre. Besides, incoming and outgoing of poultry products have been restricted in the affected areas.

Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Secretary Vishal Gagan said that there is no reason to panic as chickens from the affected areas have not been supplied to markets outside the area. In view of the avian influenza, the district administration has decided to stop serving of eggs in mid-day meals of the schools and Anganwadis in the district for ten days.

Sambalpur HC Bench stir 100 days on, lawyers in no mood to relent

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

The agitation by lawyers, common people, civil societies and different organisations demanding for a permanent Bench of the Orissa High Court in Sambalpur has completed 100 days. However, the lawyers seem not in a mood to relent.

"When all the Government offices of the district are closed since last 100 days, the silence of the State Government surprises us," said president of the Sambalpur District Bar Association Bijitendriya Pradhan. The agitation for the HC

Bench began in the month of September.

Initially, it was expected that it would be ended soon since the Government would not prefer closure of important offices of the Collector, the RDC and others for pretty long period. But nothing of that sort happened even as public has been suffering a lot. Even the two-day 'Mahabandh' on November 29 and 30 had no effect on the Government.

Revenue offices apart, all the judicial offices are remaining closed since September for which the Sambalpur Jail has been jam-

packed due to non-availability of bail to the under-trial prisoners.

More than 1,000 people are staying in jail against the normal strength of 541, jail authorities informed. Earlier also the lawyers and public resorted to a long agitation for the same demand at different points of time. But the Government was very casual then.

But this time agitators are firm in their demand and determined to continue the stir till the Bench is established. In the meanwhile, the common people have also expressed their utter dissatisfaction over the casual attitude of the Govt.

NCPDR inspects shelter homes; to visit more today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A day after the Central teams accused the Odisha Government of not following the guidelines on protection of children at shelter homes, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) teams continued their inspection of various children homes across the State on Friday.

An NCPDR team along with officials of Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPDR), Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) carried out inspection of children homes in Angul district.

The team conducted an on-spot inspection of the condition in which the children are being kept at the shelter homes. The team is also scheduled to visit some SC and ST

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Another NCPDR team visited Brahmapur to conduct investigation in various shelter homes including Child Correction Home in the city and Good News India's shelter home at Saheb Jenapalli area in Chhatrapur of Ganjam district. A NCPDR team accompa-

nied by SCPCR member, DCPO and other officials reviewed the facilities in four shelter homes in Kandhamal district. They also held discussion with ADM Basant Sahu, CWC chairman Ashoka Behera, member Jayanti Panigrahi and other district officials. The officials informed the team that Good News India shelter home in the district is closed.

Earlier on Thursday, a team of NCPDR visited Koraput district and carried out inspection at Missionaries of Charity in Koraput town and Rejoice Care Centre at Mastiput in the district.

The NCPDR along with members of SCPCR have been divided into nine teams which will visit shelter homes in 19 districts of the State and submit their report to Women and Child Development Ministry.

AHEAD OF ELECTIONS

Naveen reconstitutes BJD farmers' wing

Appoints Prasanna, Pratap president, secy general

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

At a time when the Congress is claiming agrarian distress as one of the key reasons for the BJP's debacle in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, Odisha Chief Minister and BJD supreme Naveen Patnaik on Friday restructured the 'Biju Krushak Janata Dal' (BKJD) ahead of the 2019 polls. Patnaik appointed party

senior leader and MP Prasanna Acharya as the new president of the farmers' wing and Health Minister Pratap Jena as its secretary general.

Earlier on December 12, the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC), after its first manifesto committee meeting, had announced that the party would waive all farm loans and extend financial assistance to farmers in the State for five years if it comes to power in 2019.

OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik had said if voted to power, the party would also provide solar pumps to help farmers with irrigation along with financial assistance for five years.

Robbers nabbed from city shopping mall

After cops trace mobile message

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police on Thursday night arrested two persons from a shopping mall while the miscreants were shopping after robbing a house at VSS Nagar of the city after the cops got a message.

Sources said the robbers had barged into the house of an elderly woman living alone in the VSS Nagar and decamped with ornaments and other valuables including bank debit cards at gunpoint.

Robbers had barged into the house of an elderly woman

On receiving information, the Saheb Nagar police traced the movement of the thieves with GPS tracking of the message received after the robbers withdrew cash from an ATM with the help of the looted debit card.

A special team of police caught the looters red handed while they were trying to buy laptops and mobile phones from a home appliances showroom in Patia.

After investigation, police found that the robbers had looted 100 gram gold ornaments, Rs 20,000 cash and other valuables from the elderly woman.

"I was watching TV when two youths barged into the house and gagged my mouth with tape.

They threatened me to remain silent by brandishing a gun and snatched my necklace and some other gold ornaments," the complainant Malabika Chand said.

Torture of minority community woman

NHRC asks for report from BBSR DCP

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) to submit an action-taken report (ATR) within four weeks, regarding the alleged kidnapping of the husband of a minority community woman of the Haladipadia slum under the Laxmisagar police station.

The NHRC said if the report is not received within the four weeks, the commission would be constrained to invoke coercive process under Sections 13 of the protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 for personal appearance of the DCP.

The NHRC passed the order taking cognisance of the NHRC case no. 4653/18/28/2018, filed by civil society organisation Human Rights Watch secretary Sangita

Swain. In her petition Swain had alleged that a minority community Muslim victim Hasinara Khatun(49) and her family of Haladipadia slum are being humiliated and severely tortured by some Hindu anti-socials and drug mafia.

The anti-socials kidnapped Khatun's husband after damaging her house. But though she filed an FIR with the Laxmisagar police, no action was taken by the cops. Instead they have lodged false cases against Khatun which is violation of human rights, alleged Swain.

She prayed the commission to provide protection to the victim, rescue Khatun's kidnapped husband, take action against the errant policemen and pay compensation of Rs 10 lakh to the victim.

Super-speciality hosp at Paradip in offing

PNS ■ PARADIP

Establishment of a 400-bed super-speciality hospital is on the anvil at the Paradip Port, which is likely to develop as a medical college in future. The tendering process has already started and the bids are to be opened this month.

The scope of the hospital is to rehabilitate, operate, manage and transfer the PPT Hospital for a concession period of 30 years and extendable by another 30 years as per the concession agreement.

The Paradip Port Trust (PPT), with an aim to create an advance healthcare infrastructure in the locality, has decided to upgrade its existing 64-bed hospital to a 400-bed super-speciality one through PPP mode in a phased manner. The estimated project cost is Rs 200 crore. The facility would be built in an area of 8.45 acres of land.

The Union Minister of Shipping during his visit to the port in July 2015 had announced to set up a super-speciality hospital at Paradip. Since then, the PPT has been trying to make it into a reality. A consultant was engaged for preparation of the feasibility report; and after receiving it, an expression of interest had been published.

With the completion of the super-speciality healthcare project, not only the port employees but the people residing in the nearby areas would be greatly benefitted.

Rains in several parts of State from December 16

But no threat of cyclone: IMD

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even as there is no cyclone threat to Odisha, several parts of the State are expected to experience heavy rainfall as the deep depression formed over Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify further into a cyclonic storm in the next 24 hours, said the Regional Office of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) here on Friday.

Moreover, it is likely to turn into a severe cyclonic storm in the subsequent 36 hours and head north-northwest wards and cross Andhra

IMD Regional Director HR Biswas said several parts of the State would receive rainfall from December 16 with chances of thunderstorms at one or two places

Pradesh coast between Ongole and Kakinada by December 17 afternoon, said the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

IMD Regional Director HR Biswas said several parts of the State would receive rainfall from December 16 with chances of thunderstorms at one or two places.

The rainfall activity would mostly be over the districts in interior Odisha and a few places in the coastal areas.

"The system is likely to move north-northwest wards and cross Andhra Pradesh on December 17.

Under its impact the bordering districts of Odisha including Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Koraput would receive heavy rainfall," said Biswas.

Biswas further informed that fishermen have been advised not to venture into west-central and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal on December 16 and 17.

LETTER DLC submission: Clarifications needed

Sir,

This is with reference to the submission of Digital Life Certificate (DLC). In this regard, on behalf of many pensioners facing problems, I wish the Regional PF Commissioner to please clarify the following:

1. Whether the earlier system of life certificate in paper form, certified by the Bank Manager and submitted to the bank which was forwarding the same to the EPFO Office is totally discarded or it is also valid in addition to digital life certificate (DLC)?

2. After generating the DLC at the bank is any further action required by the pensioner to visit the EPFO to submit the copy of Jeevan Pramaan? If a pensioner gets an SMS message confirming linking of DLC with PPO number, soon after DLC is generated, is it the end of the task? If the pensioner has to personally visit the EPFO to submit a copy of DLC, the benefit of getting it done at the bank is totally negated for very senior citizens who may not have anyone to help to visit EPFO.

I request for an early clarification so that thousands of pensioners are saved from the trouble of visiting EPFO, crowding the office, having to spend a lot of time and getting exhausted in the process.

K Ravi, E-237, GGP Colony, Bhubaneswar-751025, Mob: 9437616497.

Srikshetra Mahotsava to kick off from Dec 16



PNS ■ PURI

The Srikshetra Mahotsava, an annual festival of Shree Jagannath culture, traditional activities, martial arts and folk dances, would be held at Mukதாகash Rangamancha here from December 16 to 20.

This was informed by Srikshetra Mahotsava Committee joint secretary Chakradhar Mohapatra at a Press meet held here on Friday.

Mohapatra said a cultural rally would be flagged off from Gadanti Chhah here on December 16 in which more than 500 participants would go around the city to reach the Rangamancha near the Gundicha Temple.

Among others, District Culture Officer Aurovind Dash, committee president Bhagirathi Khuntia, organising secretary Fakir Panda, Narendra Mohanty and treasurer Dr Srinivas Acharya were present.

City SI's assets worth ₹ 98L found

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Based on the allegations of acquisition of assets disproportionate to his income by Bhubaneswar Court Police SI Dillip Kumar Das, Vigilance officers on Friday conducted simultaneous searches at his houses at different places and detected assets worth Rs 98,02,327 in his and his family members' names.

The sleuths served Das' residential double-storied building at Bhubaneswar, three residential buildings of his relatives at three different palces and his office room at Bhubaneswar on the strength of search warrants issued by the Court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Cuttack.

The detected assets included a double-storied building at Bhubaneswar worth Rs 43,00,000, one double-storied building at Badasarolo in Jagatsinghpur worth Rs

Sleuths served Das' residential double-storied building at Bhubaneswar, three residential buildings of his relatives at three different palces and his office room at Bhubaneswar on the strength of search warrants

15,62,800, eight homestead plots at Bhubaneswar, Puri and Jagatsinghpur together worth Rs 8,86,700, a car and two motorcycles worth Rs 6,55,857, bank, post offices and insurance deposits of Rs 11,18,063, gold and silver ornaments of Rs 7,10,030, hard cash of Rs 36,000 and household articles worth Rs 5,32,877.

The inquiry was still on, said an official release.

four bootleggers held in Khordha



PNS ■ KHORDHA

An excise squad on Friday conducted raids in different villages under the Khordha Sadar police station and arrested six persons on charge of selling illegal liquor.

The arrested were identified as Aswin Kumar Jena

(26) of Bangadia village, Company Pradhan (40) of Niamala village, Amina Baliarsingh (35) of Galpur village and Shankar Dalei (32) of Dalatola village.

The excise officials seized 16 litres of ID liquor and 2.2 litres of IMFL from their possession.

Drinking water crisis: Water ATM not panacea



BIKASH KUMAR PATI

It is difficult to figure out the actual drinking water scenario in Odisha. While the media paints the scenario black highlighting water scarcity in almost all parts of the State and insufficient access to portable water, the State Government claims to be arranged drinking water provisioning for all.

While the Government takes recourse to the statistics, others display bare facts. These two different pictures of drink-

ing water scenario in the State are so widely different that one fails to draw a conclusion about the real drinking water scenario in Odisha.

The picture is not just confined to rural Odisha. Urban parts of the State also experience the same. Whether the smart urban bodies like the State capital or smaller census towns, everywhere we can see and experience water crisis or water related maladies not just during summer, rather across the seasons.

Nevertheless, a greater political angle is also associated with ensuring adequate drinking water for people residing in urban areas of the State. Thus, more than treating the water provisioning from a rights perspective, the forces seating on the helm of power from political perspective always try to address any water related problem persisting to the community they are gov-

erning for vote bank.

Thus, when it comes to the drinking water scenario of urban set-up in Odisha in general and the State capital in particular, waster automated teller machine (ATM) has come out in a big way. Let's see how and why water ATMs have started mushrooming across the capital city, despite Bhubaneswar being a Smart City.

Bhubaneswar is having a problem of water leakage (Known as non-revenue water in Public Health Engineering Department or PHED). Official estimation is 62.5 per cent loss, whereas it should be 20 per cent. Besides there are many uncovered habitations and many isolated habitations are still dependent on hand-pumps pumping ground water.

Those hand-pumps are facing drawdown during summer. So putting water ATM is an easy way to tackle such crisis. Thus, the Bhubaneswar

Municipal Commission (BMC) started promoting this.

Another area is water supply in Bhubaneswar is being managed by the PHED and water crisis complaints come to the BMC. Arrangement is the BMC has to deposit estimated money to the PHED for water supply service improvement. But there is a poor coordination among both.

Considering political nature of the BMC and fund availability, the BMC cannot tell people to go to the PHED. Thus, water ATM is an easy way out.

Another aspect is the quality of water people are getting. There are slums in Bhubaneswar which often register various water related diseases including jaundice. The prime reasons behind are firstly those slums are not duly connected with safe water supply system and second is even if there are due supply systems,

considering the breakage and leakage in the supply system laid decades ago, those are contaminating the water being provided through the system. Hence, to curb the reported water related diseases and to ensure safe drinking water for communities, especially the excluded and marginalised ones, authorities responsible for ensuring safe drinking water have devised water ATM as the best solution.

All the water ATMs installed across the city are based on reverse osmosis (RO) system of purification. However, RO system has multiple loopholes ranging from highest water loss to removal of all minerals those are good for health. It should be noted that RO could be adopted as a purification technology, where the contaminant from water cannot really be removed by any other means - mostly appropriate for dangerous

chemical contaminants like fluoride and arsenic. But, a surface based supply system having bacteriological contamination really does not require the technology like RO, which further aggravates the water loss. Then why RO has been taken as the only technology to be fitted with the ATM across?

Once swiped, the ATM screen will show options of quantity of water. The machine will pump out water based on the quantity of litres opted by the people. On a given day, maximum 20 litres of water can be fetched using one card. Other than people who need water, some people have started using those water ATM for business purpose. They obtain multiple cards and they do sell water to various street side mediocre food business stalls.

The height is that water ATM has been started percolating to rural sphere even. In quality-affected areas, this has

really taken the centre stage of safe drinking water provisioning and the technology for purification remains same - RO. Nuapada is a case point. Nuapada being a fluoride endemic district, water ATM with RO technology has been promoted widely. But the back-water from ATM, which amounts more than 50 per cent of water gets into system, carries higher degree of fluoride and gets into the surface amounting to surface water contamination. Instead of looking for alternative safe drinking water sources, looking into water ATM with RO technology is a danger signal in rural places like Nuapada.

Considering the financial allocation to Gram Panchayats through 14th Finance Commission grant and having mandate for utilising certain amount for drinking water, the Gram Panchayats have also started opting water ATM as an

easy way out, utilising the fund as well as provisioning safe drinking water to community. But how appropriate the technology is for fluoride endemic areas has never been thought of.

The way water ATM is being promoted in current days, it seems this is the panacea to water crisis of the State. Looking into the whole gamut of issues associated with water ATM, a serious thought has to be put by authorities and institutions promoting those in the name of welfare of the community, especially the excluded and marginalised. Better late than never, water should be provided in a more sustainable way and to fix a problem, another problem should not be nurtured.

(The author works with WaterAid India, Bhubaneswar. The views expressed are personal.)

Anti-incumbency to end BJD regime: Pradhan

Union Minister attends BJP rally in Baleswar

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The recent elections showed that prolonged incumbency was responsible for the ouster of the existing State Governments. The same fate is awaiting the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD Government in Odisha in the 2019 polls, said Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at a BJP rally held in the district on Friday.

Addressing a public meeting during the Jan Paramarsha Padyatra in Bhograi block in Baleswar district, Pradhan alleged that the BJD Government is the most inefficient and corrupt in the country and; thus, time has come to uproot this Government.

"Youths, women and farmers are suffering on account of failure of Government machineries in the State. The Government is dogged by PC



(percentage) culture. Genuine beneficiaries are not receiving benefits of the welfare and poverty alleviation schemes of the Centre. They are not able to avail old age pension and housing scheme benefits without PC," alleged Pradhan.

He said that while the Union Government has been pumping enough funds for construction of toilets and electrifications in rural areas, yet they are far from satisfaction in respect of implementation in Odisha. Due to non-implementation of the Ayushman Bharat, hundreds of people have been deprived of free health services, he said.

Pradhan wanted to know while Digha in West Bengal has become a famous tourist resort, why Talseri and Chandaneswar in Bhogai havr not become such tourist attractions till now.

Pradhan also took a jibe at the State Government for the alleged sexual harassment of inmates and religious conversations reported in shelter homes of the Good News India.

"Anti-incumbency has become very strong here. Undoubtedly, people of the State will give a fitting reply to the BJD Government during the forthcoming elections," claimed Pradhan.

In Gajapati Food poisoning: 87 hostel girls hospitalised

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

As many as 87 girl students of the Tabarsingh Hostel under Gajapati district's R Udayagiri block were taken ill due to food poisoning and hospitalised at the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) here on Thursday night.

As students started vomiting, school authorities along with villagers rushed to them to the nearby Ramgiri hospital first. However, they were shifted to the DHH later at 10 pm by a bus.

On being informed, district Collector Anupam Shah, District Education Officer Pradiip Kumar Nag, District Welfare Officer Santosh Rath visited the hospital.

While about 50 students were discharged on Friday morning, the rest 35 girls were still undergoing treatment by the time of filing of this story.

A special team, formed under direction of the district Collector, is conducting investigation into the matter, said sources.



1 dies, 6 hurt in ambulance mishap in B'swar

PNS ■ BALESWAR

In a tragic road mishap on Friday, an attendant of a patient died on the spot and six others, including the driver and a pharmacist of an ambulance, sustained injuries after the ambulance carrying a patient rammmed into a stationary truck from behind on NH-60 near Haladipada.

Deceased was identified as Santilata Mitra

The deceased was identified as Santilata Mitra. She was accompanying the patient in the ambulance.

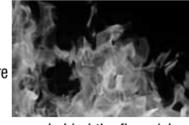
The incident took place at around 6 am when the ambulance carrying heart patient, Rajesh Mitra, from Hasimpur village under Baliapal police limits was going to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in Baleswar.

The injured were rushed to the DHH but later, ambulance driver Sashikant Mahanta and another injured Biswajit Mishra were shifted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack as their conditions worsened.

INBRIEF

TWO KIDS CHARRED TO DEATH IN KEONJHAR

Keonjhar: Tragedy struck Mundasahi village under the Nayakot police limits in Keonjhar district as two children were charred to death in a fire mishap in the locality on Friday. When the two kids were playing in a pigsty at the village, a major fire broke out and later engulfed the enclosure. The kids died on the spot. The cause behind the fire mishap was yet to be ascertained. More details about the incident were awaited.



AWARENESS RALLY HELD ON DIABETES DAY

Brahmapur: On the occasion of the World Diabetes Day, an awareness rally was organised here on Friday which local MLA Dr Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik and Brahmapur Development Authority (BDA) Chairman Subash Moharana attended as guests. Brahmapur Diabetes specialist Dr Sunil Kumar Kota and former MKCG Medical College Hospital Ophthalmology HOD Dr B Nageswar Rao Subudhi said that if treatment is not done or is delayed, it may lead to kidney failure and eyesight loss.



KALANJALI TRUST TO HOLDS BASANT UTSAV

Brahmapur: The Kalanjali Artist Trust would organise Basant Utsav for the first time here on December 23, informed trust secretary Rameswari Nanda at a Press meet. Nanda said TV serial Durga's actress Arpita Kar and star Hara Rath would attend the festival as guests. People who have achieved success in their respective fields would be felicitated. Among others, trust treasurer Ardhendu Sekhar Panigrahi, Rashmita Dhanraj, Gaurav Dhanraj, Bimalram Gantayat, Satyabrata Panda and Lokanath Panda were present.



MAOIST SYMPATHISER HELD IN KANDHAMAL

Phulbani: Police here on Friday arrested a Maoist sympathiser, Sushant Kumar Sahu, of Malibereni village in Nayagarh district. Later, he was forwarded to court.



KANDHAMAL MAHOTSAV PREPARATORY MEET HELD

Phulbani: A preparatory meeting for the coming Kandhamal Mahotsav was held here on Friday under the chairmanship of Kandhamal Collector Dr Brunda D. Among others, ZP President Akankhya Pradhan, ST Council Chairman Daruna Kanhar, ADM Basant Sahu, the DRDA PD and the Sub-Collector were present. Dr Brunda said the festival would be held from January 18 to 22.

SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT STARTS IN K'MAL

Phulbani: A three-day State-level school volleyball tournament was inaugurated here on Thursday in which 28 boys and 14 girls teams have participated from across the State. The first match was held between Bargarh and Cuttack in which Bargarh won the match. ZP President Akankhya Pradhan, district athletic association secretary



Siba Prasad Tripathy, physical education assistant director Laxmi Priya Dei, DSO Pradiip Kumar Patra, DEO Vikash Chandra Pradhan and BEO Meena Kumari Dugal attended as guests.

GKEL BAGS ENERGY CONSERVATION AWARD

Bhubaneswar: The GMR Kamalanga Energy Limited (GKEL) on Friday received the Energy Conservation Award under Independent Power Producer (IPP) segment for 2018 in a State-level function on the occasion National Energy Conservation Day. GKEL Head (O&M) Arabinda Pani, Head (Electrical) Pradeep Mohanty and AGM (Corporate Affairs) SK Ahmed received the trophy and recognition certificate from State Energy Department Hemant Sharma. GKEL COO Ramesh R Pai congratulated all employees for the honour.

UBER EATS TO LAUNCH ITS SERVICE IN BBSR TODAY

Bhubaneswar: The Uber Eats would launch its operations in Bhubaneswar from Saturday. The firm would offer consumers a variety of cuisines to choose from which would be delivered at their doorstep. The company would charge Rs 10 as delivery fee. As a launch offer, the firm would give the consumers 50 per cent off on their 1st two orders with promo code 50TASTE to get avail it with maximum discount value of Rs 75.

63 private J'suguda schools running sans NOCs

RAJ KUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA

After allegations of running of illegal shelter homes were reported in the State recently, an allegation of running of 63 private schools without (No-Objection Certificates (NOCs) has come to the fore in Jharsuguda district.

The parents, who are spending lots of money with an aim to build future of the children, are not aware of the school status and how their wards' future are jeopardised.

It is found that the number of schools running without NOCs is much more than those with NOCs. Sources said out of 93 schools imparting primary education in the district, only 30 schools are in possession of NOC and rest 63 are running without NOC. The schools are also not complying with Government conditions like provision of safety arrangements, experienced and qualified teachers, conforming to syllabus and fee structure. Out of 93 private schools, only 73 schools have applied for NOC. After verification, only 30 schools have been given NOC by the Government and the rest 63 are running without NOC.

Three DAV schools, Saint Joseph School, Saint Mary School, Ghanashyam Hemlata Vidya Mandir, two Daniel Public Schools, ST Arnold School and some Saraswati Shisu Mandir and Arabinda Schools, totalling 30, have received NOC.

Rail Roko at Bamur hits train services

PNS ■ ANGUL



Demanding halt of the Bhubaneswar-Balangir Intercity Express at the Bamur railway station in Angul district, locals under the banner of the Railway Users' Consultative Committee on Friday staged a 'Rail Roko' at the railway station disrupting train services in the State.

The agitators headed by local BJD MLA Sanjeev Kumar Sahu also staged a demonstration in front of the railway station as part of their 12-hour Bamur Bandh. Several trains were stranded at various railway stations due to the stir.

Shops and other business establishments, Government offices were closed while vehicles stayed off the roads during the protest. The activists alleged that that despite repeated requests for stoppage of the Bhubaneswar-Balangir Intercity Express at the railway station, the authorities have remained indifferent to their demand.

Free dialysis centre at JSpur DHH

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR



A free dialysis centre was opened in the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) here on Friday.

Inaugurating the centre, Chief District Medical Officer Dr Ashok Kumar Patnaik said the Centre would provide free dialysis services to the patients suffering from kidney related ailments and they would not be required to move to Cuttack for the purpose.

Among others, ADMO Dr Basanta Kumar Barik, District Programme Manager Chakradhar Jena were present.

JSpur youth held for raping minor

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

The police have arrested a youth, identified as Balia Bhoi, from Lahanga village on the charges of raping a minor girl on Thursday.

Reports said that Bhoi had been maintaining a love affair with the minor since

months. On Wednesday night, he was spotted with the minor in the latter's house in objectionable position. The parents of the girl had locked the duo from outside and called Bhoi's guardians for settlement of the case without police action.

Later on Thursday, local

gentlemen and youth's father came at minor girl's house and finally it was decided that Bhoi has to marry the minor girl after she attains the marriageable age. However, the proposal was discarded by Bhoi's father. As a result, an FIR was lodged from the minor girl's side.

Biju Bahini will mislead youths: Nirranjan

Cong public awareness rally held in J'suguda

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Even after 18 years of the BJD Government under the leadership of CM Naveen Patnaik, today Odisha has been termed as the poorest State in the country, said State Congress president Nirranjan Patnaik in a meeting organised by Jharsuguda District Congress Committee.

Alleging misutilisation of Government funds by forming Biju Bahini, he said the youths of the State are being misled. The PCC chief also targeted the Naveen Patnaik Government for splurging on publicity campaigns and advertisements.

He revealed that as per directions of Congress president Rahul Gandhi, the Odisha unit has started a public awareness campaign to come nearer to the poor farmers of the State. In his address, Patnaik while blaming the Modi Government for its various unpopular projects like GST and demonitisation etc, said that the financial status of the country has become unsta-

ble under the NDA Government. Patnaik said that the victory of the Congress in the recent elections in five States is due to its manifesto to waive the loans of the farmers. He declared that in case Congress comes to power in Odisha in 2019 election, all the problems of



the farmers will be sorted out and they will be given free solar water pumps.

The meeting was attended by AICC secretary Mastal Wali, Jharsuguda MLA Naba Kishore Das, former Chief Minister Hemananda Biswal, former Ministers Kisore Chandra Patel, Santosh Singh Saluja, Congress leader Dr Hameed Husain, Jharsuguda Zilla Parishad president Laxminarayan Patel, Pintu Padi and Sarita Agarwal, among others.

SOCIAL CANVAS

Let Odisha have State Minority Commission



MANAS JENA

race, gender, disability and sexual orientation. The Government of India has enacted the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 and notified six religions as religious minority groups in India.

As per the 2011 Census, religious minority constitutes about 6 per cent of the total population of Odisha which includes 2.77 per cent Christians, 2.17 per cent Muslims and others are Sikh, Buddhists and Jains constituting a very insignificant number. Historically, it is a fact that people under lower social status of Hindu social order are being converted to other religions. Thus, a major section of minority population carries multiple social identities in a caste ridden society like ours. Though they have changed their faith but their social status and living condition has not changed much because of the influence of the dominant religion in every spheres of social life.

The Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims are such groups who have been facing multiple forms of discriminations in their everyday life as a religious minority and also because of their past social identities. They are also a minority

within the marginalised sections. The change in their religion status has deprived them of many of the Constitutional rights and provisions of law that guarantee protection against caste based discrimination and untouchability and most important, their participation in different spheres like education and Government jobs.

After the Mandal Commission recommendations based on the criteria of social and educational backwardness, many of such minority groups are enlisted as OBC and SEBC but the issues of protection against social discrimination remain unaddressed and they are pushed into unequal competitions. There have been cases of complaints that even within their religion they face discrimination by fellow faith followers when it comes to marriage and other social relationship and holding posts in religious hierarchy and getting access to top decision making bodies and most importantly sharing of resources within provinces. There is use of words such as upper caste Christians, Dalit Christians, ASRAF and AJLAF, Majbhi SIKH etc. which sound a hierarchical division within.

The converts from higher caste Hindus still maintain distance in social relationship with people convert from lower social strata. There are a number of studies which have established that the conditions of these marginalized sections within religious minority are worst. It is being suggested that there must be provision of land, basic amenities, education, credit, employment and scope of participation in governance, including political participation and most importantly, protection against dominance and discrimination.

It is important to know about the status of a group before going for any kind of formulation of policy or for implementation of any schemes or programmes. There has been lack of disaggregated data about religious minority of the State in order to know their status for formulation of schemes and programmes. The institutional arrangement to address the very specific issues of minority at policy level is most significant and under this provision the State must have a minority commission, a separate minority department and a minority finance development corporation under the leadership of representatives

from these communities. The State minority commission is to represent the concerns of minority communities, policy and legal issues between the Government and groups and also for ensuring socio-economic justice to these groups in realisation of their constitutional rights as citizens of this country while getting protected as minority under the provisions of the law.

The Minister for Minority Development Department would be held responsible to the State Assembly and the matter of minorities will get appropriately focused. The department can appoint officers in minority concentrated areas to look into the welfare and development issues along with facilitating the participation and protection mechanism for the groups. The present department of SCs, STs, OBCs and Minority Development Department of the State should be split into four independent departments with four ministers from representing four different groups because the specific issues of each group are different while these four groups constitute more than 90 per cent of the population of the State. Therefore their protection and development is

very much vital to the inclusive development of the State. But unfortunately the specific institutional mechanism has not been developed yet. Similarly, there are many States having State Minority Commission and State Minority Finance Development Commission but the Government of Odisha has not initiated such process which can be a first step towards minority protection and development. There are 18 States such as TN, Maharashtra, AP, Telangana, UP, WB, Rajasthan, Punjab and Manipur having the State Minority Commissions.

The independent Minority Finance Development Corporation must have adequate funds allocated by the State Government under budget and tap funds from ministry of minority and credit facilities with nationalized and cooperative banks to develop self-employment schemes for minority youths and entrepreneurs for generating employment, income and economic participation in mainstream social life. The schemes must be designed to suit into the complex situa-

minority groups and areas having minority concentration.

Studies found that minority habitations in Odisha have been suffering with lack of basic amenities such as home-stead land, housing, sanitation, toilet, electricity, linking road, and common land for various use of the community. The various schemes of the Central Government especially the 15-point programme of Government of India has not reached to the minority hamlets. Unfortunately the various committees headed by Chief Secretary and Collectors are not meeting regularly to change the situation.

It is being much debated in recent times that the minority groups in Kandhamal and Bhadrak have been facing dominance and threat and are living in fear while celebrating their faith based festivals and functions. The Government must take into seriously the issue and ensure that minority groups can have a life of dignity without fear and discrimination as fellow citizens of this secular country.

(manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

IN ATHAGARH Villager held in elephant poaching case

PNS ■ ATHAGARH

Forest cops of the Athagarh Forest Division on Friday arrested one Prasanna Dehury of Rajanagar village, who is the owner of the brinjil field where the carcass of an elephant was found on Wednesday. After interrogation, he was forwarded to

court, which rejected his bail plea and sent to jail, revealed Athagarh DFO Sasmitta Lenka.

The DFO said that during the interrogation, prima facie evidence came to light that Dehury and his associates hunted the elephant with explosives.

The Forest Department has framed several non-bailable offences against Dehury for which his bail was rejected.

However, claiming that Dehury is innocent, villagers of Rajanagar had demonstrated before the DFO's office for about three hours on Thursday.

DFO said that during the interrogation, prima facie evidence came to light that Dehury and his associates hunted the elephant with explosives. The Forest Department has framed several non-bailable offences against Dehury for which his bail was rejected

The locals alleged that even the poaching happened due to negligence of the forest officials, no step of disciplinary action against any staff has yet been taken by the DFO after five long days.



Ganjam CHC project manager held taking bribe

Clerk also held

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Friday caught Ganjam district's Patrapur Community Health Centre (CHC) Block Project Manager Niranjana Reddy red-handed for demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 2,000.

He was caught taking bribe in his rented house at Patrapur from complainant Banita Nayak of Sahaspur village in Ganjam district in order to issue engagement

Ganjam district's Dharakote Block Education office Junior Clerk was held for taking bribe of Rs 2,000 from complainant Narayan Sethy, Garadabili Upgraded High School Assistant Teacher, to process the file for release of his leave salary, which had already been granted by the BEO

order in favour of complainant, who has already been selected as an Asha Karmi of the CHC.

His residential rented house at Patrapur and house at native village Lochapada in Brahmapur was searched. He was arrested and forwarded to court.

Similarly, Ganjam district's Dharakote Block Education office Junior Clerk was held for taking bribe of Rs 2,000 from complainant Narayan Sethy, Garadabili Upgraded High School Assistant Teacher, to process the file for release of his leave salary, which had already been granted by the BEO.

Talcher girl saves friend from under train wheels

PNS ■ TALCHER

Praises poured in for a school girl for showing extraordinary bravery to save her friend who was almost run over by a goods train in Talcher.

The nine-year-old Shrimati Bhadra, a Class-IV student of Ghantapada Nodal High School in Talcher set an example for others for such daring and swift action. Although her friend lost her right foot but survived.

The incident was reported on December 6 when Shrimati and her friend Pramila Munda (11), a class VI student, were returning to their homes from school. While they were crossing a railway track passing under a halted goods train, the train suddenly started moving and Pramila got stuck under it.

Applying presence of mind, Shrimati immediately pulled Pramila out and saved her life before any major mishap to take place. However, Pramila's right foot was detached from her body.

Even as she was junior to Pramila, she managed to reach

the home at Dera Munda Basti walking around 500 metre, carrying her friend in a pool of blood on her little shoulders. Later, Pramila was admitted to the Mandapal Subdivisional Hospital from where she was referred to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack for treatment. She underwent a surgery but lost her right leg.

According to reports, Shrimati and Pramila are two close friends despite their age and class differences.

"The train started moving and hit my friend while we were trying to cross the railway track. She fell and got stuck under the train wheels. She cried for help. Without thinking anything, I put my school bag aside and pulled her out from the track. I carried her home and told everyone about the incident. Her family mem-



bers rushed her to the hospital for treatment," said Shrimati.

"It is a sad incident for all of us. The victim is a bright student.

The two friends were habituated with crossing the railway line. The class VI student Pramila's leg was detached in the incident. But, Shrimati managed to save her friend's life. The next day when Shrimati narrated the incident, we immediately extended assistance to Pramila sending a representative on behalf of the school," said Ghantapada Nodal High School teacher Sagarika Hajra.

Last day of Winter Session in Punjab sees series of protests

Opp targets Congress on a slew of issues

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Vidhan Sabha's Winter Session was indeed short but not sweet as the Opposition parties took enough aims at the ruling Congress for running away from the debate on its mis-governance. Main Opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), SAD and BJP targeted the State Government on a slew of issues including farmers, potato growers, pollution in rivers, post-matric scholarship, and above all on holding the "shortest session ever".

The elevation of senior Congress leader Kamal Nath as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister also led to fiery war of words between the SAD and Congress MLAs forcing the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh to intervene. Capt Amarinder lashed out at the SAD MLAs for politicising the issue while asking them to let the law take its own course.

The second and the last day of the winter session witnessed series of protests not only by the opposition legislators, but also by the Congress MLA Barindermeet Singh Pahra who also raised the issue of "discrimination against him" over the issue of panchayat polls.

The opposition parties lashed out at the ruling Congress for limiting the session to just one day citing "no business", and claimed that

they have plentiful issues to discuss ranging from potato-sugarcane farmers and to the SC students.

Initially proposed for three days and four sittings, from December 13 to 15, the winter session was cut short to just two days and two sittings including one to pay obituaries. The treasury benches, during the Business Advisory Committee meeting, argued that there was no business that needed to be discussed, and thus the length of the session be curtailed by a day and the sittings reduced to two.

Wearing black arm-bands, AAP MLA protested against the short session and demanded to extend it. Taking up the issue in zero hour, AAP MLA Aman Arora cited the book claiming that the House should have 40 sittings in a year.

As the Speaker Rana KP Singh refused to pay any heed to their demand, Arora tore the papers and threw it on the floor in protest. AAP MLAs, sans the rebel group, stormed into the Well raising slogans against the Congress Government.

Arora also flashed a lock saying that the Assembly be locked in case the session was not held as per the laid down procedure; and staged a walk-out on the issue with AAP MLAs.

Also objecting the duration, SAD MLA and former finance minister Parminder Singh Dhindsa questioned the Speaker for rejecting his adjournment motion to discuss farmers' issue. "The Government is claiming that they do not have any business, and when we are giving business, it is being rejected on flimsy grounds," he said.



SAD president Sukhbir Badal said that the three-day session was in itself a brief session, which had been further curtailed to two days. "This two-day session will enter the Guinness Book of World records as the shortest session ever in history," he mocked.

"It is murder of democracy. Will crores of rupees be blown up for convening the session and then winding it up in a day on the plea that there is not enough business... This proves that this is the most incompetent government ever formed in Punjab which does not have any work to take up in the House," he said.

KAMAL NATH'S ELEVATION ROCKS PUNJAB ASSEMBLY

The protest against the Congress party's decision to elevate its senior leader Kamal

Nath as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister was heard in over 1000 kilometres away in Punjab Vidhan Sabha. SAD dubbed the move as rubbing salt into the wounds of 1984 riot victims.

The issue was raised by SAD MLA Bikram Majithia, to which the state Parliamentary Affairs Minister Brahm Mohindra retorted that MP CM designate was not named in a single FIR.

Mohindra pointed that Nath was elected eight-times as MP after 1984 riots, and thrice served as Union Minister, but never ever this issue was raised by SAD.

Showing pictures in his mobile phone purportedly of former Chief Minister and SAD patriarch Parkash Singh Badal felicitating Kamal Nath and Parminder Dhindsa, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder

Singh alleged that the opposition was politicising the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

The Chief Minister said that a mere reference in the Nanavati Commission report could not be construed as Nath's involvement in the case. "Let us leave it to the law. If somebody is guilty, he's guilty. If he is not guilty, he is not guilty," he said.

Congress and SAD MLAs engaged in a verbal duel on the issue, with SAD legislators raising slogans against the Congress Government and later staging a walkout.

On SAD president Sukhbir Badal's allegation that cases pertaining to the 1984 riots were "suppressed" over the years, Mohindra said: "The country has seen five non-Congress Prime Ministers, they were your (SAD) allies... If you felt so, why did you not

raise it then."

CAPT ASSURES OF EARLY RESOLUTION OF POTATO PRICE FLUCTUATION ISSUE

Showing deep concern over the falling prices of potato crop, the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder assured the House to address the issue on priority while expressing his Government's complete solidarity with the distressed potato growers.

The issue was raised by SAD MLA Gurbpartap Singh Wadala by moving a calling attention motion. Intervening, Capt Amarinder said that the Government had already raised with the Centre a demand to allow export of potatoes and sugar to Russia, UAE, Iran and Sri Lanka for fetching better prices of these crops.

BJD Govt most corrupt, inept: Pradhan



PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday participated in the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) Padayatra organised from Patuli village to Olavar College field here where later he addressed a gathering.

Pradhan charged that the State Government led by CM Naveen Patnaik has reached to the extreme point of corruption, incapability and callousness.

"The Naveen Government has failed from all fronts. Unemployment, insecurity of women and farmers distress are major issues. People in general have now made up their mind for a political change in the State and it is definitely going to happen in

2019 general elections," said Pradhan.

Since Narendra Modi led NDA Government came to power in the Centre, the number of LPG connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) has increased in Orissa 20 per cent to 70 per cent, said Pradhan.

He further stated that the PMUY is a flagship programme of the Government of India which is intended to provide access to clean cooking to the poor households. The Ujjwala Yojana has been immensely useful in transforming the lives of underprivileged, especially the poor women and children. In Orissa, 41 lakh LPG connections have been provided to poor households till date, said Pradhan.

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice for Building Works
Bid Identification No. 20 / 2018-19

1167-0

- Name of the Work :- 2 No of Building Work (As per col.2 Of Annexure available in the Portal)
- Estimated Cost :- Rs.23.46 and Rs 37.52 .Lakh
- Period of Completion :- 6 Months
- Date & Time of availability of Bid document in the Portal :- From Dt.17.12.18 at 10.00 A.M.to Dt.27.12.18 up to 4.00 P.M.
- Last Date & Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal :- From Dt.17.12.18 at 10.00 A.M.to Dt.27.12.18 up to 4.00 P.M.
- Date & Time of Opening of Tender :- Dt. 28.12.18 at 11.00 A..M.
- Name and Address of O.I.T :- Executive Engineer, R.W Division, Bhadrak
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tendersorissa.gov.in>"
Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R.W. Division, Bhadrak

25060/11/0019/1819

GOVERNMENT OF ORISSA
"e" Procurement Notice(Short) No.M-I-E-12/18-19 dated: 11.12.2018(On line)
www.mibalasure@yahoo.co.in, 06782-262146

952-A

- Name of the work :- Different works of M.I.Division,Balasure under FDR & RCER grant.
- No. of Works :- 04 Nos.
- Estimated Cost :- Varies from Rs.6.92 Lakhs to Rs.26.12 lakhs (approximately)
- Class of Contractor :- "B" "C" & "D" Class.
- Period of Completion :- 03(Three) Calendar months (90 days)
- Other details are as follows:-

Bid inviting authority	Bid Identification No.	No. of Works	Availability of tender on-line for bidding		Date & time of opening of tender	Date & Time of Transparent Lottery if necessary.
			From	To		
Executive Engineer, M.I.Division, Balasure	M-I-E-12/2018-19	04Nos	18.12.2018 at 11.00 A.M.	26.12.2018 up to 5.00 P.M.	27.12.2018 at 11.00A.M	02.01.2019 at 11.00A.M.

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Minor Irrigation Division, Balasure.

32014/11/0022/1819

Swap land with Pak, make Kartarpur part of India: Pb Assembly resolution

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

As Pakistan Government has virtually granted permission to visit Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara, Punjab lawmakers now wanted to bring it here in the Indian Territory. For, the Vidhan Sabha on Friday unanimously passed a resolution urging the Centre to swap land with Pakistan to bring the historic Gurudwara in India.

Proposed by SAD president Sukhbir Badal, the demand was supported by not only his party colleague but also the Congress MLAs and Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa who pointed that similar demand was made by his father when he was Dera Baba Nanak MLA.

With the passing of the resolution, the State would now raise the issue with the Central Government, putting on offer nearly 11,000 acres of land from the state in lieu of the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara in Pakistan.

During the discussion on the resolution moved by the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder to thank the Pak and Indian Governments for opening the corridor, besides urging the Central Government for completing the corridor by December 2020 before 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, Sukhbir urged to

move the resolution for swapping the land.

AAP MLA Kanwar Sandhu and SAD MLA Bikram Majithia too supported him, with Congress Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa pointing that this could be done as his father had also raised the issue with the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi which was also considered seriously, but could not fructify in the wake of 1970 war.

Dera Baba Nanak stands opposite the Kartarpur Sahib gurudwara on the Indian side, and is the place from where the Kartarpur Corridor is to be constructed to Pakistan's Narowal district.

Earlier, appreciating the opening of the corridor, Capt Amarinder reiterated his warning to the Pakistan Army to stop terror activities in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir declaring that he would be the first one to visit the Kartarpur Sahib gurudwara through the corridor, provided Pakistan ensured that peace was not compromised on this side of the border.

To support his apprehension, Capt Amarinder cited an article written by defence expert saying, "It is a project of the Pakistan Army, not that of Imran Khan (Pak Prime Minister). Imran Khan was

well-intentioned, but the Pakistan Army is not, and we should not fall prey to their sinister designs," he reiterated.

However, Capt Amarinder's apprehensions on Pak using corridor to revive terrorism in India, especially Punjab, was not supported by most of the MLAs, including of his own party. Instead, they urged the Chief Minister to send across the message of love and peace, and shun "negativity" over the same.

Congress MLA Raj Kumar Verka pointed that whenever India trusted Pakistan and extended friendly hand, they attacked us, but we should give peace a chance.

Another Congress MLA Harminder Singh Gill said that the Chief Minister's apprehensions were ill-founded.

AAP MLA Kultar Singh Sandhwan said the "our Chief Minister" should give the message of love and peace, while leaving it to the Army to take care of the border.

SAD MLAs Sukhbir Badal and HS Chandumajra also asked the Chief Minister not to use "words" which may create hurdle in the years-long pending demand of the Sikh community.

"Only people from Punjab would go there, no one from there would come to Indian



side. And I am sure that extra care would be taken to ensure the security," said Sukhbir.

Majithia said that the move to exchange land would undo the historic blunder that happened while British were dividing India. "Also, land-swapping will take care of the misgivings put forth by Captain Amarinder Singh," he said.

MLAS THANKED SIDHU, CAPT'S RESOLUTION NOT

Fine innings by cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu in the not-so-friendly match between India and Pakistan over the opening of Kartarpur corridor was played down by his own "captain".

Virtually keeping him out of the appreciation game, majority of the MLAs, both

from opposition and ruling, did not fail to thank Sidhu, while Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh relegated his party and cabinet colleague virtually to the position of an "extra".

Sidhu, who undoubtedly had played a significant role in opening of the corridor, listened to the entire discussion silently, but with a smile. And expressing his gratitude by nodding and bowing every time a MLA mentioned his name.

Congress MLA Verka appreciated Sidhu for bringing the message of opening of the corridor from across the border during his first visit. AAP MLA Kultar Singh Sandhwan demanded that names of everyone, including Sidhu, be included in the resolution for thanking him to realising Sikh's long pending demand.

New rules delayed counting in MP, Raj: EC

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Friday explained the reasons that led to a delay which include objection related to voting machines, mandatory tallying of electronic voting machine (EVM) count with voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips, issuance of certificate after every round of counting and denying public announcement system.

The increase in the postal ballot votes, slim margins in Madhya Pradesh on many seats and a cautious approach adopted to avoid the embarrassment further, also the reasons for delay in announcement of polls results this year.

MP Assembly election results were declared 24 hours after counting began while Rajasthan results declared 19 hours after counting began.

Unlike the quick counting of votes for the Assembly polls in Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Mizoram, counting in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan went on at a snail's pace, keeping people in general and the political parties in particular on tenterhooks throughout the day on December 11.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) VL Kantharao said "The delay is because every candidate has to be provided a certificate after every round of counting." "Right from the first round of EVM counting at 8.30am, the candidates were very particular about checking and examining every seal, tag and serial number of the EVMs and their cases being brought to the counting tables. In several cases, they raised trivial objections on the seals, serial number, tag number, signatures of polling staff on the tags, which required the intervention, explaining and convincing by the Returning Officer, District



► Election Commission explained the reasons that led to a delay which include objection related to voting machines, mandatory tallying of electronic voting machine (EVM) count with voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips, issuance of certificate after every round of counting and denying public announcement system

Election Officer and Observer before these EVMs were taken up for counting. Even though no EVM was kept aside or found tampered amongst the 66,000 EVMs taken up for counting, the process of objections slowed down the rounds," the CEO said.

The MP CEO further explained that when a result is noted from an EVM machine at a counting table, it is written down on part two of Form 17C and the counting agents verify and sign on this sheets which is then photocopied and given to them.

"Similarly, when the tabulation of 14 such results from the 14 tables in the counting hall is made into a broad sheet, it is again verified and photocopies are distributed to the candidates. Strict adherence to this procedure has slowed down the counting process," the CEO said.

"The insistence of the candidates to not bring the next round of EVMs on to the counting tables before tabulation, round-wise figures are written on the blackboard/white board in the counting hall and announced in the public

announce system has denied five-minute time saving that have could done in between rounds. With an average 22 rounds of counting per Assembly constituency, this has led to two hours of delay."

According to Kantharao, in about 250 cases out of 66000 EVMs taken up to counting, the presiding officers had not followed the Close-Result-Clear (CRC) after the mock poll done in the morning of the poll day.

This meant that the result of these particular EVMs had to be obtained through the counting of the VVPAT Slips. The MP CEO further stated that in the run of up to the Legislative Assembly elections 2018, Madhya Pradesh added about 13,000 (21 per cent) additional polling stations as compared to the previous elections. Rajasthan's Chief Electoral Officer Anand Kumar said the reason of delay is because of votes in the electronic voting machine (EVM) have to be matched by randomly selecting a VVPAT from a polling centre in each Assembly constituency.

24 MLAs elected to C'garh have criminal cases: ADR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 24 of the 90 MLAs elected to the Chhattisgarh Assembly this week have criminal cases against them. They account for 27 per cent of the strength of the House, up from 17 per cent in the last assembly. As per the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report, 13 of the 90 (just over 14 per cent) have declared serious criminal cases against themselves - bribery, attempt to murder and death by negligence, among others. The comparative number for the 2013 Assembly was nine per cent.

The Congress has 68 MLAs in the new House, including 19 with criminal records (28 per cent). Of these, 12 MLAs have declared serious criminal cases against themselves. Ajit Jogi's Janta Congress Chhattisgarh (J), meanwhile, has strength of five MLAs, two of whom have records. One of these two is

► The increase in the postal ballot votes, slim margins in Madhya Pradesh on many seats and a cautious approach adopted to avoid the embarrassment further, also the reasons for delay in announcement of polls results this year

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► With an average 22 rounds of counting per Assembly constituency, this has led to two hours of delay

accused of serious crimes.

The BJP, which lost power after 15 years, has three MLAs out of 15 (20 per cent) with a record, but none of them are accused of serious crimes. ADR's analysis revealed that 68 (76 per cent) of the incoming MLAs are crorepatis, which is almost the same as the outgoing Assembly's figure of 67.

Forty-eight Congress MLAs (71 per cent), 14 from the BJP (93 per cent), all five MLAs of Jogi's party and one of the BSP's two MLAs fall in this bracket.

"The average of assets per MLA in the Chhattisgarh 2018 Assembly elections is Rs 11.63 crore. In 2013, the average assets of 90 MLAs analysed was Rs 8.88 crore," said the ADR report. The average assets are Rs 11.83 crore for the Congress, Rs 6.32 crore for the BJP, 28.68 crore for the Janta Congress Chhattisgarh (J) and Rs 2.04 crore for the BSP.

RAFALE DEAL Cost comparison not job of court, says SC

Says closely examined jet prices of 2007 & 2016



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said despite having "examined closely" the pricing details of the basic Rafale fighter jet under the original Request for Proposal (RFP) of 2007 and the one under the Inter-Government Agreement (IGA) in 2016 to "satisfy its conscience", it cannot go into cost comparison as it's not the job of court.

The top court said despite its initial disinclination to even go into the issue of pricing, the Centre was directed to place the cost details of the aircraft in sealed cover, just to satisfy the conscience of the court.

It said the Government has not disclosed the pricing details except for the basic cost of the aircraft even to Parliament on the ground of sensitivity of pricing details and national security, apart from the issues of breach of the agreement between the two countries - India and France.

In relief to the Modi Government, the Supreme Court Friday dismissed the pleas challenging the deal between India and France for procurement of 36 Rafale jets saying there was no occasion to "realy doubt the decision making process" warranting setting aside of the contract. The deal is estimated to be Rs 58,000 crore, or about USD 8 billion.

A Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and KM Joseph said the Central Government despite its reluctance, placed the material regarding costs of the aircrafts before the court to satisfy its conscience.

"We have examined close-

ly the price details and comparison of the prices of the basic aircraft along with escalation costs as under the original RFP (of 2007) as well as under the IGA. We have also gone through the explanatory note on the costing, item wise," the Bench said.

It noted that the pricing details of 36 Rafale fighter jets are stated to be covered by Article 10 of the IGA between India and France, which provides for protection of classified information and material exchanged under the IGA and it would be governed by the provisions of the Security Agreement signed between both the Governments on January 25, 2008.

"It is certainly not the job of this court to carry out a comparison of the pricing details in matters like the present. We say no more as the material has to be kept in a confidential domain," the Bench said.

It added even Chief of the

Air Staff is stated to have communicated his reservation regarding the disclosure of the pricing details, including regarding the weaponry which could adversely affect national security.

The Centre has claimed that there is a commercial advantage in the purchase of 36 Rafale aircraft and that there are certain better terms in IGA qua the maintenance and weapon package, it noted.

The pricing details were however shared with the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and the report of CAG was examined by the Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament and only a redacted portion of the CAG report was placed before the Parliament which is in public domain, the court said. *PTI*

Def procurement processes broadly followed: Top court

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said it cannot seek clause-by-clause compliances of the Defence Procurement Procedures (DPP) in the Rafale fighter jet deal and opined that the processes have been "broadly" followed. It also expressed satisfaction with the Government's decision-making process which led to the deal between India and France for procurement of 36 Rafale jets, saying that there was "no occasion to really doubt" it.

Top court, while junking the PILs challenging the Rs 58,000 crore Rafale deal, examined the three "broad areas of concern" - decision-making process, difference in pricing and the choice of Indian Offset Partner by Dassault Aviation.

Scrutinising the decision-making process, a bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said though it had no occasion to really doubt the process, even if there were minor deviations then they would not lead to annulment of the deal. On the DPP, the

court cannot seek "clause-by-clause compliances" of the Defence Procurement Procedures. "Broadly, the processes have been followed."

The Bench, also comprising Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph, said, "We have studied the material carefully. We have also had the benefit of interacting with senior Air Force Officers who answered court queries in respect of different aspects, including that of the acquisition process and pricing.

"We are satisfied that there is no occasion to really doubt the process, and even if minor deviations have occurred, that would not result in either setting aside the contract or requiring a detailed scrutiny by the court." It added, "We have been informed that joint exercises have taken place, and that there is a financial advantage to our nation. It cannot be lost sight of, that these are contracts of defence procurement which should be subject to a different degree and depth of judicial review." *PTI*

Curative plea challenging Asthana's appointment as Spl CBI Director dismissed

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has dismissed a curative petition seeking to re-examine its verdict upholding the appointment of Gujarat cadre IPS officer Rakesh Asthana as special director of CBI.

The apex court rejected the curative petition filed by NGO, Common Cause, whose review petition was also earlier held to be devoid of merits.

After an in-chamber hearing, a bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, said, "We have gone through the curative petition and connected papers. In our opinion no case is made out within the parameters indicated in the decision of this court (in the case laying down guidelines to deal with the curative petition)."

The Bench, also comprising Justices MB Lokur, AK Sikri and AM Sapre, passed the order on December 11 and was made public on the apex court's website on Friday.

Curative petition is heard in the chamber of judges in the absence of lawyers.

The decision of the apex court came amidst a bitter feud between Asthana and CBI Director Alok Verma. Both have been divested of powers and sent on leave by the central government on October 23.

The apex court, on November 28, 2017, had dis-



missed the PIL filed by the NGO against the appointment of Asthana to the post of CBI special director, saying it cannot question a "unanimous" decision taken by the selection committee and the decision is not illegal.

Later, the court also dismissed the plea seeking review of the verdict.

The top court had said there cannot be any doubt that if the statute provides for consultation with any person before making a recommendation for appointment to any post, the consultation with that person has to be made.

The NGO in its petition had challenged Asthana's appointment, saying it was illegal as his name had surfaced in a diary recovered during a raid conducted by the Income Tax Department at the offices and other premises of company Sterling Biotech Ltd. *PTI*

ED launches probe against Usha Martin's MD

With alleged violations of FEMA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has launched a probe against the Managing Director of Usha Martin, the country's largest steel wire rope maker, in connection with alleged violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA),

agency sources said on Friday.

The said agency sleuths questioned Rajeev Jhawar, the MD of the Kolkata-headquartered firm, at their office in the capital of West Bengal on Friday.

The officials recorded Jhawar's statement under FEMA in connection with the purchase and registration of an immovable asset in Singapore in 2013 and a few other overseas transactions.

Jhawar is under the Enforcement Directorate's scanner for alleged irregularities in mobilising funds to create assets abroad.

The agency wants to ascertain the source of funds and compliance of required approvals, the sources said. Jhawar's uncle BK Jhawar and the latter's son Prashant Jhawar are other promoters of the company.

The Competition

Commission had recently cleared Tata Sponge Iron's acquisition of steel business of Usha Martin Ltd. (UML) for Rs 4,300-4,700 crore. UML had earlier said the sale of steel business to Tata Steel will help the company in "significant reduction" of its debt.

Usha Martin is amongst the largest wire rope manufacturers in the world and a leading producer of speciality steel in India.

Centre grants extension of service of 6 months to IB chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the general elections next year and the defeat of the ruling BJP in the Hindi heartland States' Assembly polls, the Centre has granted extension of service of six months to Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief Rajiv Jain and external Intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) boss Anil Dhasmana. Both were due to retire later this month end.

While Jain's tenure was to end on December 30, Dhasmana was slated to retire from service on December 29.

The decision to extend the tenure of the two Intelligence chiefs was taken due to the forthcoming general election and the Centre wants the new Government to take a decision on the appoints for the top

posts of the covert agencies, officials said. Jain, a 1980-batch IPS officer of Jharkhand cadre, was appointed IB Director on December 30, 2016, for a fixed tenure of two years.

A recipient of the President's Police Medal, Jain has served in various departments of IB, including the sensitive Kashmir Desk.

He was advisor to the previous NDA Government's interlocutor on Kashmir KC Pant when talks were held with separatist leaders like Shabbir Shah.

Dhasmana, a 1981-batch officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been with RAW for 23 years, during which he served in important areas, including the Pakistan Desk and is considered an expert on Balochistan.

Planting of wheat increased marginally: Agri Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Agriculture Ministry data shows that planting of wheat has increased marginally to 233.71 lakh hectare so far in the ongoing rabi season from the same period a year ago, but coverage of other crops especially pulses and rice was still lagging behind. Sowing of rabi (winter) crops begins from October and harvesting from March onwards. Wheat is the main rabi crop.

Wheat was sown in 233.59 lakh hectare in the same period of rabi season in the 2017-18 crop year (July-June). As per the ministry's latest data, wheat acreage in Punjab has increased marginally to 34.34 lakh hectare so far this season from 33.92 lakh hectare a year ago.

Similarly, the area sown to wheat in Haryana has improved slightly to 24.11 lakh



hectare from 23.32 lakh hectare in the said period. The sowing operation in these two States is almost completed, while it is underway in States especially Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Farmers in Madhya Pradesh have planted wheat in more area at 44.57 lakh hectare

so far this season when compared with 37.91 lakh hectare in a year ago.

However in Uttar Pradesh, wheat sowing was still lagging behind at 76.70 lakh hectare so far this season as against 81.90 lakh hectare in the same period last season.

In Rajasthan too, the

acreage was slightly down at 23.49 lakh hectare as against 25.42 lakh hectare in the said period. As per the Ministry's data, total pulses area was down at 125.40 lakh hectare so far this rabi season as against 138.29 lakh hectare in the year-ago period.

Oilseeds acreage was also slightly down at 70.22 lakh hectare as against 70.58 lakh hectare in the said period. Coarse cereals area remained lagging behind at 37.55 lakh hectare so far this rabi season as against 47.16 lakh hectare in the year-ago.

Rice acreage was also down at 9.24 lakh hectare as against 12.86 lakh hectare in the said period.

Total area sown to all rabi crops remained down at 476.12 lakh hectare so far this rabi season from 502.48 lakh hectare in the year ago period.

Phethai to hit Andhra by Monday, predicts MeT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted that cyclone is brewing over the Bay of Bengal and it is expected to hit Andhra Pradesh's coast on Monday afternoon. The cyclone is named 'Phethai' (contributed by Thailand) in line with the naming protocol for cyclones in the North Indian Ocean.

This would be the seventh cyclone this year, starting with 'Sagar', 'Mekunu' and 'Luban' - all in the Arabian Sea - and 'Daye', 'Titli', and 'Gaja' in the Bay of Bengal and third to hit south India in less than two months.

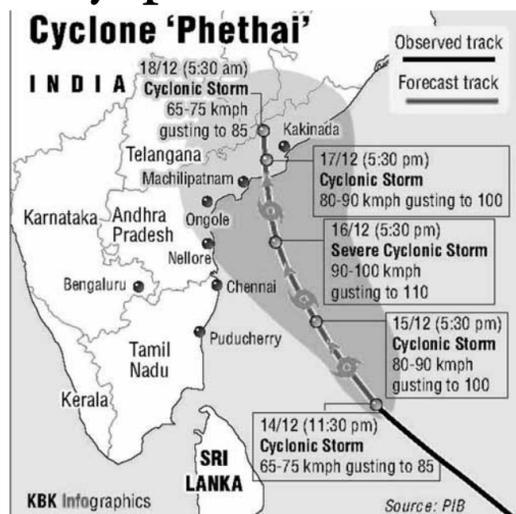
Chhattisgarh and Odisha may also see rainfall on December 17. "The Bay of Bengal sees approximately five times as many cyclones as the Arabian Sea. In addition, cyclones in the Bay are stronger and deadlier. But this year could be an exception in terms of the numbers. It has also been seen that nearly 58 per cent of cyclones formed in the Bay reach the coast, as compared to only 25 per cent of those in the Arabian Sea," the IMD officials said.

The IMD said as expected, the low pressure area in Bay of Bengal has now intensified into a well-marked low pressure area and is now seen over Central Bay of Bengal. "Conditions continue to be favourable for the system to induce a depression in the next 24 hours. In fact, we expect it to strengthen into deep depression and further into a cyclonic circulation in the subsequent 48 to 72 hours," it said.

The IMD predicted that

severe cyclone would achieve a maximum intensity of wind speeds reaching up to 105 km/hr and gusting to 115 km/hr along and off Andhra Pradesh, north Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts from Saturday evening. "The system would continue to move in north northwest direction and would be heading towards Andhra Pradesh Coast," it said. As the system nears, rains would also start picking up pace and we can expect heavy to very heavy rains over South Coastal Andhra Pradesh. North Coastal Tamil Nadu would see moderate rains with some heavy showers.

"Sea conditions would be rough to very rough, along with high velocity winds. We can expect winds of 80 kmph-90 kmph gusting up to 110-120 kmph at the time of landfall. Locals and fishermen are advised not to venture out in the sea for the next three days," officials said.



Govt open to 'outside' agencies taking up accreditation of institutions: Javadekar

New Delhi: The Government is open to the idea of roping in "outside" agencies for accreditation of educational institutions, and IITs and IIMs have also been approached in this regard, Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said on Friday.

"To improve the quality of education, we are making the accreditation process more scientific and tough. The Government wants to increase the strength of the National Board of Accreditation and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council so that more number of institutions can be accredited," Javadekar said during the national conference on "Positioning India on the Global Education Map".

"The Government is open to other agencies taking the responsibility of accreditation, and IITs and IIMs have been asked about it... So that more and more institutions can be accredited," he added.

The Union Minister said ranking and rating of education institutions increase competitiveness among them for better performance.

"Today, because of the National Institutional Ranking Framework, every institute has constituted an internal committee to improve their ranking. Students also take into account the institution's ranking before taking admission," he said.

"Graded autonomy is another major step by the Government to boost quality education in the country. Universities will remain within the ambit of the UGC but will have the freedom to start new courses, off campus centres, skill development courses, research parks and any other new academic programmes.

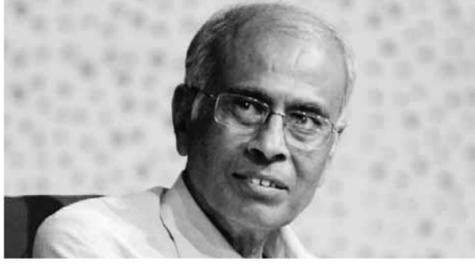
"They will also have the freedom to hire foreign faculty, enrol foreign students, give incentive-based emoluments to the faculty, enter academic collaborations and run open distance learning programmes," he added. *PTI*

NARENDRA DABHOLKAR MURDER CASE

CBI fails to file chargesheet

3 accused get bail

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



In a sad commentary on the functioning of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), a Pune court on Friday granted bail to the three accused in the Narendra Dabholkar murder case, after the CBI failed to file a supplementary chargesheet in the case within the stipulated 90 days.

Pune's First Class Judicial Magistrate SMA Sayyed granted a day after they moved the court for bail on the ground that the CBI had not sought additional time from the court to file the supplementary charge-sheet under section 43 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

Kale, Bangera and Degvekar are also accused in the journalist Gauri Lankesh murder case. The CBI had arrested Bangera and Degvekar on September 1, while Kale was arrested on September 3. The

CBI had in the first week of September obtained the custody of Kale, Bangera and Degvekar from the Karnataka's Special Investigation Team (SIT) investigating their links with the Dabholkar murder case.

The contention of the three accused was that neither the chargesheet was filed under IPC nor did the CBI seek additional time from the court to file the supplementary charge-sheet under UAPA.

At Friday's hearing, a request was made on behalf of the CBI that the probe agency be given time till December 20 to file the chargesheet on the ground that its officials were pre-occupied with some other work in Delhi, the CBI. However, Magistrate Sayyed rejected the CBI's request on the ground that it should have filed the chargesheet on Wednesday when the 90-day deadline expired.

However, there have been

many occasions in the past when the Bombay High Court had pulled up the CBI for the inordinate delay in completing investigations in the Narendra Dabholkar murder case.

The Supreme Court had said on Tuesday that if there was a "common thread" among the murders of social activists Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare, journalist Gauri Lankesh and rationalist M M Kalburgi, then one agency could investigate all the four cases.

Sixty nine-year-old anti-superstition campaigner Dabholkar was shot dead him from a point blank range by two motor-bicycle riding gunmen — aged between 25 and 30 years, while he was taking a morning walk on the Omkareshwar bridge located in the heart of Pune, on August 20, 2013.

Gauri Lankesh (55) was shot gunned down outside her Bengaluru residence on

September 5, 2017. She was the editor in Lankesh Patrike, a Kannada weekly started by her late father P. Lankesh. After Lankesh's death, Gauri used to her own weekly called Gauri Lankesh Patrike.

With the State police having failed to make any headway in the investigations into the Dabholkar murder case, the Bombay High Court had transferred the case to the CBI on May 9, 2014, after overruling the objections raised by the Maharashtra Government. The CBI had registered a case on June 2, 2014, on the high court's orders.

It was the Karnataka SIT that arrested Kale, Bangera and Degvekar first in connection with the Dabholkar murder case. The CBI, which is helped by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) in the investigations, has a strong reason to believe that the same pistol was used by the miscreants in killing both Dabholkar and Gauri Lankesh.

While Kale is former Pune unit convener of Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, an affiliate outfit of Sanathan Sanstha, Digvekar was a promoter of Sanatan Sanstha's publication the Sanatan Prabhat. Bangera allegedly trained two sharpshooters Sachin Andhure and Sharad Kalaskar in handling the pistol.

Congress planning to go it alone in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal unit of the Congress Party is planning to contest single handedly in the next year's Lok Sabha elections, party insiders say.

The Pradesh Congress leadership has been given a clear mandate by the Central leadership to take a decision on its system of alliances, sources said. The decision is the fallout of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's prior announcement to go it alone in the general elections.

"Our workers are being attacked and killed and their houses and properties looted every day by the Trinamool Congress people. They are being framed in false cases. So the Congress plans to take on the Trinamool on its own strength," PCC president Somen Mitra said.

Insiders however said its public posturing apart, the PCC still might wait for a "respectable offer" from the Trinamool without which the party will go it alone in the elections.

The PCC is divided in three groups. The first group led by former PCC president Adhir Chowdhury and State Opposition Leader Abdul Mannan who want an alliance with the Left Front. The second



group led by the likes of Subhankar Chakrabarty, AH Khan Chowdhury feel the Congress has no chances of winning without support from the Trinamool. The third groups led by the likes of MP Pradip Bhattacharya want to go it alone.

Mitra a veteran party leader of 1960s and 70s has asked the lower rung leaders to reach out to the people and strengthen the organisation "where we have a bigger presence." The Congress currently has four MPs in Bengal. While two seats are from Murshidabad the two others are from Malda district.

However the party alleges

that its organisational base has been "gobbled up by the Trinamool Congress which has either by muscle power or by lure of money forced a large number of our local workers to join their side."

Mitra said "we will have to rebuild our organisation in many places. The victories in Rajasthan, MP and Chhattisgarh shows that we still can do it even in Bengal. If we start working from now then we can definitely challenge the TMC."

On whether the party will still go with the Trinamool if they offer a respectable alliance, he said "they have not approached us, neither we will go to them begging for seats."

Kumar Vishwas may join BJP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Rae Bareilly, the parliamentary constituency of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson Sonia Gandhi, on December 16 could throw some surprises as there is a possibility that rebel Aam Admi Party (AAP) leader and poet Kumar Vishwas may join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in his presence.

Though sources close to the poet denied such a move, and there is a tradition that no politics is involved during the Prime Minister's function, sources in the BJP confirmed in Lucknow on Friday that there is a strong possibility of Kumar Vishwas joining the party.

"There is a surprise for you. Wait till Sunday," a senior BJP leader said. In 2014, Kumar Vishwas contested the Lok Sabha election from Amethi constituency on AAP ticket and in 2019 he could be the BJP candidate in place of Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani.

But sources in the BJP claimed that Vishwas could be shifted to contest against Sonia Gandhi, while Irani could contest against Rahul Gandhi from Amethi again.



Govt. of Bihar

Department of Science and Technology
Muzaffarpur Institute of Technology, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India. Pin - 842003

1. NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
(Through e-Procurement mode only over <https://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in>)

Tender Notice No:02/2018-19/DSI/MIT-M-150 Date: 08-12-2018

E-tenders are invited for Muzaffarpur Institute of Technology under two bid systems from reputed organizations/companies by this Department for Procurement of Machine & Equipment, furniture etc. for Mechanical, Pharmacy & Super I-way Lab, Conference Room & Library and publisher/distributors/registered suppliers for Books for the Library at MIT Muzaffarpur.

Sl. No.	Scope of work	Cost of tender document (In Rupees) (inclusive of GST @18.00%) to be paid through e-payment mode (i.e. NEFT/RTGS/Credit Card/Debit card)	Tender processing Fee (Non Refundable) (inclusive of GST @18.00%) to be paid through e-payment mode (i.e. NEFT/RTGS/Credit Card/Debit card)	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees) Refundable
01.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Machinery and equipment of Advanced Manufacturing Practice Lab under Mechanical Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000.00	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 20,000.00
02.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Tribology Lab under Mechanical Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000.00	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 14,000.00
03.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Computational Fluid flow Lab & Computational Heat Transfer Lab (computer based) under Mechanical Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 1,00,000.00
04.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Super I-way Lab at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 40,000.00
05.	Supply of Books for MTech&BTech for Library at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 40,000.00
06.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Pharmacology Lab of Pharmacy Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 9,500.00
07.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Pharmacognosy Lab of Pharmacy Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 23,500
08.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Pharmaceutical Chemistry Lab of Pharmacy Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 19,500
09.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Pharmaceutics Lab of Pharmacy Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 18,500
10.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Pharmaceutical Biotechnology Lab of Pharmacy Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 23,000
11.	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Training & Maintenance of Central Instrumentation Lab of Pharmacy Department at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 50,000
12.	Supply of Chair for library from standard company like Godrej, Promark etc.	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 2,200
13.	Supply of revolving chair, visitor chair, office able, office chair, conference table and conference mic system for conference room at MIT Muzaffarpur	Rs. 1000	Rs. 1,180	Rs. 41,500

1. The DD of earnest money shall be in favour of Principal, Muzaffarpur Institute of Technology, Muzaffarpur payable at Muzaffarpur.

2. In case any package is not approved by purchase committee, the cost of tender document fee & tender processing fee will not be refunded. Only earnest money is refundable.

3. The rate should be quoted for the entire package, but the bidder is supposed to quote the cost of each item of the package also. The comparison will be based on the total price of package only. If the rate of any item in any package is missing, then the tender will not be considered for comparison of that particular package.

4. Bidder can apply even for one package.

The details of specification & other information of each package is available on www.eproc.bihar.gov.in & www.mitmuzaffarpur.org and can be downloaded from 25/12/2018. The last date of receiving the tender is 15/01/2019. The tender can be sent by Registered post/speed post/courier only. The tender by hand will not be accepted.

For further details please visit website www.prdbihar.gov.in

Principal
MIT Muzaffarpur
PR. No. 13243 (Sci. & Tech.) 2018-19
आओ सब मिलकर बात करें, बंद हो दहेज, शुरुआत करें।

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that a unknown dead body of male, Age about 02 years, Height 1'6", Wearing Green colour T-shirt and yellow colour nikkar was found dead at Haiderpur Canal, Delhi on 26.08.18. In this regard a vide DD No. 10-A dated 26.08.18 has been lodged at PS K.N. Katju Marg, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this dead body may kindly inform to the undersigned.

SHO
PS: K.N. Katju Marg, Delhi
Ph.: 27571762, 27571153

DP/2379/RD/18

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is here by informed that an unidentified person (depicted in the photo) name: **Unknown**, residence and family: **Unknown** about 30 years of age was found dead in front of Shamshan Ghat, Sector-3, Rohini Delhi on 09.12.2018. In this regard a FIR/DD No. 57-A dated 09.12.2018 has been registered at Police Station South Rohini, Delhi.

His physical description is as under:-
Sex: Male, Age: 30 years, Height: 5'3" ft., ID Mark : Tattoo Mark on right hand, Wearing: Gray & white colour Jersey & Green colour pant.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or Telephone Numbers.

SHO
P.S. South Rohini, Delhi
Ph. No. - 011-27512189
Mob. No. - 8750870331

DP/2377/RD/18

UJVN Limited
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135-2763808, Fax No.: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UP2001SGC025866. Website: www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com

Tender Notice

The office of Executive Engineer (E&M), Joshiyara Barrage Joshiyara (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tenders from interested firms for following work/supply:

NIT No. - 14/EE (E&M)/BARRAGE/18-19: Supply, Installation, Testing and commissioning of LT Control Panel and other work at substation of Joshiyara Barrage MB-II Uttarkashi.

Estimated Cost : Rs. 21,11,200/- Only (GST Extra)
Earnest Money : Rs. 64000/- Only
Tender document Fee : Rs. 1180/- Only.
Last date of downloading the tender : 07.01.2019
Last date of submitting the tender : 08.01.2019 upto 15:30 Hrs.
Due date for opening the tender : 11.01.2019 at 11:00 Hrs.
For eligibility criteria and fuller & further details kindly visit our website www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com. Bidders are advised to regularly visit our website for further details, subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc.

Executive Engineer
733/UJVNL/Adv/L Dated 14-12-2018 "Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

Appeal for Identification

General public is hereby informed that one male dead body of Name: **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 55 years Approx., Height: 5'5", Complexion: Shallow, Sex: Male, Wearing: Navy Blue Guard Dress**, was found dead on 07.11.2018, Place of Recovery: Near Badli Metro Station Opp. Suraj Park Jhuggi, Delhi. In this regard FIR/DD No. 70-A, has been lodged at PS Samaipur Badli, Delhi, on 07.11.2018. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

SHO
PS Samaipur Badli, Delhi
Ph.: 011- 27854757

DP/2378/RD/18

Private Medical Colleges in TN come under court scanner for lack of facilities

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A Madras High Court order delivered on Thursday asking the Tamil Nadu Government to shift 150 MBBS students from a private medical college in Kancheepuram to Government run medical colleges exposed the rot that has set in the medical education system, at least in the State.

Justice T Raja, while disposing a series of petitions filed by the students of Ponnaiyah Ramajayam Institute of Medical Sciences (PRIMS) complaining about the lack of infrastructure in the college asked the Tamil Nadu Government to shift the 150 students from the college to the 22 Government-run medical colleges in the State.

This is not the first time the Madras High Court is issuing an order like this. The year 2017 saw the court ordering the shifting of 144 students from Annai Medical College and Hospital to government-run medical colleges. Dr C V Krishnaswamy, highly respected medical doctor in Tamil Nadu told The Pioneer that the regulatory mechanism in the

State need to be beefed up to save the students from fly-by-night operators. "Most of the private colleges have found to be wanting when it comes to infrastructure facilities and qualified teachers," said Dr Krishnaswamy.

Though the PRIMS did not meet the mandatory requirements, the college authorities managed to get the essentiality certificate from the State government in August 2014 which authorised the institution to admit 150 students every year to the MBBS course. But the Medical Council of India opposed the move by the Tamil Nadu government to issue essentiality certificate and Letter of Permission pointing out that PRIMS had many short comings. This included shortage of outpatients, low bed occupancy and non-availability of blood bank.

But the College authorities managed to get the permission based on a Supreme Court verdict based on the report submitted by the Oversight Committee. The Central Government issued the Letter of Permission in August 2016 which allowed the intake of students from the academic year

2016-17. But the students faced number of problems in the college from day one onwards because of shortcomings in infrastructure.

Dr GR Raveendranath, general secretary, Doctors Association for Social Equality (DASE), said the court orders were reflective of the inefficiency and corruption prevailing in the sector. "It is all because of the essentiality certificate issued by the State Government that the PRIMS could commence MBBS course. The fact that an essentiality certificate was issued to an institution which does not meet the mandatory requirements itself has to be probed comprehensively," said Dr Raveendranath.

He also pointed out that admitting students from private medical colleges to government run colleges was counter productive in all respects. "The government-run colleges have already filled the classes with students. There is a student-teacher ratio as well as other limitations in the government colleges. Admitting students midway in the course cause lot of hardship to other students and teachers," said Raveendranath.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed cover tender is invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Governor of Tripura from the bonafide contractors of Tripura for construction of maintenance of the SP (EB) office building no.2 at A.D. Nagar, Agartala.

2. A copy of Tender Notice may be obtained at free of cost from the Office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours up to 1300 hours from 06-12-2018 to 30-12-2018. The closing time/date of the tender is 1300 hours on 30-12-2018.

3. Detailed Tender Notice and terms & conditions may also be seen at following web site:- www.tripurapolicen.nic.in www.tripura.nic.in

Sd/-
(Manik Das. TPS.)
Superintendent of Police (EB)
ICA/C-1933/18
Tripura : Agartala

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN UNANI MEDICINE
(Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India)
61-65, Institutional Area, Opp. D-Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110 058

Walk-in-Interview

Eligible candidates are invited for a walk-in-interview for engagement to the contractual post of **Consultant (Budget)**, on 27.12.2018 at 11.00 A.M., at CCRUM, 5th floor, 61-65, Institutional Area, Opp. D Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi.

1. Full details of the post, eligibility conditions, age limit, remuneration etc. are available on the website of the Council, i.e. ccrum.res.in.

2. The eligibility of the candidates will be determined as on the date of advertisement.

3. The requirement is purely for a short duration and engagement shall be initially for a period of six months.

4. Eligible applicants should come with the Curriculum Vitae in the prescribed format, which can be downloaded from the website of the Council i.e. ccrum.res.in. They should also bring valid identity proof and original educational/professional qualification certificates, experience certificate(s) with a set of photocopies and two recent passport size photographs.

- Sd/-
Assistant Director (Admn.)
for and on behalf of Director General, CCRUM

Bulandshahr violence STF seeks Nepal police help to nab prime accused

Lucknow: Sleuths of the Special Task Force have sought the help of Nepal police to arrest prime accused in Bulandshahr violence and Bajrang Dal's city chief Yogesh Raj.

The violence which erupted in Bulandshahr on December 3 claimed the lives of the Inspector of Syana police station and a local youth.

"We have inputs that to avert his arrest, Raj has fled to Nepal. We are in contact with our Nepalese counterparts and are trying to drop the net on the mastermind of Bulandshahr violence," said a senior STF officer posted in west UP.

On Thursday night, the STF team arrested another accused, identified as Saurabh Payal, from Bulandshahr. He was produced in a local court on Friday morning and the court sent him to jail. Earlier, the probe agencies had arrested armyman Jitendra Malik aka Jeetu Fauji in connection with the Bulandshahr violence. Later, a hunt was launched for arresting some aides of the armyman who were at the scene on the fateful day.

Interestingly, all accused named in the FIR and with safe-front links have been freely uploading videos on social sites and giving interviews, pleading their innocence, but the law enforcers have preferred to look the other way.

Former Minister leaves 'sinking ship' AIADMK

...and lands on DMK's safe shores

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

With former Minister Senthil Balaji joining the DMK on Friday, the process of disintegration of the AIADMK has reached the full steam. Hundreds of his followers too accompanied Balaji in his journey from Karur to Chennai and then to the DMK headquarters at Mount Road in the metro. Balaji and his followers were welcomed into the DMK by party chief MK Stalin. It was a home coming for Senthil Balaji who had left the DMK in 2000 to join the AIADMK and was elected thrice to the Legislative Assembly in the party ticket.



Former Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthil Balaji joins DMK in the presence of party president MK Stalin, at the party headquarters in Chennai on Friday. PTI

AIADMK launched by VK Sasikala (aide to late J Jayalalithaa) wished Senthil Balaji as the best in his new innings in the DMK. "I don't know why he decided to leave us. If he had any genuine problems and had told us about it, we could have sorted it out," said Dr V Mythreyan, MP and senior leader of the AIADMK said there is no possibility of his party's merger with the Dhinakaran faction. "O Panneerselvam, our convener, has made it clear that there is no question of aligning with the Sasikala family dominated party and the subject ends there," Mythreyan said. This puts to rest at least for the time being, reports about the possibilities of merger between the rival factions which were being highlighted by the local media.

charismatic leader who could match the calibre of Jayalalithaa to pull it through the troubled times. I am not sure about the capabilities of Dhinakaran," said Satyamurthy. He also said Senthil Balaji joining the DMK is also media hype. "You wait for a couple of weeks and see what happens to him and Dhinakaran. Tamil Nadu politics is getting churned," he said. Dr V Mythreyan, MP and senior leader of the AIADMK said there is no possibility of his party's merger with the Dhinakaran faction. "O Panneerselvam, our convener, has made it clear that there is no question of aligning with the Sasikala family dominated party and the subject ends there," Mythreyan said. This puts to rest at least for the time being, reports about the possibilities of merger between the rival factions which were being highlighted by the local media.

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Yogi asks Rahul to apologise for Rafale lies

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hitting out at the Congress president, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Rahul Gandhi told lies about the Rafale fighter aircraft deal and he should apologise to the people and defence personnel for spreading canards to get political mileage. "The oldest political party of the country has failed to perform its duty. It has threatened the nation's security and integrity by questioning the Rafale deal which was initiated by their government but was later shelved as they could not

find any middleman like (Ottavio) Quattrocchi or (Christian) Michel," the Chief Minister said while speaking to news persons in Lucknow on Friday. Yogi was reacting to a Supreme Court judgement in which a three-member bench gave a clean chit to the Rafale deal. The judgement came as a shot in the arm for the sagging morale of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which promptly used the verdict as a hammer to beat the Congress. The Chief Minister also asked the Congress why its government delayed the Rafale

deal during its tenure from 2007 to 2014. "Was the party in power searching for brokers like they did during the previous defence deals?" Yogi asked in an oblique reference to the Bofors deal. Yogi said that Rahul Gandhi should also disclose the source of his information on Rafale deal as it seemed that his statement against the government was an attempt to weaken the country's security. "The statements made by the Congress chief were more alarming as neighbouring countries are equipped with the latest aircraft and other defence

technology," he said. The Chief Minister also suggested to the judiciary not to entertain frivolous public interest petitions (PILs) which could affect the security and integrity of the country. "This is a fact that these PILs were filed just to reap political mileage and defame the government. The court should take strict action against such PILs," he said. Yogi welcomed the decision of the SC in rejecting all petitions filed against the Rafale aircraft deal and claimed that the judiciary's verdict was a clear indication that nothing



was wrong in the deal. "The SC judgement has exposed the false propaganda of the Congress. The grand old party defamed the Central government and the BJP merely for political reasons," Yogi said.



Congress party workers celebrate after the party named Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot for Rajasthan Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister's posts respectively, in Ajmer, on Friday. PTI

J&K becomes 1st State to have law banning 'sextortion'

PTI ■ JAMMU

Jammu & Kashmir has become the first State in the country to have a law banning sexual exploitation of women by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant. The State Administrative Council (SAC) under the chairmanship of Governor Satya Pal Malik on Friday approved the 'Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018' and the 'Jammu & Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018', an official spokesman said. The Jammu & Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 seeks to amend the Ranbir Penal Code, whereby specific offence under section 354 E is being inserted to provide for the offence of 'sextortion', he said.

Student dies during tug of war game in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a freak mishap, a 22-year-old college student collapsed and died during a tug of war game at Somaiya College at Vidya Vihar in north-east Mumbai late on Thursday evening.

A resident of Thane city, Jibbin Sunny was leading one of the two teams in the tug of war game when the incident took place.

The tournament had been organised as part of the college's annual sports day.

The video footage of the mishap, which went viral on Friday, showed that Sunny collapsed after he put the rope around his neck and pulled it with more power.

Sunny was rushed to the nearby Rajawadi Hospital where he died during treatment.

While the cause of death was not immediately known, Sunny's body has been sent for post-mortem.

This is perhaps the first death that taken place in the metropolis during a tug of war game.

JD(U) not in favour of Ordinance for Ram temple: RCP Singh

PTI ■ PATNA

Key NDA constituent JD(U) on Friday made it clear that it was not in favor of promulgation of an ordinance to facilitate the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, demand for which has been made by the sangh parivar and a section of the BJP.

JD(U) national general secretary Ram Chandra Prasad Singh said the party will stick to its earlier stand it had taken on the issue in its earlier avatar as the Samata Party which was — the issue either be solved by mutual consent between the affected communities or decided by a court of law.

There should be no confusion in the minds of the people with regard to our stand on Ram temple issue at Ayodhya. If an ordinance is promulgated to facilitate construction of the temple, our party will not support it, he said.

"Since the Samata Party days, we have been in favour of a resolution of the dispute by mutual consent or through a court order. We brook no third alternative," Singh, who is also the party's leader in the Rajya Sabha and a confidant of Chief

Minister Nitish Kumar told reporters here.

Even before walking out of the NDA in 2013, the JD(U) had always insisted that abrogating Article 370, Ram temple in Ayodhya and Uniform Civil Code should be kept out of the coalition agenda. JD(U), headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, is running a coalition government with the BJP in Bihar.

BJP-called shutdown derails Kerala

IANAS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Called-to-dusk shutdown derailed by the BJP to protest against the death of a man said to be a Sabarimala devotee derailed Kerala on Friday, sparking widespread anger over the disruption to normal life.

The 50-year-old Venugopalan Nair set himself on fire at a BJP protest venue on Thursday and succumbed to his injuries in a hospital here.

But in his dying declaration, he made no mention of the Sabarimala temple.

Before being taken to the public crematorium, his body was brought to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) protest venue where party leaders paid their last respect.

But the rationale for calling the shutdown came under fire from the ruling CPI-M, Congress, business groups as well as the man on the street.

Annual rejuvenation camp for TN temple elephants begins

PTI ■ COIMBATORE

The 11th edition of annual rejuvenation camp for temple elephants in Tamil Nadu began at Thekkampatti on the banks of Bhavani River on Friday.

State Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Minister Sevoor S Ramachandran inaugurated the camp along with forest minister Dindigul Serinivasan and Municipal Administration Minister S P Velumani.

Ramachandran said 27 elephants from various temples and mutts had been brought for participation in the 48-day camp, a pet project of late Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.

Adequate medical care will be provided to the elephants at the camp, with special veterinarian teams, he said adding nutritious food with special diet would be given.

Meanwhile, about 40 farmers of surrounding 23 villages attempted to stage a picketing of the road near the venue, opposing the camp at the location, claiming threat to the people and crops by wild elephants which stray into their area in view of the presence of temple jumbos.

Hope BJP also wait for SC's Babri Masjid verdict: Mehbooba

Mumbai: On a day the Supreme Court dismissed pleas challenging the Rafale deal, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said the BJP should also wait for the apex court's verdict on the Babri Masjid issue.

In a relief to the Modi Government, the Supreme Court on Friday dismissed the pleas challenging the deal between India and France for procurement of 36 Rafale jets saying there was no occasion to "really doubt the decision mak-

ing process" warranting setting aside of the contract.

"Like the Rafale decision was welcomed, I hope they (the BJP) will wait for the decision (of Supreme Court) on Babri Masjid as well and won't start pointing fingers at the SC. We have an institution which is highly respected," Mehbooba said.

She was replying to questions at an event held by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF).

The Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has been demanding an ordinance or a law to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya at the earliest. It had also criticised the Supreme Court's decision to defer the hearing in the land dispute case, saying it "hurt" Hindu sentiments.

Several Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders have also supported RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's push for the law to enable the construction of Ram temple.

Lingayat politics back to haunt Kumaraswamy

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

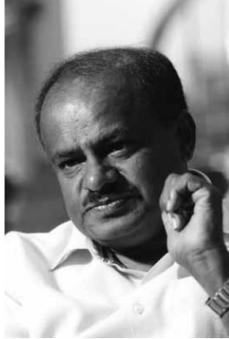
The decision of Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy and coalition partner Congress to appoint Pratap Chandra Shetty, a Congress leader from coastal Karnataka as Chairman of the Legislative Council (upper House) has made both the JD(S) and the Congress leaders fuming against the decision of the Chief Minister.

The decision has upset the former pro tem chairman of the council (of the JD(S)) Basavaraja Horatti and the Congress leader SR Patil (who was Siddaramaiah's candidate) both Lingayat leaders have openly criticised the Congress and the JD(S). Along with it another powerful Lingayat leader from north Karnataka and former water resource Minister MB Patil also directly hit at Kumaraswamy and many say this might help BJP

to consolidate in favour of the party which is playing Lingayat card successfully in many elections. The Lingayat drama unfolded in the ongoing Winter Session of the Assembly where Kumaraswamy is facing the heat both inside and the outside. Sugarcane farmers are protesting and pressuring for the MSP and also to get the dues cleared.

The Lingayats are a powerful community which constitute over 19 per cent of the state population. The BJP has been polarising Lingayat votes keeping its strongman from the same community BS Yeddyurappa and this might help them to work out a strategy in the ensuing 2019 general elections.

Even though the Congress victory in the Hindi heartland has given ammunition to the coalition partners, the century old party has failed to douse the fire. In another political devel-



opment Siddaramaiah who is the chairman of the coordination committee of the coalition Government has cut short his foreign visit and back in Bengaluru to handle the changing political developments. Many Congress MLAs are waiting for the December 22 for the Cabinet expansion. According to sources after the

victory in MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh the party may not expand the Cabinet which might lead to more dissent in the party.

The State Governments acceptance on the floor of the house that only 800 farmers have benefited from the ₹49,000 crore farm loan waiver till now has given ammunition to the BJP and also dissidents within the coalition partners.

A senior Congress leader said "the party which extended support to JDs to form the government has ignored the Lingayat leaders in the party who were involved in the movement for a separate and minority religion tag to the community. The Centre also rejected their demand and the leaders who led the movement are left in a lurch in process".

Soon after stepping down as the pro-tem chairman of the legislative council, Basavaraja Horatti, blamed his leader

Kumaraswamy and asked him not become a rubber stamp.

He said, "I want to tell my leader and Chief Minister Kumaraswamy not to end up as a mere rubber stamp of the Congress. My party asked me to file the nomination but after we realised that the Congress was fielding its candidate, we backed out to save the coalition from embarrassment," he added.

He said, "The Congress drove a hard bargain for the portfolios during the cabinet formation. They had then demanded the speaker's post while agreeing to give the chairman's post to the JD(S). But now, they have unilaterally decided to stake claim to the council top post. Can you run a coalition without rules?"

Former water resources minister MB Patil of the Congress has questioned the Government on North-South disparity when it comes to allocation of prime positions by

the Congress is miffed with the party over not being given a Cabinet berth. He said "more number of Congress legislators (41) had been elected from north Karnataka, but only five of them had been made ministers. In contrast, 36 legislators have been elected from South Karnataka, but nine of them have been made ministers".

"All the prime portfolios like Home, Water Resources, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj have gone to legislators from South Karnataka. Important positions like Deputy Chief Minister, Speaker of the Assembly, Chairman of the Council too have gone to legislators from the South" he added.

He said he will be writing a letter to Congress president Rahul Gandhi regarding this. "This disparity should go and the imbalance should be set right. The post of chairman should have gone to SR Patil," he added.

SOUTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
 OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (E&M)-II,
 LODHI ROAD AUTO WORKSHOP, UNDER SEWA NEGER FLY OVER NEW DELHI-110003
 E-mail: ee-auto2-sdmc@mcd.gov.in, Telephone Number-011-24620140
PRESS SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
 The Ex. Engineer (E&M)-II, invites tenders on behalf of Commissioner SDMC through online item rate tenders on the website https://www.tenderwizard.com/SOUTHDMCETENDER from the reputed and eligible contractors in two part bidding system i.e. Technical bid and Price bid as per schedule given below:
 Issue of Tender document form : 14.12.18 at 04:30PM, Tender Closing of bid : 20.12.18 at 11:00 AM, Opening of Technical bid : 20.12.18 at 11:30 AM, Opening of Financial bid : 20.12.18 at 01:00 PM, S.No. 1, Name of Work: Engagement of 35 nos. drivers for a period of 03 month for operation of water tankers under SDMC. Head of a/c: F-100-1064, Tender Amt.: 2387609, EMD: 48000, Tender Cost: 500, Time of Compl.: 90 days, Rate hold good for: 120 days, Rate: IR, Other detailed terms and conditions can be seen on the website https://www.tenderwizard.com/SOUTHDMCETENDER
 RO No.142/DPI/S/2018-19 EE (E&M)-II, SDMC

Uttar Haryana Biji Vitran Nigam
 Office of the Chief Engineer/ I/M, Shakti Bhawan, Sector-6, Panchkula
 Tel.: 2561931-39, 2560438 Fax: 0172-2566404
 Regd. & Corp. Offices: C-16 Vidyalay Sector-6, Panchkula Haryana
 Ph. No. 0172-3019133 Fax: 0172-3019119 Web Site: www.uhbvn.org
 CIN No. U40109HR1999SGG034166 E-Mail: cgmnuhbvn@gmail.com
Corrigendum-IV
 Notice Invited Tender No. 227/UHMM/ENP/IV/MM/QH/1990 DATED: 25-09-2018
 Extension in due dates against tender enquiry No. QH-IV/1990 for procurement of GI Wire 8 SWG (4mm) are notified for information of all concerned.

Sr. No.	Particulars	Date and Time
1	Bid Preparation & Submission (Bidder Stage)	27-12-2018 at 13:00 Hrs.
2	Date & Time of opening of Technical Bids	27-12-2018 at 15:00 Hrs.

 All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.
 Detailed information can also be obtained from website
 https://haryanaprocmnt.gov.in and www.uhbvn.org/portal/tenders.
 RO NO. 74154 Dt. 14-12-2018

ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
 OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MAINTENANCE NORTH DIVISION, NEW DELHI
 e-procurement Tender Notice
 Tender I.D. No. : 2018 NDMC 163702 1
 Name of work : Hiring of two vehicles for break-downs/maintenance works in 11 KV Maintenance North Division (Elect.) for the period of one year.
 Estimated Cost : Rs. 14,52,384/- (Rupees Fourteen Lac Fifty Two Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Four Only)
 Earnest Money : Rs. 29,048/-
 Date of release of tender through e-procurement solution : 13.12.2018
 Last date/time for receipt of tenders through e-procurement solution : 26.12.2018 at 3:30 PM
 Date/Time for opening of bid through e-procurement solution : 26.12.2018 at 4:00 PM
 Further details can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in
 Note :- To participate in e-tender in NDMC registration with E-tendering system of government of NCT of Delhi is mandatory. Sd/- EE (E) /M/N

noida New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
 Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)
 Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com
E-TENDER NOTICE
 E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & http://etender.up.nic.in. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.
A (1) 121/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/2018-19 Water Supply Scheme for Sector-78 (Electric Power Connection for UGR & Tube Wells), Noida. Cost 58.45 Lacs. **(2) 125/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/2018-19** Water Supply Scheme for Sector-74, Noida. (P/L Distribution Supply Line) Cost Rs. 68.20 Lacs. **(3) 127/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/2018-19** Strengthening of Water Supply (Reboring of Tube Well No.-5/56 & 6/56), Noida. (Erection of New Boring, S/F Pumping Plant, Making Foundation, Chain Pulley Stand & Connection for Tube Well). Cost 48.57 Lacs. The above tenders can be uploaded by date 28.12.2018 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 31.12.2018 at 11.00 AM.
(BABU RAM) SENIOR MANAGER (JAL)-I NOIDA
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

The Rafale soars

The Supreme Court's putting down of the allegations on the jet deal is welcome news for the Modi Government



Before a bench headed by the Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, pronounced their judgement on whether further investigations were necessary on the Rafale case, both sides — the ruling BJP and the rabble-rousers who have been hammering on about this case egged on by Rahul Gandhi himself — were prepared for a very different judgement. Some in the ruling dispensation had steeled themselves for an unfavourable judgement. The expectation of a Court-monitored Special Investigative Team (SIT) kept all of Narendra Modi's detractors happy. After all, the opposition seems to have pinned down a strategy of painting Modi as corrupt, both financially and morally. So much so that when the judgement was read out, emotions went in completely opposite directions. The BJP deflated after the recent state poll results where there is no doubt that the Rafale deal played a part, got a booster shot when the expected prognosis was worse. The Congress and its army of rabble-rousers were shocked into silence in social media, and this was not even a Chief Justice about whom they could spread insinuations like they did with the recently retired Justice Dipak Misra. All they could do was latch on to the court's observation that the CAG report on Rafale was given to the Parliament's Public Account Committee, which they claimed was not true.

But the happiest people today ought to be the strategists in the Defence Ministry and the officers and men of the Indian Air Force. With the Rafale deal now certified by the Supreme Court, there is no doubt that the first of the planes manufactured in France will land in India in late 2019. It was as if in anticipation of the verdict that Dassault, the manufacturers of the fighter jet, released a picture of the first plane to be delivered to India undergoing flight testing off the French Atlantic coast. However with India's frontline fighter fleet severely depleted and still depending on 30 to 40-year-old jets, the approval of this deal will not change the situation dramatically on the frontlines. India needs to place a follow-up order to these 36 planes as soon as possible, and while the Defence Ministry has issued a Request for Information from global manufacturers for a 110-plane order, one hopes that does not descend into a horrible farce all over again. We are not only at risk for a technically-advanced and burgeoning People's Liberation Army Air Force but also at risk of losing pilots unnecessarily because they fly outdated jets older than themselves. One way to ensure this is that the government does take the opposition at least in confidence about the necessity of the deal and why the winning contender was selected. The need for new fighter jets for the Indian Air Force should trump politics, and so should be the need to develop a private sector military-industrial complex. The government should have been less arrogant and the Opposition should have resorted to less grandstanding on this issue. Now that everything has been resolved, we should bury the body of the Rafale scam and hope that its ghost stays six feet underground.

Generational conflict

Rahul Gandhi has a tough job in keeping both his CMs and his peers harmonised till 2019



Congress chief Rahul Gandhi may scream "united colours of Rajasthan" and claim the diversity of experience and youth, maturity and raw energy as an ideal detente of governance but will it rid the Congress' age-old malaise of infighting and undercutting? That's a question he has to answer as his young Turks are getting increasingly restless for relevance. Otherwise he may run the risk of being labelled an inheritor of dynastic fortunes seeking pliant courtiers rather than as a team-builder of equally aspirant and

capable men and women. Yes, a decisive mandate would have undoubtedly helped him but given the slim margins of victory in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, he had to do some bridge-building in consultation with his mother Sonia Gandhi. Truth be told, though he has handed over the throne to old loyalists, he will have to work out a suitable operable area for both Sachin Pilot and Jyotiraditya Scindia to feel needed and keep them invested enough for all the work they have put in towards resurgence of the party's fortunes. Scindia has even said that he will continue to serve the state as he has age and time on his side but both Gandhi and he know that prospect won't hold infinitely. Satisfying both peers frankly will be a tall order given that their activities should not in any way tread the egos of the senior Chief Ministers. Or else the inter-generational tussle could cost the party heavily before the 2019 polls, both in terms of governance and perception.

The new Congress Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Kamal Nath, has always been assessed in terms of his elitist associations and negotiating strategic worth with the central leadership so far. Having steered the party through difficult troughs before, he did manage to push the baseline voter grid in the state this time too and had bet big on stitching alliances with the BSP even before the verdict became sure. In fact, his younger partner Scindia was more cautious as Nath worked the ground and negotiated a way for himself through swift political management. But as one who has undoubtedly nurtured his home ground of Chhindwara, even touting his model of development there better than Modi's, he is yet to develop a pan-state appeal. In this respect, he falls far short of his predecessor Digvijay Singh, who had a keen eye on statistics of each district and knew people by name, and even BJP's Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who was a crowd favourite for 15 years. Scindia scores slightly better on image. Nath's biggest challenge now will be portfolio allocation, humoring the Scindia group enough and breaking through angry farmers who turned the tide.

For Rajasthan, Gandhi was under pincer attack with Pilot actually moving to the state from Delhi to develop the Congress vote base and Gehlot becoming one of the key floor managers in keeping the RSS and its affiliates at bay. And when all hope was lost, the latter did manage to script the Congress revival story in the Gujarat elections and is now party national general secretary in-charge of organisation. Besides, vote share charts show the BJP still remains a force to reckon with both inside the Assembly and outside. Managing legislative business, therefore, remains a task at hand for both governments. Which is why the old guard is needed to keep up the momentum for 2019. Gandhi can still toss the national challenge of rebuilding to these young leaders and can reward them if they do deliver selflessly at the hustings for long-term gains than claim a prize for a one-time job well-done. Can everybody put party first?

Get art out of the box

The Kochi biennale has pushed key frontiers in global dialogue, snapping the exclusionary stiffness of art fairs, where the plight of the dispossessed is merely a motif and not felt anguish



RINKU GHOSH

Young Ahalya from Kollam, who grew up in a pineapple farm, loved the fruit's colours so much that she decided to express herself through them and turned painter. As she filled up her canvas with intricate scenes of plantation life, replicating her hard-working parents' faces on the figures that peopled it, she surrounded them with hills and forests, nature in a flaming surge as it were, pushing the pylons of civilisation in a distant greyness. Her fellow artists have picked up a morbid rubble tossed up by the Kerala floods and strung them to a twisted spinal cord, which is straightening itself in a desperate lunge at survival. There's Pangrok Sulap from Malaysian Borneo, another artist born of the soil, dancing on a canvas spread taut on wood-cut blocks depicting farm life and issues, his happy feet imprinting his memories of them. All of them have stitched together their peasant origins and come together at the Kochi Muziris Biennale, which is unshackling art from the confines of rarefied thought and elitism to listen to the sub-terranean voices and helping them stake a claim in contemporary discourse.

If art biennales are meant to rearticulate the times, then the Kochi edition has clearly pushed key frontiers in global dialogue, snapping the exclusionary stiffness of art fairs and museums, where the plight of the dispossessed is merely the motif and not the felt anguish of those who go through it. As its curator, artist Anita Dube has attempted to explore "possibilities of a non-alienated world" and managed to address the elephant in the room, to create a safe public sphere where we can think freely, exchange ideas, ask questions of ourselves, have conversations and dialogue rather than ideological loud-mouthing and best of all provide a safe pedagogic haven where people do not feel threatened, judged or not qualified enough. In this respect, the Kochi biennale has fully given credence to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's argument for the need to create a social and cultural capital juxtaposed to the economic one. He had defined "cultural capital" as that which determined the "tastes" of society, which, if not wholesome and representative enough, can perpetuate a cycle of privilege instead of breaking it down. Museums and galleries may lend us access to all sorts of artwork that have emerged as an interpretation of history, context and archives but what of sensitive story-telling? Will it be a projection of an idea rather than a humane experience? The Kochi biennale hasn't talked down, it has allowed everyone to come in. Or as Dube described it, enfolded them in the "discursive frame of culture." Be it an attempt at post-colonial redemption by the West, the resolution of anxieties, the fluidity of identities, the retrieval of protest poetry from conflict zones, the reinstatement of women's



dues, like that of the selfless Malayali nurses, the cry for ecological justice, the siege of micro-cultures or the much-revered cow head turning into a fist of agrarian assertion, every voice has been respected and interpreted in concrete, tactile and visually explosive terms. For public engagement of art cannot happen unless it appeals to our sensorium. And till that is done, till art also becomes a source of pleasure, populism will continue to cede space to majoritarian monologues. Should that be easily handed over? Shouldn't populism be a happy prospect than be demised as a takeover tool of everybody's trade? In that sense, the Kochi biennale has already started the process of culture reclamation as a democratic nurturing of ideas, not a handed down rewriting of scripts. Muziris was an ancient port on the Malabar coast, our first point of globalisation over centuries as merchant ships plied the spice routes and broke down barriers for a confluence and assimilation of cultures. Perhaps this biennale rescued that ancient spirit and applied it to the current context. For Kerala, a State that was ravaged brutally by the floods barely a hundred days ago — 1.5 million people displaced and 200,000 lives lost — the biennale has been a huge palliative. Many had questioned if the Government should go through with this edition and not divert

the usual funds to the reconstruction process. But Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wanted to send out the message that Kerala is resilient and means business. The spinoff effects on the economy by way of tourism, services and infrastructure are for all to see. The laid-back Fort Kochi area is now a bustle, the waterways have emerged as transport corridors ferrying people from one island to another, the local youth have signed up as volunteers and most residents have opened up homestays and cafes. Warehouse owners, who do booming business in a port town, have let out spaces for three months to make way for installation artists. And abandoned houses are getting a new lease of life. More so, the people of Kochi, who have virtually owned this art event as their badge of pride through the past years, don't want to let go of it. Students and young people are toggling assignments and work to play hosts and coordinators. Thousands of carpenters are at work, helping erect structures and artworks, the caterers have never been busier, feeding visitors on the roadside and the auto wallahs have replaced the need for Google maps. The Chief Minister himself inaugurated the biennale, lending a heft to proceedings and insisting in his speech that the traumatised State indeed needed to heal itself through art. The biennale has done up drab

walls in hospitals and dressed up worn out facades with colourful murals to mask the darkness of pain. Over the years, organisers have reached out to schools and made entry free on certain days for the common people to access and embrace a different form of expression. This is the process by which an auto rickshaw driver like Bapi Das was inspired enough to embroider his thoughts on fabric, now on prominent display. Or a runaway like Vicky Roy, who grew up in a shelter home near the New Delhi Railway station and who was trained in a photography workshop, to reframe the urbane through his lens and awaken us to the trickle-down effects of societal statutes and policy-making. Like Ahalya, they were not empowered by birth, be it in terms of access to language or chance. They evolved on their own, organically and untutored. Kerala clearly isn't shedding a tear for itself. Of course, what's art without the political subtext? And there were plenty at the biennale posed against the visual epidemic of clichés on other media. At a time when the women artists' collective have articulated their brand of #MeToo in the Malayali film industry and faith debates on Sabarimala continue to hover over a woman's right to enter the shrine, the biennale has had its first woman curator and devoted more than 50 per cent of the

works to women artists. The Guerrilla Girls, who have been talking about sexism in the arts field through provocative slogans and street performances, have plastered the town with placards, asking questions about whether women are only good as models for artists and if gallery staff get respectable pay. Kashmiri artist Veer Munshi has recreated a Sufi shrine with lacquer coffins of the young, arguing for the middle path in dialogues and a return to civilisational contiguity that has been torn asunder by extremism. A young performance artist frisks entrants to peacefully demonstrate his angst of growing up behind the wired quarters. That speaks louder than the gun. In the end, art anywhere should be about the relational dynamic between the creator and the audience. Only then can it be a vibrant cultural asset and offset hierarchies set by economic and political structures. Or to borrow words from the Guerrilla Girls, "Don't let museums reduce art to a small number of artists who have won a popularity contest among big-time dealers, curators and collectors. If museums don't show art as diverse as the cultures they claim to represent, tell them they're not showing the history of art, they are just preserving the history of wealth and power." The sea winds have brought a whiff of life to Kochi. (The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

Farmer's loan waiver shouldn't be part of poll promises. It inhibits investment in the farm sector and puts pressure on the fiscal of States which undertake it.



Former RBI Governor —Raghuram Rajan

We have taken significant steps to build on India's status as the US' major defence partner, including elevating the country to strategic trade authorisation, tier one status.



Top US official —Alice Wells

Telling a compelling story is more important for me than winning an award. I do not believe in competition when it comes to art.



Norwegian filmmaker —Iram Haq

Every word you utter, every decision you make, every vote you cast, resonates deeply within the hearts of your people who have expectations from you.



Vice President —Venkiah Naidu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Politicising matters

Sir — Retired Lieutenant General DS Hooda, who was the former General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army's Northern Command in September 2016 when the surgical strikes took place, rightly spoke against the politicising of military operations. Surgical strikes were part of a necessary counter-offensive of the Army in retaliation to the Uri terror attack in which 19 Indian soldiers were killed by Pakistani terrorists.

Hooda said that it was natural to have initial euphoria about the success, but the constant maintenance of hype over military operations was unwarranted. Indeed, a constant political showcasing of a military strike can do a two-fold damage. First, a constant political chest-thumping for an Army operation can have adverse effects on our relations with neighbouring countries. Second, if it turns into political asset for one political party, it will send a wrong impression that the entire country is divided in terms of defence policy.

Sujit De Kolkata

Post-election rout, BJP has its task cut out

This refers to the editorial, "Rahul's day dawns" (December 12). Which way the political winds are currently blowing is not hard to see. Obviously, the election results in the so-called Hindi heartland represent a shot in the arm for the Congress and a setback for the BJP. Evidently, the impoverished masses, including the distressed farmers and the unemployed youth, have turned their back on the BJP for which they voted overwhelmingly in 2014 and demonstrated their strength to redraw the political landscape. It must be sobering for the BJP to realise that a party long on promises but short on performance cannot keep its support base for long. Voters in the Hindi belt disabused us of the BJP's invincibility and gave the Congress a new lease of life. The "Modi factor" could not help the party romp home even in its impregnable strongholds. Had the BJP won, it would have been wholly attributed to



Modi's enduring and soaring popularity. With no tangible vikas and acche din, Modi's case for another term is wearing a little thin. The Prime Minister now has a fight on his hands to contain the ripple effects of the party's defeats on the whole country and outdo a formidable mahagathbandhan.

G David Milton Maruthancode

Lessons in loss

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Rahul's day dawns" (December 12). The Assembly elections must prod the BJP to acknowledge the relevance of the much maligned dynasty of the Congress and that it is but a form of orchestrating individual strengths to optimise collective

results. The Indira Gandhi regime of imperious central diktats saw the party gradually losing cohesion at grass roots. Tall regional satraps could yet hold the party, but with the loss of Rajasekhara Reddy of Andhra Pradesh, the party plunged into decline. Clearly, the dynasty was effective so long as its president produced results. See what the lack of dynasty has done to the

AIADMK, whose faction fight is a textbook case for the Samajwadi Party.

Congress chief Rahul Gandhi seems to have learnt the lessons well. His persuasive style had the frontline leaders, be it Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, to put party needs above personal ambitions. His task now is to keep that esprit de corps going and showcase the same for the 2019 LS elections.

Meanwhile, the BJP too must ponder now that its centrally driven one-man party apparatus has proved fallible. Nor can the Prime Minister carry the sole onus of campaigning. The party needs many more shoulders and given its poor bench strength today, it is left with little time to promote fresh talent.

R Narayanan Navi Mumbai

Get ready for 2019

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Rahul's day dawns" (December 12). The BJP was, perhaps, too over-confident of winning the Hindi-speaking belt. But they lost because of empty promises. The results should be an eye-opener for the party. Rising problems, like farm and rural distress as also urban angst played a crucial role in the erosion of the BJP's support base. Understanding the problems faced by people will remain crucial to fight the next General election.

Jubel D'Cruz Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Quest for a future on our terms

Investing in children's growth will help advance their health and overall development. Doing so must be a priority so as to secure their future



POORNAM KHETRAPAL SINGH

Childhood is inarguably the most crucial stage of life. During this phase, brains develop, bodies grow, social skills are learnt and character is built. So important are the early stages of life that they can define a person's future, from the likelihood of a lifelong health to outcomes in cognitive and physical ability. This in turn affects the prospect of living a productive life and making a positive contribution to society. Accelerating region-wide health and development is, therefore, incumbent on investing in early childhood and ensuring each and every child gets the best start possible.

The potential to do so is clear. In recent years, WHO South-East Asia's member states have made dramatic progress in reducing child mortality. Between 1990 and 2017, for example, under-five mortality was slashed by 70 per cent. Neo-natal mortality declined by 60 per cent. Last year alone, 3.5 million more children under-five — including 1.3 million newborns — survived as compared to 1990, with almost all member states achieving the Millennium Development Goal on reducing child mortality. Commendably, four member states have already met the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target on under-five mortality. These outcomes are in keeping with the region's flagship priority of ending preventable maternal, new-born and child deaths.

As member states sustain this progress, the need to invest additional resources in early childhood development (ECD) must be grasped. At the same time as enhancing health equity, research shows that for every dollar spent on ECD, the return can be as high as 13 times, due in large part to ECD's capacity to help overcome the effects of stunting (which 37 per cent of children in the Region suffer), and other early childhood adversities that can cause poor development, mental health problems, obesity and heart disease among other conditions. Though enhancing ECD requires action across multiple areas of Government, including the education and nutrition sectors, the health sector has a crucial role to play, especially from conception to the age of three, which is the critical period for brain development. As outlined in the recently developed global framework on "Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development" in addition to the region's own strategic framework, there are several steps countries can take to advance ECD's game-changing potential and provide the responsive care needed.

First, high-level political leadership and buy-in must be secured. It is fundamental to ensure that impactful policies to advance ECD are devised and implemented at the grassroots, including at primary healthcare centres. It is also fundamental to ensure that the underprivileged or at-risk populations are prioritised. Importantly, adequate funding must be allocated to programmes aimed at enhancing ECD on a long-term basis. "Equity from the start" must be more than a mantra. Second, concerted efforts should be made to fortify and scale up interventions, starting from the antenatal period, as part of a broader focus on frontline care. Community health and nutrition workers are crucial to promoting ECD for providing ongoing health services for newborns and children, including necessary vaccines, monitoring weight and growth and providing appropriate care. As part of this, promotion of breastfeeding is vital. Breastfeeding is, after all, proven to provide the strongest foundation for lifelong health and optimal nutrition.

Third, families should be supported to boost ECD themselves. In the early years of life, parents and close family members are the best providers of nurturing care — through love, bonding and attachment, and stimulating their children through age-appropriate activities. Making families aware that communication for at least one hour a day has the power to shape a child's destiny should be a priority among policy-makers. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is working to promote these outcomes.

In addition to working with countries to implement the region's strategic framework, a WHO-organised meeting was held with parliamentarians from across the region in July to chart the path forward. That was followed by the Partners' Forum 2018 in New Delhi, which brought together 1,200 partners dedicated to implementing the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, including ECD, which is integral to the "thrive" objective outlined therein.

Region-wide, the quest to accelerate progress in ECD is growing stronger. It must be scaled up. ECD's capacity to revolutionise health and development in the space of just one birth cohort must be fully comprehended and leveraged by both high-level political leaders and citizens alike. Should this happen, the future will not only be ours, it will be every generation's to come.

(The writer is Regional Director, WHO South East Asia)

WE (CONGRESS) AGAIN CHALLENGE THE PRIME MINISTER FOR A JPC PROBE TO UNVEIL EVERY LAYER OF CORRUPTION IN THE RAFALE DEAL.

—CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON RANDEEP SURJEWALA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE TRUTH HAS ONLY ONE VERSION AND FALSEHOOD HAS MANY. THE SUPREME COURT VERDICT IS CONCLUSIVE AND LEAVES NO SCOPE OF ANY DOUBT.

—UNION MINISTER ARUN JAITLEY

State results: BJP downing BJP

The recent Assembly polls have given the party time to learn crucial lessons. Voters have sent a strong message that they know how to halt the juggernaut if leaders do not listen to them



VK BAHUGUNA

The results of the Assembly elections held in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Mizoram must have sent jitters down the spine of the BJP leadership. The seniors had never expected this kind of a drubbing, thinking their schemes were indeed people-friendly when their implementation was skewed. In contrast, the outcome has also done a lot to rejuvenate the Congress and Opposition leaders, who are all now rallying behind the leadership of Congress president Rahul Gandhi. The BJP, however, has not been totally routed. It retains a fair share of the vote pie in spite of anti-incumbency in the three heartland States — Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. But for sure, the oft-repeated slogan of 'a Congress-mukt Bharat' was blown away like a hot balloon. With these results, the Opposition is going for the jugular now and smelling power for the 2019 parliamentary elections, notwithstanding the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity remains intact.

The results have further proved that the Indian electorate does not bother about performance or rhetorical slogans and knows how to halt the juggernaut. They have also thrown a few lessons for both the ruling and Opposition parties. Let us examine the matter from the point of view of both the BJP and the Opposition. As an informed citizen, this writer has been observing the functioning of the Government in different fields in different States, has been writing on issues germane to the people, hailing good decisions and providing suggestions for improvements on several others.

Governance is not a cakewalk for any ruler, nor is feeling the pulse of the Indian mind in elections an easy task, as voters have time and again been pooh-poohing expert psychologists with disdain. Any hasty policy decision on well-intentioned goals and programmes has always backfired on the ruling regimes. People have a poor memory both for good deeds as well as bad. They tend to forget the good deeds fast enough and forgive quickly on bad experiences. Because of this, for quite some time, the Indian polity has become a sort of circus. Short-term perceptions rule the people's minds and those who exploit them are victorious.

Taking a particular group or section of people for granted is wishful thinking. The ruling NDA had a lot of positives to offer to the country after it came to power, both internally (in several fields) as well as on external affairs. India's prestige and position grew to a new height and esteem, globally. The Prime Minister's demonetisation drive had yielded a few positives in due course, like busting black marketers in real estate, ghost business houses *et al.* This writer vividly remembers the poor people happily standing in long queues before the banks during demonetisation as they believed it was going to end black money and cause difficulty to the corrupt and the rich.

There has been a sustained increase in the number of Income Tax Returns (ITRs) filed in the last four financial years. As compared to 3.79 crore ITRs filed in 2013-14, the number of ITRs filed during 2017-18 was 6.84 crore, which is an

“GOVERNANCE IS NOT A CAKEWALK FOR ANY RULER. NOR IS FEELING THE PULSE OF THE INDIAN MIND IN ELECTIONS AN EASY TASK, AS VOTERS HAVE TIME AND AGAIN BEEN POOH-POOHING EXPERT PSYCHOLOGISTS WITH DISDAIN. ANY HASTY POLICY DECISIONS ON WELL-INTENTIONED GOALS AND PROGRAMMES HAVE ALWAYS BACKFIRED ON THE RULING REGIMES.”



increase of 80.5 per cent. The number of e-filings increased to 6.75 crore during the last fiscal. During 2017-18, the gross collections before refunds rose by 13 per cent to ₹11.44 lakh crore. The quantum jump in tax base to a large extent was the result of demonetisation. The Government machinery, however, could not counter the allegations against it.

But the biggest voter loss (loss of vote base) for the BJP was the business community (the traditional BJP supporters for long) due to initial hiccups in the implementation of the Goods and Service Tax (GST). The introduction of GST was a revolutionary attempt but those who implemented it will never agree that they failed to read the people's mind on this. The problem is that promises made before the reform got under way were never implemented. And later, when the Government tried to correct the mistakes, it was too late.

The mishandling of the agitation of the upper castes against reservation for promotions in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan had really made a difference to the BJP as the community voted for NOTA. In Madhya Pradesh, NOTA votes were exercised by 542,295 (6,43,144 voters) constituting about 1.4 per cent of the total votes. In Rajasthan, NOTA votes were to the tune of 467,781, constituting about 1.3 per cent of the total votes polled. Most people, who exercised NOTA, were anti-reservation supporters and former BJP supporters. The BJP got 41 per cent votes in Madhya Pradesh while the Congress got 40.9 per cent. The 1.4 per cent

NOTA may have taken the BJP's tally to well past 120 seats. Similarly, as against the Congress getting 39.3 per cent of votes compared to the BJP's 38.8 per cent in Rajasthan, the NOTA vote would have crossed to 40 per cent for the BJP and the party could have scraped through. In Chhattisgarh though, the Congress really trounced the BJP by a margin of 10 per cent.

Yet another cause of the Congress' win was the way the party got the support of farmers, who were facing several constraints notwithstanding the fact that Shivrang Singh Chouhan, during his chief ministerial tenure, increased the irrigated land from 7.5 lakh to 36 lakh hectares over the last 10 years. It was the disconnect in the programme with regard to production, marketing and incomes of farmers (including lopsided implementation of the Bhavantar scheme) that stoked the farmers' anger.

Though the Union Government had taken a lot of steps for the farmers' welfare, it had either not been marketed or executed well. Besides, the farmers' income was still not commensurate with production costs. In Rajasthan, the State had done very good work in water harvesting but the programmes did not catch the imagination of the farmers. The outreach by the bureaucracy was also not visible on the ground.

Another cause of the BJP's defeat is the mobilisation of opposition parties and the saffron party's lack of containment of negative vibes in politics. The "Sampark for Samadhan" was a damp

squib as those who were contacted were mainly urbanites. Genuine opinion makers' attempts for course correction were ignored. For example, though Telugu Desam Party supremo Chandrababu Naidu's own political situation is not so good in Andhra Pradesh, his alienation did fuel a movement against the BJP. Similarly, the party alienated several of its opinion-makers who during the last 15 years were in its favour. This writer knows one senior journalist and many more supporters who relentlessly attempted to take the BJP to a high pedestal as an acceptable national party with pan-Indian appeal among the intelligentsia but they were either ignored or sidelined.

Now, the Congress and the Opposition front must adopt a charter which is nationalistic and filled with a positive vision for a future India and away from confrontationist polity as the BJP is still a favourite for 2019. The Congress has to modernise its functioning and embrace a collective leadership, keep the Delhi crowd of bureaucrats at a distance and engage with experts to serve the nation. The people are fed up with poor governance and unnecessary logjams in Parliament. To make democracy work, we must be a nation of participants, not simply observers and squabbling political leaders. The mandate of people is supreme. It should be seen as a lesson for all politicians, particularly in view of the coming Lok Sabha election in 2019.

(The writer is a Retired Civil Servant)

When democracy is not enough

If we do not stand up and reclaim the space we have conceded to criminals and other low-life who now sit in judgment over us, it will be our children who will pay the price in the coming years



DEEPAK SINHA

The Preamble to the Constitution of India clearly states that India is a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic. But as the ongoing public discourse of our political masters clearly shows, we are more a democracy and less a republic. We may not truly be aware of the subtle difference between the two or even be bothered to give this aspect much thought. But make no mistake, if we are to progress and develop as a nation, we cannot do without either. History tells us that the term 'democracy' originated from the Greek words 'demos', the common people, and 'kratos' or strength. The first democracy was the city of Athens in 508-507 BC.

where Cleisthenes, known as the father of Athenian democracy, introduced the concept of rule by the common people. However, representational democracy, as we know it today, is very different from what was practised then and is today defined by its one major characteristic "rule of the majority", which can easily devolve into mob rule or tyranny of the majority, or even worse, anarchy.

Benjamin Franklin once said: "Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch." The only thing that keeps the lamb off the lunch menu is the fact that we are a republic — not a perfect one but still one nonetheless. What that basically implies is that the country is not a private concern of the rulers but is considered a "public matter" and belongs to each one of us regardless of caste, creed, gender or ethnicity. While this obviously demands that our rulers are elected and not inherited, as quite a few tend to be, more importantly, it requires them to rule

for the common good, an aspect of governance on which philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, wrote volumes. This is, of course, only possible when there are a set of laws and those elected as leaders follow them both in letter and spirit.

Unfortunately over the past few decades, common good seems to be ignored in the face of parochial and self-serving interests of our leaders, as the rule of law is often ignored or rendered irrelevant. It is no wonder then that our legislatures at the Centre and States have a surfeit of members facing criminal charges — 1,765 MPs and MLAs at last count, or 36 per cent facing over 3,500 cases as per the Government; though some contend the numbers are vastly understated.

While the Supreme Court may well view the entry of criminals into legislative bodies as akin to "termites to the citadel of democracy," it cannot make laws to keep them out. That, the court said, is the domain of Parliament, an institution that is yet to show a firmness of resolve to

stem the rot. Ironically, it is the actions of the apex court itself which gave a fillip to criminals joining politics with its farcical ruling in the infamous JMM bribery case, involving the bribing of MPs to defeat a no-confidence motion brought against the then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Government way back in 1993. These allegedly corrupt MPs were unashamed and blatant enough to openly deposit the bribe money in a public sector bank. They were subsequently prosecuted under the Prevention of Corruption Act but were absolved by the Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 105 of the Constitution. This Article states that (1) MPs shall enjoy freedom of speech in Parliament and (2) shall not be held liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given in Parliament.

The court held that the alleged bribe-takers, who had voted in the House, were "entitled to the immunity conferred by Article 105(2)." It

also went on to direct that the bribe-givers must be prosecuted, as also the bribe-takers who did not vote. Certainly, a unique legal justification for the concept of honour among thieves.

The apex court has now attempted to correct the existing state of affairs by directing the Government to set up 12 fast-track special courts to try cases against the legislators.

In addition, it has also directed all political parties, which give tickets to persons with criminal cases pending against them, to publicise the information on the party websites, apart from issuing a declaration in "widely circulated" newspapers and on electronic media after the nomination is filed.

However, there is little doubt left that the "centre of gravity" seems to have shifted in favour of the criminal legislators and they seem to have become indispensable to parties for grabbing power. The sad truth is that actions taken by the Supreme Court now are of little

consequence, nothing more than closing the barn door after the horse has bolted.

While regular and reasonably fair elections have ensured that we continue to enjoy the fruits of a vibrant democracy, the same cannot be said for the state of our Republic. The gradual decline of values and the rule of law have ensured that the common good is of little concern to our political class who are quite happy with the *status quo*. Neither the judiciary nor the bureaucrats can bring about change for the better that is required. It is, therefore, left to the common citizen to act. If we do not stand up and reclaim the space, we have conceded to criminals and other low-life who now sit in judgment over us. It will be our children who will pay the price in the coming years.

(The writer is a military veteran, a Consultant with the Observer Research Foundation and Visiting Senior Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)



FOREIGNEYE



RAHUL'S RETURN

Till a few days back Rahul Gandhi had a nickname that no poll victory could erase off. It's 'Pappu' which means 'loser'. However everything has changed overnight. The Congress' spectacular victory in the Assembly polls in Hindu hinterland of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh has made people see the young Congress President in a new light. There is a metamorphosis of a new leader.

(DailyMirror Editorial)

₹ skids 22 paise to 71.90 against \$



PTI ■ MUMBAI
The rupee declined by 22 paise to close at 71.90 against the US dollar on Friday amid strengthening of the greenback and cautious trading in the domestic equity market. Forex traders said the rupee came under pressure following strengthening of the dollar against major currencies overseas, while caution prevailed amid the RBI's central board meeting under new Governor Shaktikanta Das. At the Interbank Foreign Exchange (forex) market, the local unit opened lower at

71.80 and fell further to touch the day's low of 72.04. However, it pared some losses and finally ended at 71.90 per dollar, down by 22 paise against its previous close. On Thursday, the Indian rupee had plunged 33 paise to 71.68 per US dollar. Benchmark indices finished with modest gains after a sea-saw session Friday. The BSE Sensex ticked higher by 33.29 points, or 0.09 per cent, to end at 35,962.93, while the broader NSE Nifty rose 13.90 points, or 0.13 per cent, to 10,805.45. Brent crude, the international benchmark, was trading

at \$61.02 per barrel Friday, lower by 0.70 per cent. On a net basis, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) bought shares worth ₹675.14 crore Thursday, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) were sellers to the tune of ₹51.86 crore, provisional data available with BSE showed. The Financial Benchmark India Private Ltd (FBIL) set the reference rate for the rupee/dollar at 71.7359 and for rupee/euro at 81.4628. The reference rate for rupee/British pound was fixed at 90.5809 and for rupee/100 Japanese yen at 63.20.

PSU banks do not have any plan to close ATMs: Govt

2.21 lakh ATMs are deployed in the country as on September 30

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Public Sector Banks (PSBs) do not have any plans to shut down their ATMs, Minister of State for Finance Shiv Pratap Shukla informed Parliament. The statement assumes significance amidst a report by the Confederation of ATM industry (CATMI) warning that nearly half of the 2.38 lakh machines run the risk of closing down by March next year due to regulatory compliance changes making the business unviable due to rising costs and dipping or stagnant revenues. As reported by the scheduled commercial banks, small finance banks, payment banks and white label ATM operators, 2.21 lakh ATMs are deployed in the country as on September 30, Shukla said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. Apart from ATMs, banking services across the country are provided through bank branch-

es, inter-operable business correspondents (BCs) with micro-ATMs etc, he said. Further, he said, mobile banking services and various digital modes of banking facilities are also available in India. Replying to another question, Shukla said the Government announced recapitalisation of PSBs to the tune of ₹2.11 lakh crore in October 2017, through infusion of capital by the Government and raising of capital by banks from the markets. PSBs meet their capital requirement through various sources including, inter alia, mobilisation of capital from the market through issuance of capital instruments and monetisation of non-core assets, internal capital generation including through recovery in written-off accounts, and capital infusion by the government. "₹88,139 crore was infused by the Government in PSBs during financial year 2017-18 after the recapitalisation announcement and provision of ₹65,000 crore has been made in the budget for the current financial year for infusion," he said. Since the recapitalisation announcement till November 2018, PSBs have been recapitalised to the tune of ₹1,28,861 crore through infusion and mobilisation of capital from the market, he said.

India Post gets full-fledged entry into e-commerce



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India Post on Wednesday announced full-fledged entry into e-commerce business, where it will leverage its parcel business for end-to-end delivery of products. "We have simplified decision-making process at Department of Posts (DoP) by setting up a separate parcel directorate. It can make quick decision on parcel rates and related provisions. India Post will leverage its vast network for e-commerce services for doorstep delivery of products," Communications Minister Manoj Sinha told

reporters. The minister also launched India Post's e-commerce portal. Earlier, any decision related to change in parcel delivery rates or matching services of private players required approval from top officials, which was time-consuming. The DoP has set up parcel directorate which is free to take decision to match the competition. "India Post is open for registration of all vendors for e-commerce business. It will pick up products from vendor and deliver to doorstep of customers," Sinha said.

India Post has delivery network up to remotest villages through its 1.55 lakh post offices which no one can match, the minister said. "We will also facilitate return of products service like it is available for customers on other e-commerce platforms," India Post Secretary A N Nanda said. Sinha said the department will strictly monitor delivery of products. "The credibility that DoP has built over the years is immense. We will suitably resolve complaints whenever we receive them," the minister said.

Indian School of Hospitality hosts international student counsellors conclave

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

Indian School of Hospitality, a newly inaugurated Gurugram based hospitality and culinary arts college, hosted its first international counsellor summit — the Counsellors' Retreat 2018. Inaugurated by Chancellor of the Gurugram University Markandey Ahuja, the summit saw a gathering of school counsellors representing schools from across the entire country and neighboring regions, including people who are working in hospitality education Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. The Counsellors' Retreat was called with the mission and aim to introduce school

counsellors to the diverse range of professional opportunities and career paths in the world of travel, tourism, hospitality, culinary arts and other new age industries for their students. The event saw counsellors participate in talks held by industry and education leaders that highlighted the trends of the hospitality industry, career options for students and the benefits of hospitality and culinary education for today's talent. During the interactive session, industry and academic experts discussed and exchanged views about ISH and its curriculum for the hospitality and culinary education space.

J&K Govt to set up RERA to promote planned development

PTI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir Government for the first time will set up a Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) in the state to promote regulated and planned growth of the real estate sector, official spokesman said on Friday. On Friday, the State Administrative Council (SAC) under the chairmanship of Governor Satya Pal Malik approved the establishment of Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) in the State. The Jammu and Kashmir Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill, 2018 approved by the SAC provides

a provision to establish the Real Estate Regulatory Authority, the State Advisory Council and the Real Estate Appellate Tribunal in the State to effectively and efficiently regulate this sector, spokesman said. The move is aimed at promoting planned development of real estate and to ensure sale of plots, apartments, buildings and other real estate projects, in an efficient and transparent manner and to protect the interests of the consumers, he added. RERA would ensure a fair and just treatment to the buyers and protect them from any unscrupulous builders, he said.

WPI inflation falls to 4.64% in Nov on easing food, petro prices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's wholesale inflation fell to a three-month low of 4.64 per cent in November, driven down by decline in prices of food articles, especially vegetables, and some easing in rates of petro products. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was 5.28 per cent in October and 4.02 per cent in November last year. Food articles witnessed softening of prices with deflation at 3.31 per cent in November, against 1.49 per cent in October, government data released Friday showed. Vegetables, too, became cheaper with deflation at 26.98 per cent in November, compared to 18.65 per cent in the previous month. Inflation in the 'fuel and power' basket in November continued to rule high at 16.28 per cent, but was lower than 18.44 per cent in October. This was on account of lowering of prices of petrol and diesel, following a decline in global crude oil prices. Separately in petrol and diesel, inflation was 12.06 per cent and 20.16 per cent, respectively, and for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), it was 23.22

per cent during October. ICRA Principal Economist Aditi Nayar said the easing of the WPI inflation was led by a deeper disinflation in prices of primary food articles, easing of inflation related to crude petroleum and mineral oils following the correction in retail fuel prices, and some impact of the appreciation in the rupee on the landed prices of imports. "The recent trend of a year-on-year correction in food prices does not augur well for the strength of rural demand in the immediate term. However, factors such as weak post-monsoon rainfall and a delay in rabi sowing pose some uncertainty regarding how long food prices would remain in the disinflation zone," Nayar said. Nayar said with the recent stability in the crude oil prices and the rupee, ICRA expects the WPI inflation to range between 3.7-4.4 per cent in the remainder of second half for current fiscal. Among food articles, potato prices continued to rule high with 86.45 per cent inflation in November. While onion witnessed deflation of 47.60 per cent, the same for pulses stood at 5.42 per cent. The October inflation was

4.64 per cent is the lowest in three months, and a lower inflation than this was last seen in August at 4.62 per cent. CARE Ratings, in its analysis, said it expects WPI inflation to remain in the range of 4.5-5 per cent for the rest of the year, and will be above the CPI rates. The WPI inflation for September, however, has been revised upwards to 5.22 per cent, from the provisional estimate of 5.13 per cent. Data released earlier this week showed that the retail or consumer price index-based inflation for November also fell to a 17-month low at 2.33 per cent. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mainly takes into account retail inflation data while formulating monetary policy. In its fifth monetary policy review for the fiscal, released last week, the Reserve Bank kept interest rates unchanged, but held out a promise to cut them if the upside risks to inflation do not materialise. The central bank lowered retail inflation projection to 2.7-3.2 per cent for the second half of the current fiscal, citing normal monsoon and moderate food prices.

Govt asks mills to undertake sugar shipment as per fixed quota

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing concerns over slow pace of sugar export, the Government on Friday directed mills to undertake shipment of their fixed quota and even threatened to take action against defaulting sugar mills. To liquidate surplus stock and improve the liquidity of the sugar mills to facilitate them for clearance of cane price arrears of farmers, the Government has asked domestic sugar mills to mandatory export 5 million tonnes in the 2018-19 marketing year (October-September). The Government is even compensating expenses towards internal transport, freight, handling and other charges to undertake shipment. "However, it has been observed that the sugar mills are not undertaking export of sugar at a desired pace. Only about 2.46 lakh tonne of sugar has been exported and 6 lakh tonne (including 2.46 lakh tonne of actual export) in the first quarter of the season," the food ministry said in a statement.

Syndicate Bank
Regional Office: C Block, Phase 2, Industrial Area, Sector 62, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201309,
PH: 0120 240 0851, Email: ro.noida@syndicatebank.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE
{for immovable property under Rule 8(1)}

Notice is hereby given under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule- 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The Bank issued demand notices on the date mentioned against account and amount stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within sixty days from the date of receipt of said notices. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against account and amount below.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The owner/s of the property in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Syndicate Bank for the amounts and interest, cost and charges etc thereon. Detail of Properties where Symbolic possession had been taken is as follows:-

Sr. No.	Borrower/ surety/ owner/Branch	Description of mortgaged (movable & immovable) property	Amt o/s (as mentioned in the Notice u/s 13(2))	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession
1	Borrower Mrs. Jaibun Nisha W/o Mr. Masroor Khan and Co-Borrower Mr. Masroor Khan S/o Mr. Ahmed Saeed Khan and Sh. Alisher Khan S/o Sh. Gulsher Ali B/O: HPDA Hapur	All that part and parcel of Residential Building on Plot No. 9 measuring 124.51 Sq.Yards Part of Khasra No. 1285M, situated at Mohalla Majeed Pura, Hapur in the name of Mrs. Jaibun Nisha	Rs.4,93,910.15 and interest thereon, costs etc.	23/07/2018	13/12/2018
2	Borrower Mrs. Sudha Chauhan W/o Mr. Dhanraj Singh B/O: Bichhat Surjanpur	One nug Plot of Land pertaining to Khasra No. 1s having Area 315 Sq.Mtrs. i.e. 376 Sq.Mtrs situated at Village Sanata Shafipur Khurja P&T Khurja	Rs.3,09,423.02 and interest thereon, costs etc.	01/08/2018	13/12/2018
3	Borrower Sh. Rajesh Kumar S/o Sh. Prem Chand Garg and Guarantor Sh. Sunil S/o Sh. Vijay Pal Singh B/O: Chipiyana Khurd Urf Tigr	A Residential Flat No. 1, Part of House No. 40, Area 78.78 Sq.Mtrs situated in Rama Krishna Colony, Old Arya Nagar, Ghaziabad, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad (UP) owned by Sh. Rajesh Kumar	Rs.4,15,665.54 and interest thereon, costs etc.	31/07/2018	12/12/2018
4	Borrower Sh. Rohtash B/O: Garhmukteshwar	All that part and parcel of A plot no.73 measuring 265 sq yds and standing structure there upon situated at Moh Kasba Naya Banns, ward no. 5, Garhmukteshwar paragna and Tehsil Garh. Distt Ghaziabad at present Hapur owned by Mr. Rohtash Kumar	Rs. 2,86,653.44 and interest thereon, costs etc.	24/09/2018	12/12/2018
5	Borrower Sh. Satish Bharwar Singh B/O: Garhmukteshwar	All that part and parcel of Residential house area 98.77 sq mtr at ward no 9, Upadhaya Nagar, Garhmukteshwar owned by Mr. Sandeep and Satish	Rs.1,36,429.42 and interest thereon, costs etc.	24/09/2018	12/12/2018
6	Borrower Smt. Prem Wati B/O: Garhmukteshwar	All that part and parcel of Plot measuring 63 yards at Moh: Adarsh Nagar, Ward No.11, Garhmukteshwar owned by Premwati	Rs.1,35,487.11 and interest thereon, costs etc.	24/09/2018	12/12/2018
7	Borrower M/s Om Enterprises prop. Sh. Amit Kumar s/o Sh. Dal Chand also Guarantor Sh. Dal Chand s/o Sh. Udai Singh Saini, Sh. Jay Prakash s/o Udai Singh Saini, B/O: Khurja	All that part and parcel of UREM of Commercial Shop Situated at Moh Burj Usman Khan, Subhash Road, Kasba Khurja, Pargana and Tehsil Khurja Distt. Bulandshahar owned by Shri Dal Chand and Shri Jay Prakash s/o Shri Udai Singh Saini	Rs. 19,64,446.87 and interest thereon, costs etc.	09/08/2018	12/12/2018
8	Borrower M/s Rajveer Industry prop. Shri Rajveer Singh as also Guarantor Smt. Raj Kumari w/o Shri Rajveer Singh, Sri Balbir Singh, Sri Trilok Chand, B/O: Khurja	All that part and parcel of nug of land having area 251 sq. mtrs, i.e. 300 sq. yards and construction there on pertaining to Plot No.59, situated at Kasba Khurja, Bahar Chungi, Pargana & Tehsil Khurja, District- Bulandshahar owned by Smt. Raj Kumari w/o Shri Rajveer Singh	Rs. 30,50,388.23 and interest thereon, costs etc.	09/08/2018	12/12/2018
9	Borrower M/s Pradeep Sattering Store Prop. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sharma as also Guarantor Mr. Satendra Kumar B/O: Khurja	All that part and parcel of one nug Plot having area 167.28 Sq.Mtrs, Khasra No. 34, situated at Village Gospur Traina Khurja Pargana & Tehsil Khurja, Distt. Bulandshahar owned by Mr. Satendra Sharma S/o Mr. Madan Gopal Sharma	Rs. 11,58,915.82 and interest thereon, costs etc.	08/08/2018	12/12/2018

Date: 15.12.2018, Place: Gautam Budh Nagar Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER, SYNDICATE BANK

DVCom launches e-store, offers range of products

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to provide customer services through online shopping portals, a Delhi based DVComm group has launched India's first Tech supported e-store DVComm.in. The site offers a wide range in IT, Communication and Electronics among other related products. The company is said to have deployed a team to help, guide buyers with their pre-sales assistance & Free Tech Consultation. DVComm's big advantage is that they are providing pre-sale guidance, post sales service with direct liaisoning with OEM during the warranty period of the product, this begets customer comfort & huge confidence, a service that is pro-

vided by non other DVComm also provides a chargeable installation as required & guarantees delivery anywhere in India. Presently its product line includes a wide range in IT, Networking, Telecom, CCTV Security Electronics, UPS products from leading Global brands such as — Cisco, Alcatel, Polycom, CPPlus, Samsung, Nikon, Huawei, LG, Dell, HP, Emerson, APC and others. Surya Murugaan from Ericson Global Services India, Bengaluru said — "The Hub motors from DVComm.in are good, their components are really trust worthy".

ONGC board to consider share buyback on Dec 20

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) Friday said its board will consider buyback of company shares at a meeting on December 20. This follows Government pushing cash-rich PSUs to use their funds to buy back shares or pay a higher dividend. The Government is looking to bridge budgetary deficit through higher receipts of dividend as well as selling its shares in PSUs in the buyback programmes. Stock buybacks refer to the repurchasing of shares by the company that issued them. A buyback occurs when the issuing company pays shareholders the market value per share and re-absorbs that portion of its ownership that was previously distributed among public and private investors. In a regulatory filing, ONGC said, "The meeting of Board of Directors of the company will be held on Thursday,

December 20, 2018, inter-alia, to consider the proposal for buy-back of the fully paid-up equity shares of the company." The Government holds 67.48 per cent stake in India's largest oil and gas producer ONGC. Just on Thursday, state-owned Indian Oil Corp (IOC) said it will buy back 29.76 crore shares for about ₹4,435 crore and spend another ₹6,556 crore on paying an interim dividend to shareholders. The board of the country's largest oil firm Thursday approved buyback of up to 29.76 crore equity shares, or 3.06 per cent, at ₹149 per share. The Government, which holds a 54.06 per cent stake in the company, is expected to participate in the share buyback. The Government is targeting a minimum ₹5,000 crore through share buyback offers of state-owned firms like Coal India, BHEL and Oil India Ltd.

Govt to set up National Medical Devices Promotion Council

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Friday said it will set up National Medical Devices Promotion Council (NMDPC) to boost manufacturing, attract investments and promote exports of the fast-growing sector.

"As Indian manufacturing companies and startups move towards creating innovative products, the setting-up of the council will spur domestic manufacturing in this sector," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

It said the medical devices industry plays a critical role in the healthcare ecosystem and is indispensable to achieve the goal of health for all citizens.

The manufacturing and trade in the sector is growing steadily which includes a wide



range of products.

Although the industry has been growing in double digits, it is predominantly import-driven, with imports accounting for over 65 per cent of the domestic market.

The council, it said, will undertake several activities including facilitation, promotion and development of the sector besides holding seminars and workshops to garner views of industry and understand best global practices.

It would also identify redundant processes and render technical assistance to the agencies and departments concerned to simplify the approval processes involved in the sector.

It will "enable entry of emerging interventions and support certifications for manufacturers to reach levels of global trade norms and lead India to an export driven market in the sector," it said.

The NMDPC would support dissemination and documentation of international norms and standards for medical devices, by capturing the best practices in the global market and facilitate domestic manufacturers to rise to international level.

It will also "drive a preferential market access policy, by

identifying the strengths of the Indian manufacturers and discouraging unfair trade practices in imports".

Besides, it would make recommendations to Government based on industry feedback and global practices on policy and process interventions to strengthen the medical technology sector.

The council will be headed by the secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion.

Apart from the concerned departments, it will also have representatives from healthcare industry and quality control institutions.

Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu announced this move at WHO Global Forum on Medical Devices at Visakhapatnam.

Ducati enters pre-owned bike market in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Italian superbike maker Ducati on Friday announced its foray into pre-owned market in India through its Ducati Approved programme.

Under the programme, only bikes less than 5 years old with certified mileage lower than 50,000 km are allowed to be sold after undergoing 35 technical checks, the company said in a statement.

"Our entry in the pre-owned segment in India will make Ducati more accessible to passionate bikers who aspire for the luxurious and premium experience offered by Ducati motorcycles," Ducati India managing director Sergi Canovas said.

Ducati Approved is a certified pre-owned motorcycle programme wherein company's qualified service technicians select and inspect every bike, certifying its history, the company said.

The programme also includes extended warranty and roadside assistance, it added.

"With this program, our aim is to sell bikes with the same level of sophistication and authenticity as offered with a new Ducati," the Ducati India managing director said.

Infosys forms JV with Hitachi, Panasonic, Pasona in Japan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Infosys on Friday said it had formed a joint venture (JV) with Hitachi, Panasonic Corporation and Pasona to strengthen its presence in the Japanese market.

As part of the agreement, Infosys will acquire 81 per cent of the shareholding in Hitachi Procurement Service Co, Hitachi's fully owned subsidiary, Infosys said in a statement.

Hitachi, Panasonic and Pasona will be minority shareholders of the entity, it added.

The consideration for the 81 per cent stake, subject to closing adjustments, is JPY 2,762 million (approx ₹174.58 crore).

"As part of the transaction, Infosys Consulting Pte. Ltd. will acquire an 81 per cent stake in HIPUS from Hitachi by way of an acquisition of existing shares," Infosys said in a regulatory filing.

Hitachi will transfer 2 per cent each to Panasonic and Pasona, and will hold the remaining 15 per cent, it added.

The transaction is expected to close by April 1, 2019, subject to customary closing conditions, Infosys said.

"The transaction is in alignment with Infosys' strategy to strengthen its presence in Japan and invest in local capabilities to serve the local and global needs

of Japanese corporations," it said.

Hitachi Procurement, currently, handles indirect materials purchasing functions for the Hitachi Group. "...iconic companies coming together, will accelerate business process transformation leveraging digital procurement platforms for the local and global needs of Japanese corporations," the statement said.

Infosys will bring its expertise in procurement processes, consulting, analytics and digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to the venture.

Combined with Hitachi and Panasonic's knowledge of their procurement functions and local teams, and Pasona's human capital and BPM networks in Japan, the entity will provide differentiated, end-to-end, efficient and high value procurement capabilities to corporations, the statement said.

"This JV will help Japanese corporations transform their procurement processes using next-generation digital platforms, as we bring together the combined power of deep procurement expertise, technology, global expertise and local skills," Infosys president Ravi Kumar

Indospace raises USD 1.2 bn to develop, buy logistic parks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Everstone-backed IndoSpace on Friday said it had raised USD 1.2 billion from investors through its new fund to develop and acquire industrial and logistics parks.

IndoSpace is one of the largest provider of modern industrial and logistics real estate in India and has taken total commitment to India to above USD 3.2 billion. It is promoted by Everstone Group, GLP and Realterm.

IndoSpace said in a statement that it held the final close on IndoSpace Logistic Parks III (ILP III) and the offering was significantly oversubscribed on the back of strong investor demand.

"USD 580 million of total equity has been committed to ILP III which, post leverage will create a corpus of more than USD 1.2 billion to develop and acquire industrial and logistics-related real estate investments in India," it added.

IndoSpace would utilise the fund to further strengthen its market leadership position. Leading global institutional investors have invested in ILP III. Currently, IndoSpace has a portfolio of around 30 million square feet across developed and under-construction projects.

Alembic Pharma raises ₹350 cr

New Delhi (PTI): Drug firm Alembic Pharmaceuticals on Friday said it had raised ₹350 crore through allotment of non-convertible debentures (NCDs) on private placement basis. "The NCD committee of Alembic Pharmaceuticals Ltd... has allotted 1,500, 9 per cent rated unsecured listed

redeemable non-convertible debentures (NCDs)... aggregating to ₹150 crore under tranche 1," Alembic Pharmaceuticals said in a regulatory filing. The company said it had also allotted 2,000, 9 per cent rated unsecured listed redeemable NCDs... aggregating to ₹200 crore.

National electronics policy almost finalised: Prasad

New Delhi (PTI): The government has almost finalised the National Policy on Electronics to boost electronics manufacturing in India on a big scale, Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Friday. He said the Narendra Modi government was pushing India's case for USD 1 trillion digital economy. Speaking at an event organised by industry body CII, the minister also asked the electronics industry to focus on producing medical devices, defence and automobile items.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
BHARTIARTL	305.2	333.4	305.2	319	15.9
BPL	334.65	349.4	330.75	344.95	10.05
YESBANK	172.7	181.6	168.25	179.7	5
IOC	141.15	142.5	140.1	141.3	3.9
COALINDIA	244.55	250.4	242	250.55	5.5
ONGC	143	150.4	140.6	146.25	2.95
NTPC	141	144.15	139.6	143.8	2.75
GRASIM	850	852.75	835.5	844.9	15.5
IBULHSGFIN	772.65	798.05	760.05	788.9	13.2
EICHERMOT	23,350.00	23,800.00	23,150.70	23,700.00	394.6
ASIANPAINT	1,332.80	1,351.00	1,320.00	1,339.00	18.8
POWERGRID	181.5	186.25	180.5	185.1	2.55
GAIL	346.95	353.2	341.5	351.3	4.85
ULTRACEMCO	4,039.00	4,043.80	3,975.00	3,998.50	49.4
INFRATEL	249	252.9	247.25	252.3	3.1
INFY	697.45	713.7	694.4	706.15	8.4
HINDPETRO	224	229.5	221.1	226.95	1.8
VEDL	199	202.2	198.15	201.9	1.25
ICICIBANK	349.2	354.05	349.15	351	1.45
TCS	1,983.00	1,998.95	1,975.25	1,989.00	6.4
RELIANCE	1,103.10	1,114.90	1,091.80	1,110.00	2.95
HINDUNILVR	1,837.00	1,863.85	1,832.75	1,860.55	5
TECHM	709.15	716.8	705.1	711	1.7
TATASTEEL	511	517.8	506.5	513.5	1.25
ITC	274.35	277.25	273.9	275.85	0.55
AXISBANK	619.1	623	611.3	620.3	1.2
HINDALCO	219.5	222.85	217.3	220.6	0.3
TATAMOTORS	166	168.4	164.85	167	0.15
MARUTI	7,684.00	7,699.00	7,545.95	7,676.00	5.5
SBI	288.5	290.8	287.05	288.7	-0.3
BAJAJFINSV	6,179.90	6,208.20	6,101.30	6,153.10	-6.3
HEROMOTOCO	3,302.00	3,350.80	3,266.65	3,315.00	-3.25
INDUSINDBK	1,610.00	1,613.50	1,590.05	1,608.00	-2.1
BAJFINANCE	2,488.25	2,512.00	2,464.25	2,485.35	-3.75
M&M	753.1	764	751.6	757	-2.2
DREDDY	2,595.00	2,609.60	2,568.00	2,589.20	-7.65
HDFCBANK	2,104.90	2,118.00	2,088.05	2,095.10	-6.2
SUNPHARMA	421.95	426	417.1	420.45	-1.65
ADANIPORTS	370	371.15	367	368.9	-2.15
KOTAKBANK	1,264.40	1,271.70	1,247.10	1,256.60	-7.8
CIPLA	528.35	533.8	516.65	522.05	-4.95
BAJAJ-AUTO	2,836.00	2,837.35	2,785.20	2,808.50	-27.6
UPL	770	777	758.85	765.9	-7.55
WIPRO	339	343	332.3	335	-3.65
LT	1,423.45	1,428.55	1,405.05	1,410.65	-15.8
ZEEL	491	494.95	482	485.55	-8.15
TITAN	943.65	951.7	928.45	928.6	-15.55
HDFC	1,945.00	1,955.00	1,896.05	1,909.60	-32.45
JSWSTEEL	297	300.85	291.15	292.9	-5.15
HCLTECH	966	968.8	950	960.1	-17.95

BSE 500

Script	Last	Abs Change	% Change
Traded	3,202,785	-400.35	-1.24
3MINDIA	165.15	-5	-2.91
8KMILES	1438.05	2.45	0.17
AARTIIND	1431.35	-6.1	-0.42
ABB	7534.55	30.2	0.4
ABBOTINDIA	99.05	0.6	0.61
ABCAPITAL	199.1	0.8	0.4
ABFL	1498.5	-1.75	-0.12
ACC	368.95	-2.4	-0.65
ADANIPORTS	52.15	0.35	0.68
ADANIPOWER	219.75	-0.05	-0.02
ADANITRANS	178.5	1.55	0.88
ADVENZYMS	196.2	-6.4	-3.16
AEGISLOG	1611.05	-22.95	-1.4
AIAENG	1096.25	16.25	1.5
AJANTPHARM	1574.25	11.25	0.72
AKZO	46.35	-0.05	-0.11
ALBK	1882.1	11.5	0.61
ALKEM	107.35	1.05	0.99
ALLCARGO	735.35	5.35	0.73
AMARAJABAT	219.25	0.5	0.23
AMBIJACEM	28.6	0.1	0.35
ANDHRABANK	608	-9.15	-1.48
APARINDS	1290.5	-14.6	-1.12
APOLLO	266.45	6.75	2.6
CANBK	278.35	12.25	4.6
CANFINHOME	536.85	-7.55	-1.39
CAPF	393.75	-4.65	-1.17
CAPPL	351.6	-3.1	-0.87
CARBORUNIV	997.6	-2.4	-0.24
CATERING	149.25	2.1	1.43
CARSTALIND	279.7	-0.1	-0.04
CCL	1309.4	14.3	1.1
CEATLTD	30.5	0.35	1.16
CENTRALBK	36.8	-0.7	-1.87
CENTRUM	185.9	1.8	0.98
CENTURYPLY	925.55	12.8	1.4
CENTURYTEX	2357.3	-9.45	-0.4
CERA	40.5	1.55	3.98
CGPOWER	144.2	-2.45	-1.67
CHAMBLFERT	278.25	4.1	1.5
CHEMNIPETRO	1230.7	-7.7	-0.62
CHOLAFIN	521.4	-6.35	-1.2
CIPLA	246.75	1.95	0.8
COALINDIA	381.15	-0.4	-0.1
COCHINSHIP	264.7	-1.8	-0.68
COFFEEDAY	1311.85	8.7	0.67
COLPAL	651.55	2.5	0.39
CONCOR	438.85	9.6	2.24
COROMANDEL	28.4	0.2	0.71
CORPBANK	519.5	1.55	0.3
ITDCEM	108.85	-0.6	-0.55
ITI	92.85	-0.35	-0.38
J&KBANK	35.75	-0.4	-1.11
JAGRAN	112.3	-0.7	-0.62
J&KCORPLTD	103.75	-0.45	-0.43
JAMNAAUTO	63.65	-0.95	-1.47
JBCHEPHARM	298.1	-0.8	-0.27
JCHAC	183.6	6	3.33
JETAIRWAYS	259.95	8.1	3.22
JINDALSAW	82.1	-0.7	-0.85
JINDALSTEL	157.35	-1.85	-1.16
JISLJALEOS	66.5	0.25	0.38
JKCEMENT	731.3	1.55	0.21
JKIL	119	-3.4	-2.78
JKLAKSHMI	279.65	5.7	2.08
JKYRE	95.55	-0.05	-0.05
JMFINANCIL	86.45	-1.3	-1.48
JPASSOCIAT	7.03	0.1	1.44
JSL	33	0.05	0.15
JSLHISAR	90.2	0.65	0.73
JSWENERGY	70.95	0.35	0.5
JSWSTEEL	293.45	-4.6	-1.54
JUBILANT	738.3	-2.3	-0.31
JUBLFOOD	1246.05	-6.65	-0.53
JUSTDIAL	491.7	-0.5	-0.1
KAJARIACER	444.85	-5	-1.11
KALPATPOWER	390.9	5.6	1.45
KANSAINER	458.05	-3.6	-0.78
KEC	290.4	3.2	1.11
KEI	379.65	-1	-0.26
KIOCL	147.6	2.3	1.58
KNRCON	189.2	-5.6	-2.87
KOTAKBANK	1255.25	-6.85	-0.54
KPTI	215.2	-2.45	-1.13
KPRMILL	569.55	4.1	0.73
KRBL	288	-4.4	-1.5
KSCIL	589.5	-1.8	-0.3
KTKBANK	108.35	0.5	0.46
KWALITY	8.81	-0.03	-0.34
KTFH	146.8	1.65	1.14
LAKSHVILAS	86.6	-0.6	-0.69
LALPATHLAB	958.55	-5.8	-0.6
LAOPALA	223.55	-0.5	-0.22
LAURUSLABS	378.35	-9.25	-2.39
LAXMIMACH*	581.5	3.65	0.06
LICHSGFIN	461.7	0.2	0.04
LINDEINDIA	681.7	0.2	0.03
LI	1411.55	-13.6	-0.95
LI	1806.15	56.85	3.25
LITTS	1631.95	32.75	2.05
LUPIN	842.8	-3.45	-0.41
LUXIND	1507.3	-17.85	-1.17
M&M	755.8	-1.95	-0.26
M&MFIN	454.4	1.1	0.24
MAGMA	110.65	-2.35	-2.08
MAHABANK	13.57	0.14	1.04
MAHINDCIE	252.9	-1.35	-0.53
MAHLIFE	387.25	-5	-1.27
MANAPPURAM	88.35	-0.7	-0.79
MANPASAND	86.8	-2.95	-3.29
MARICO	372.85	-1.55	-0.41
MARUTI	7654.1	-9.65	-0.13
MAXINDIA	80.15	13.35	19.99
MCX	724.3	-1.2	-0.17
MEGH	60.6	0	0
MFLS	431.6	-11.65	-2.63
MGL	871.4	-2.45	-0.28
MHRIL	196.85	-0.95	-0.48
MINDACORP	136.1	-1.5	-1.09
MINDAIND	331.2	-0.8	-0.24
MINDTREE	866.55	7.55	0.88
MMTC	27.7	-0.2	-0.72
MOIL	172.35	-1.45	-0.83
MONSANTO	2700	22	0.82
MOTHERSUMI	166.45	5.1	3.16
MOTILALOFS	616.4	-9.25	-1.48
MPHASIS	973.15	0.25	0.03
MRP	66350.35	-856.35	-1.27
MRPL	73	-1.15	-1.55
MUTHOOTFIN	471.95	-8.1	-1.69
NATCOPHARM*	700.55	-12.65	-1.77
NATIONALUM	64.1	-0.35	-0.54
NAUKRI	1559.6	2	0.13
NAVINFLOUR	719.95	22.6	3.24
NAVKARCORP	46	-0.55	-1.18
NAVNETEDUL	105.55	0.5	0.48
NBCC	52.8	-0.75	-1.4
NBVENTURES	120.8	1	0.83
NCC	82.3	-0.4	-0.48
NESTLEIND	10972.55	-17.95	-0.16
NETWORK18	38.55	-0.2	-0.52
NH	199.4	-6.05	-2.94
NHP	26.2	0.05	0.19
NHPC	198.05	-0.65	-0.33
NIITTECH	1140.45	18.8	1.68
NILKAMAL	1485.65	-4.6	-0.31
NLCINDIA	68.3	-0.15	-0.22
NMD	93.9	0.7	0.75
NOCIL	166.25	-0.65	-0.39
NTPC	143.65		

SRI LANKA CRISIS Mahinda Rajapaksa to resign as PM today

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Signalling an end to the nearly two-month power tussle in Sri Lanka, disputed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa will resign on Saturday, his son said on Friday, soon after the Supreme Court refused to stay a court order that restrained the embattled former strongman from acting as the premier until it fully heard the case next month.



Rajapaksa, 73, was appointed as the prime minister on October 26 by President Maithripala Sirisena in a controversial move after sacking Ranil Wickremesinghe, which plunged the island nation into a constitutional crisis.

"To ensure stability of the nation, Former President PresRajapaksa has decided to resign from the Premiership tomorrow after an address to the nation," Rajapaksa's son Namal tweeted.

The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) with former president, Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and others will "now work to form a broader political coalition with President Sirisena," Namal Rajapaksa, a lawmaker, added.

Wickremesinghe's camp was hopeful that Sirisena would now reinstate him over the weekend after Rajapaksa resigns, effectively ending the political stalemate that plagued the nation for the past seven weeks.

There was no immediate reaction from President Sirisena, the architect of the current crisis. Parliamentarian Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena said Rajapaksa, who ruled Sri Lanka for nearly a decade, decided to step down in the best interest of the country.

He claimed Rajapaksa can hold office without resigning but that will only further drag the political turmoil in the country. So the former president decided to step down after the court ruling given on Friday and on Thursday.

His Cabinet will also stand dissolved, Abeywardena was quoted as saying by the Colombo Gazette.

The apex court's latest ruling came a day after it unanimously declared that the dissolution of Parliament by President Maithripala Sirisena was "illegal", in a body blow to the embattled leader, whose controversial decisions plunged the island nation into an unprecedented political turmoil.

The Supreme Court decided that a Court of Appeal order issued against the appointment of Rajapaksa as Prime Minister and against his Cabinet from holding office will stand.

May sticks to her Brexit plan despite rebuff from EU

AP ■ BRUSSELS

British Prime Minister Theresa May insisted on Friday that her Brexit deal was still alive and kicking, despite a stinging rebuff from the European Union after she agreed for changes to make the agreement more palatable to UK lawmakers.



May came to an EU summit in Brussels seeking legally binding changes to the agreement, but the bloc told her bluntly that a renegotiation was not possible. They offered only assurances they would seek to move swiftly on forging a new trade deal after Britain leaves the bloc on March 29.

Nonetheless, May told reporters in Brussels that she welcomed the EU's words — and that, as formal conclusions of an EU summit, they "have legal status."

"There is work still to do, and we will be holding talks in coming days about how to obtain the further assurances that the U.K. Parliament needs in order to be able to approve the deal," May said.

May's optimism contrasted with a pessimistic tone from many on the EU side. EU leaders expressed deep doubts that May could live up to her side

of their Brexit agreement and vowed to step up preparations for a potentially-catastrophic "no-deal" scenario for Britain's departure.

"Very objectively, the signals that we heard yesterday are not especially reassuring about the capacity in Britain to be able to honor the engagement that was undertaken," Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel told reporters.

Expressing a "gigantic doubt" that May can get her Brexit deal through the British Parliament, Michel said: "we are going to be sure to prepare for all hypotheses, including the hypothesis of a 'no deal'."

May canceled a Brexit vote in the U.K. Parliament this week after it became clear the assembly would reject the deal she concluded with the EU last month.

She travelled to Brussels in hope of wringing some concessions from her European partners that would help assuage doubts about the draft divorce agreement back in London.

But EU leaders rejected any attempt to re-negotiate their agreement, a 585-page legal text settling things like the divorce bill and the rights next year of Europeans living in Britain or Britons living in the EU, plus a document laying out their hopes for future relations, which isn't legally binding.

They did publish a short text with "assurances" about how the deal would work.

"Very objectively, the signals that we heard yesterday are not especially reassuring about the capacity in Britain to be

EU leaders vow to press on with 'no-deal' Brexit plans

AP ■ BRUSSELS



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able to honour the engagement that was undertaken," Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel told reporters.

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No country has ever left the 28-nation EU — the world's biggest trading bloc — and the rules laying out that process are sketchy. Essentially, Brexit is being made up as the process advances. Court challenges have clarified some of the rules.

This week, Europe's top court ruled that Britain can change its mind about leaving should it want to.

One thing is clear: Brexit will happen on March 29, although a transition period will help ease Britain out over almost two, and possibly up to four, years. The prospect of a no-deal has shaken markets and the British pound, and created uncertainty for investors and businesses. Brexit involves Britain leaving around 750 international treaties drawn up over 40 years of membership. One of them is the EU's aviation market.

Without a deal, British planes won't be able to land in Europe on March 30. Nor will European planes be able to land in the UK.

May didn't talk to reporters as she entered EU headquarters early Friday for talks with French President Emmanuel Macron, after shuffling around Europe earlier this week seeking support.

GLOBE TROTTERING

16 KILLED IN TRUCK ACCIDENT IN NEPAL
Kathmandu: At least 16 people were killed when a mini-truck met with an accident in Nepal's Nuwakot district, 80 kms west of Kathmandu, on Friday evening.

OFFENSIVE AGAINST TALIBAN KILLS AT LEAST 20
Kabul: An Afghan official says an assault on Taliban positions in northeastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, which included US air strikes, killed at least 20 insurgents, contradicting Taliban claims of civilian casualties.

EU court rejects Hamas appeal over terror listing

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

A top EU court on Friday threw out an appeal by the Palestinian Islamism movement Hamas against its listing by the bloc as a terrorist organisation.

The General Court of the EU rejected a bid by Hamas, the militant group which has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007, to end a freeze on assets held in the bloc that was imposed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

China lodges 'stern' protest with US over Senate Bill on Tibet

PTI ■ BEIJING

China has lodged a "stern" diplomatic protest with the US over the Senate passing a bipartisan legislation that seeks to impose a visa ban on Chinese officials who deny American citizens, officials and journalists access to Tibet, even as Beijing asked Washington not to make it a law.

Reacting to the US move, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said here that the American action disregarded facts and amounted to interfering in China's internal affairs and was a violation of international rules.

"China is firmly opposed to it and lodged stern representations to the US. I want to point out that Tibet affairs come under China's internal affairs

and it allows no foreign interference," he said.

The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, seeking unhindered access to Tibetan areas for Americans, something which is routinely denied by the Chinese government, was passed by the US House of Representatives in September.

The US Senate on Tuesday passed the crucial bipartisan legislation that also calls for a visa ban on Chinese officials who deny American citizens, government officials and journalists access to Tibet, the remote Himalayan homeland of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

The legislation, passed unanimously, comes amid the Trump administration imposing massive trade import duties on China that has started

impacting the Chinese economy.

The bill now heads to the White House for President Donald Trump to sign into law.

Lu said foreigners entering Tibet can apply through normal channels and every year a lot of foreigners and local tourists visit Tibet.

He said since 2015, about 40,000 Americans visited Tibet and this included US Senators, Congressmen and businessmen.

"This shows the US accusations do not hold water at all and Chinese government and people cannot accept that. We urge the US to immediately take effective measures to stop signing the act into law and thus avoid harming US-China relations and our cooperation in key areas," he said.

Trump knew hush-money payments were wrong: Ex-lawyer Michael Cohen

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump knew it was wrong to order election-eve hush money paid to two women who claimed to have had affairs with him, his former lawyer Michael Cohen said in an interview to be broadcast Friday.

Cohen challenged Trump's assertion in a tweet Thursday after the lawyer's sentencing that he never told him to break the law.

"I don't think there is anybody that believes that," Cohen told George Stephanopoulos on the program "Good Morning America." ABC released excerpts of the interview ahead of its full airing.

"First of all, nothing at the Trump Organisation was ever done unless it was run through Mr. Trump. He directed me to make the payments, he directed me to become involved in these matters," Cohen said.

Trump acted because he was very concerned about how this would affect the election, says Cohen

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Seven-year-old Guatemalan girl dies in US custody: Report

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

A seven-year-old Guatemalan girl died in American custody after being detained by US border police in New Mexico, The Washington Post reported on Thursday.

The girl who illegally crossed the border from Mexico along with her father and dozens of others died last week of "dehydration and shock," the newspaper reported, citing US Customs and Border Protection.

She had "reportedly had not eaten or consumed water for several days," the CBP told the Post, who said she began having seizures more than eight hours after being detained.

Emergency responders had measured her body temperature at 105.7 degrees (41 centigrade), the Post said.

She died after being flown to hospital.

The name of the girl and her father have not been released.

The father is in El Paso, Texas awaiting a meeting with Guatemalan consular officials, the Post said, quoting CBP, which said it is investigating the incident.

President Donald Trump has made hard-line immigration policies a central plank of his presidency, drawing fire from critics who accuse him of demonising migrants for political gain.

Much attention has been focused on caravans of thousands of Central Americans who have made their way to Tijuana, Mexico, just south from San Diego, California in a challenge to Trump, who criticised them as posing an "invasion".

But migrants fleeing poverty and gang violence also continue to cross over in New Mexico, Texas and Arizona after enduring dangerous treks through Mexico.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this female **Named: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 55 years, Sex: female, Height: 4 feet 10 inch., Complexion: Shallow, Identification: Tattoo Mark of "Ganga Saraswati" on right hand, Wearing: White petikot, purple printed blouse, bare footed,** has been found dead at Under Signature bridge, Yamuna River in drowned condition, Timarpur, Delhi on dated 24.11.2018.

In this regard a DD No. 15-A, dated 24-11-2018 has been lodged at P.S. Timarpur, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this female but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this female may kindly inform to the following.

**SHO
PS. Timarpur, Delhi**

DP/9460/N/18 Ph.: 011-23812734, 8750870129

France dismisses ISIS claim for Strasbourg Christmas bloodshed

Strasbourg (France): France's interior minister on Friday dismissed a claim by the Islamic State group that it was responsible for a shooting spree at a Christmas market in Strasbourg after the gunman was shot dead by police, ending a 48-hour manhunt.

The city reopened the market on Friday, with officials praising the massive public help and quick police reaction that led to the death of suspected shooter Cherif Chekatt late on Thursday.

AFP

Israel in West Bank manhunt as Netanyahu under pressure

AFP ■ RAMALLAH (PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES)

Israeli forces kept up a manhunt on Friday for a Palestinian who shot dead two soldiers in the occupied West Bank, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced rightwing pressure for a strong response.

Thursday's shooting was the latest incident shattering months of relative calm in the West Bank, where 4,00,000 Israelis live in settlements alongside more than 2.5 million Palestinians.

It was the third deadly attack by Palestinian gunmen in the West Bank in two months and set off demonstrations by settler groups against Netanyahu, whose rightwing government depends

on their support. Israeli media speculated Friday about the possibility of a new Palestinian "intifada," or uprising, against Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

In Thursday's attack, a gunman got out of his car and opened fire on soldiers and others outside a settlement in the central West Bank, killing two and seriously injuring another two Israelis before fleeing. In response the army locked down the city of Ramallah, home to secular Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, while calling in reinforcements.

Clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces erupted in different parts of the West Bank, including inside Ramallah during army raids.

Settlers shouting for revenge threw stones at

Palestinian vehicles, while an Arab bus driver was beaten by ultra-Orthodox Jews in Modiin Illit settlement, according to Israeli media reports.

In overnight raids, the army said it arrested 40 Palestinians, most of them affiliated to the Islamist movement Hamas which has claimed responsibility for two recent shooting attacks.

It has not yet claimed Thursday's attack, though Israeli officials point the finger of blame in its direction.

The Army did not say it had made arrests linked directly to the latest attack.

At a checkpoint near the Beit El settlement on Friday morning, a soldier was moderately wounded after a man hit him with a rock before fleeing, the Army said.

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Syndicate Bank

Regional Office: C Block, Phase 2, Industrial Area, Sector 62, Noida,
Uttar Pradesh 201309, Ph: 0120 240 0851, Email: ro.noida@syndicatebank.co.in

Demand Notice

You the below mentioned borrowers have availed loan by mortgaging the schedule mentioned property and you the below mention have stood as borrower/co-borrower, guarantor for the loan agreement. Consequently to the default committed by you, your loan account has been classified as non-performing asset under the provisions of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (in short SARFAESI Act). The Authorized Officer of Syndicate Bank had issued Demand Notice u/s 13(2) read with section 13(13) of the SARFAESI Act to the address furnished by you. The notices sent to you by the Registered post are receiver back returned unopened. The contents of the said notices are that you had committed default in payment of the various loans guaranteed to you. Therefore, the present publication carried out to serve the notice as the provision of Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act and in terms of provision to the rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002:-

Sr. No.	Name and Address of the Account, Borrower(s) & Sureties, Branch Office	Details of the security to be enforced	NPA/ 13(2) Notice date	Amount O/s as per 13(2) notice
1	Borrower: M/s. Sarveshwar Creations Pvt. Ltd. Represented by its Directors 1. Sh. Apoorva Joshi and 2. Smt. Geetika Kweera, Office at: CR-274, Lalita Park, Laxmi Nagar Delhi-110092. Factory Unit at B-58, Sector-63, Noida UP. Surety: 1. Sh. Apoorva Joshi s/o Late Sh J C Joshi R/o D-169/56, Sector-50, Noida UP. 2. Smt. Geetika Kweera w/o Sh. Apoorva Joshi R/o D-169/56, Sector-50, Noida. UP. Also at 3. Corporate Guarantee of M/s Sheen India Pvt. Ltd. Office address: B-107, Sector-63, Noida UP-201301. 4. Corporate Guarantee of M/s G & K Moda Plus Pvt. Ltd., Registered Office: CR-274, Lalita Park, Laxmi Nagar, New Delhi. Branch Office: SME Branch, B-117, Sector-18 Noida.	1). Stock & Book Debts and other Current assets. 2). Immovable Property Plot No. A-38-1, Sector-34, Noida in owned by M/s G K Moda Plus Pvt Ltd	28.09.2018 27.11.2018	Rs. 52027562.90 (Rupees Five Crores Twenty Lakhs Twenty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Two and Paise Ninety Only) is along with interest from 01.10.2018 and cost etc.
2	Borrower: Mr. Bijendra Singh, R/o Village Shahpur Chaudhary, Teh Garhmukteshwar, Hapur-245207. Surety: Mr. Samar Pal Singh s/o Sh. Rati Raj), R/o Village Powti Garhmukteshwar Dist. Hapur. Branch Office: Garhmukteshwar	House part of Khasra No. 890 which is constructed at ground floor in village: Shahpur chaudhary, Pargana & Tehsil- Garhmukteshwar Distt-Hapur UP. Owned by Mr. Bijendra Singh	31.05.2014 24.09.2018	Rs. 714149.74 (Rupees Seven Lakh Fourteen Thousand one Hundred Forty Nine and Paise Seventy Four Only) is along with interest from 01.09.2018 and cost etc.

You are hereby called upon to pay Syndicate Bank within the period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice the aforesaid amount with interest and cost falling which Syndicate Bank will take necessary action under the Provisions of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers, mortgagors and the guarantors. The power available to the Syndicate Bank under the said act include (1) Power to take possession of the secured assets of the borrowers/guarantors including the rights to transfer by way of lease, assignment of sale for releasing secured assets (2) Take over management of the secured assets including rights to transfer by ways of lease, assignment or sale and realize the secured assets and any transfer as of secured assets by Syndicate Bank shall vest in all the rights and relation to the secured assets transferred as if the transfer has been made by you.

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"Your kind attention is invited to provisions of sub-Section (B) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act where under you can tender the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured asset(s) by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Please also note that if the entire amount of outstanding dues together with the costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank is not tendered before publication of notice for sale of the secured assets by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty, you may not be entitled to redeem the secured asset(s)."

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PLACE: GREATER NOIDA, DATE: 15.12.2018

AUTHORISED OFFICER, SYNDICATE BANK

Irish Parl votes to legalise abortion

PTI ■ LONDON

Ireland's parliament has passed landmark legislation to make abortion legal for the first time in the Catholic-majority country, a "historic moment" which came after an Indian dentist died from blood poisoning in 2012 when the doctors refused her repeated requests to abort the foetus.

Ireland voted decisively to change the Constitution to repeal the Eighth Amendment in May, with 66.4 per cent voting in favour of new legislation to allow for the termination of pregnancies.

"The bill that allows for the introduction of abortion services in Ireland has passed all

stages of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) and will now go to President Michael D Higgins to be signed into law," Irish Broadcaster RTE reported on Thursday.

"Historic moment for Irish women. Thanks to all who supported and well done to (Health Minister) Simon Harris for steering this through both Houses," Ireland's Indian-origin President Leo Varadkar said.

The new development has come following a rising number of distressing stories about women unable to get an abortion in Ireland.

One of the high-profile cases was that of 31-year-old Indian dentist Savita Halappanavar, who died in

agony from blood poisoning after doctors refused her repeated requests for an abortion while she was having a miscarriage at a Galway hospital in 2012. Her death helped "personalise" the debate around abortion, said a legal scholar at Trinity College Dublin.

"This is a genuinely historic moment. It paves the way for the implementation of the service for termination of pregnancy in January 2019," said Minister Harris. The Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy Bill allows for abortion services to be provided "on demand" up to the 12th week of a pregnancy, in the case of a fatal foetal abnormality or where the physical or mental health of the

mother is in danger.

Since the bill's introduction at first stage in October, there have been some minor changes, including a decision to review the legislation after three years, rather than five years as was originally planned. Two different doctors will be allowed to assess a woman in early pregnancy and the offences section has been moved from the front of the bill, the BBC reported.

"I want to thank the campaigners who fought for 35 years to change a nation, to change hearts and minds. I want to thank the minority who fought the battle in here when it was convenient for the majority to ignore.

SHORT CIRCUITS



DEEPIKA PADUKONE

It feels nice to be one of the top actresses of Bollywood. It's not something that has fallen in my lap. My message to kids is that work hard, believe in your dreams and have fun while you are at it. Life is not only about being at the top, but more about enjoying the process.



KAILASH KHER

Even if we touch the sky, we cannot uproot ourselves. *Koi kitna bhi bada ho, apne bado se bada nahi hota. Ye mere bado ki dharti hai.* (No matter how much one achieves, s/he is not bigger than her/his elders. This is the land of my elders). It's nostalgic and emotional to sing for my people on my homeground.



RANVEER SINGH

Marriage is like the best thing that has ever happened to me. I feel some kind of magic. It's like I'm invincible. You know in those superhero movies, you know that moment when the suit comes on. I feel like marriage has done that to me. I would highly recommend it to the entire young population.



MATTHEW HEALY

I don't think it is particularly brave to be talking about my drug addiction in my song. Telling the truth is the only option. That's why I represent it in my art and the way I speak and the way I am with people. It is important for me to be upfront. People can deal with anything if it's true.

JENNIFER LOPEZ

Limitless is a song that Sia wrote for the movie, *Second Act*. It's the anthem for the film. I asked her watch the movie and tell me what you think — if you're inspired, write something, and she wrote that song which is I thought I had to be somebody else, but look at me now, I'm limitless.



EVENT 30 MINUTES

NOT JUST FOOD

Founders RUCHI SIBAL and ADITI KAPOOR tell CHAHAK MITTAL how the Palate Fest goes beyond conventional culinary habits to promote healthier initiatives among the public



What were called the *melas*, popularly known as amusement fairs, have now got a suave new avatar as theme-based festivals and extravaganzas, especially ones that are centred food. In fact, the turn of the season seems to signal the start of a host of events centred around gourmet eating. This trend has not only acquired a must-do status among the denizens of the capital but also shapes the face for various cuisines and food cultures in the year to come.

Ruchi Sibal, co-founder and director of the Palate Fest, says that the festival was the first-of-its-kind when it was launched five years ago. "We conceptualised the show keeping in mind a space where there is something for everyone including kids and adults. If it provides a section to particular cuisines to showcase, there is also a special section for kids as well as one for presenting food products for adults," she says.

There will be gaming zones for kids and sections that promote healthy eating habits. It also gives a platform for various chefs and cooks to share and learn new recipes.

believes Ruchi. So what is the biggest element that the festival offers? Founder Aditi Kapoor says that by bringing in chefs from many segments, they are trying to promote healthier food eating habits. She says, "We have chef Sabyasachi who promotes 'healthy bingeing' of fruits and dry fruits including dehydrated mangoes without any added sugar. He also brings fresh eating habits by avoiding trans-fat and including a tomato and cucumber salad."

With about 80 stalls, the festival offers piquant food options like freshly-skewed fish, barbecued chicken, noodles, and various cuisines including Mexican and pan-Asian.

Ruchi lists some of the elements that have been added for the first time in the fest. "So we have a country pavilion for Mexico in a corner. It will present their local cuisine and culture. We have also expanded our entertainment factor where we'll have the kids' zone. Earlier everything was in one area, now there are separate sections for everyone. We also have little food alleys where there will be young and significant food brands. There is also more participation from even the general public."

"Food is something that can bring everybody together. People used to go for picnics in the parks earlier. Now that concept is vanishing. However, such festivals, in a way, are trying to replicate the experience minus the preparation and time that these entailed. These aim to bring in delicacies at big venues,"

Aditi believes that street food in India was always more popular but today the Indian audience is open to more cuisines and food cultures. She says, "It's not just about having *chowmein*, *butter chicken* or *chole bhature* anymore, or going out to have one



food item. Such a festival gives a roof to all kinds of cuisines together."

She says that this scenario has evolved among the current population as they are travelling a lot more. "When they like something in a foreign land, they also wish for it to be present and accessible in their own country. Now with growing awareness, the availability has also increased. Today there's a plethora of things to explore," she says.

While talking about the challenges, she agrees that there are always hurdles while creating something so massive. "But," she says, "the biggest one is to not become stagnant and do the same thing year after year. There should always be certain additions that give a new vibe. This time there are food sessions and talks on healthy food, sections for food art and organic products, entertainment and more." She recalls that when they implemented their idea for the first time, half a decade ago, "there was one challenge — understanding. We wanted people to comprehend that it is not just a frivolous food festival that has some drinks and music but also amusement related to food as well as an

opportunity to gain some knowledge around various cuisines."

So what have been the patterns that she has observed during the course of five years? "The demographic of the country is so wide that there are no particular lines that hit the highest graph. If some follow more international dishes, some still stick to Indian food. Those who have tried things before and have liked them want to stick to them. There are variations so there can't be just one statistic. But, the Indian audience is indeed increasingly heading towards global food movements," says Aditi.

The three-day extravaganza will also see Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu greeting audience. There will be performances by singers like Daler Mehendi on December 16, while Jasmine Sandlas and Tulsi Kumar will be performing today. A few names from the culinary space are Big Wong, Jom Jom Malay, Bombay Brasserie, The Great Kabab Factory, Orient Heritage, Wok to Walk, Olives of Spain, Kiara's Soul Kitchen, among others.

(The festival at Nehru Park ends on Sunday.)

ENCOUNTER 20 MINUTES

'ART IS NEVER A COMPETITION'

Filmmaker IRAM HAQ's *What Will People Say* has been selected as Norwegian entry for the best foreign language film at the 91st Academy Awards

Norwegian-Pakistani actress filmmaker Iram Haq, whose film *What Will People Say* has been selected as Norwegian entry for the best foreign language film at the 91st Academy Awards, says telling a compelling story is more important for her than winning an award because she does not believe in competition when it comes to art.



How did she first react on her film being chosen to represent Norway at the Oscars.

Haq, whose film stars Indian actors Adil Hussain, Ekavali Khanna and Rohit Sarafi said, "When I started making the film, the most important thing for me was to tell a story in an utmost honest manner. And as an individual, I strongly believe that art is never a competition."

"Of course, it is a big honour for me that my film has been chosen but I want to say that it is not possible to compete in art. Reaching out to people with a story is important," added Haq, whose earlier film 'I am Yours' was also selected as the official Norwegian Oscar entry for Best Foreign Language Film.

This year, Rima Das's *Village Rockstar* has been selected as India's official entry to Oscar. The story of Haq's film deals with the journey of a young girl who is dealing with socio-cultural difference and a disturbed relationship with her parents.

According to her, understanding the generational gap and expressing a critical view on the matter through the film was very important.

Talking about projecting a balanced view with the story, Haq said, "It was important for me to put out both sides of the story. You see, the film is basically a love story between a father and his daughter and that does not really work because they are coming from two different generation, gender and mindset.

"While the daughter understands the cultural values of her father and how he is struggling to accept the cultural difference of a world that is very different from a regular south Asian society, the girl is a Pakistani born and brought up in Norway. It is almost impossible for her to live her entire life to please her family."

The film not just features Indian actors, but is also shot in various parts of India, mostly in Rajasthan. In fact, Adil won the Best Actor award at the Amanda Award or the Norwegian National Awards.

On casting Indian talent, especially Adil, Haq said, "He is a wonderful actor and he was the perfect choice for playing the father. How wonderfully he transformed the character from script to screen through his performance."

Being a Pakistani girl who is born and brought up in Norway herself, just like the pro-

tagonist Nisha — played by Maria Mozhdah — the film is quite autobiographical for the director. Reflecting upon that, she said, "When our parents went abroad and were not well-integrated, they feared to embrace the new culture. That is how they ended up taking wrong decisions for their children."

"I had to live life like a well-mannered South Asian girl in my home because according to my parents, 'log kya kahenge (what will people say)' otherwise, we will lose out on our tradition and culture. They think the new generation will lose themselves in the western culture."

"I wanted the young generation to break free of that constant thought of *log kya kahenge* and assert that we are not here to live up to the expectation of 'log (people)... we are here to live our *zindagi* (life). This is how I always stand by my child as a mother," added Haq.

She was kidnapped and taken to Pakistan and lived there for a year. She had lost connection with her parents.

"I want to say that the story of the film is told with a lot of love but at the same time, it is a critical voice on how you shut down a young voice, or the voice of a girl, because she is a girl or because the individual is young. I am a strong believer of respecting your voice."

Before making her directorial debut in 2010 with the short film *Little Miss Eyeflap*, Haq worked as an actress, writer and theatre artiste for many years.

Is she interested in collaborating more with Indian actors? She said, "I have already worked with Indian artistes and producers over here in India and of course I love India. I speak the language and it feels like they are my people. So, I am open to the idea of collaborating with Indian artistes in the near future."

—IANS

DIALOGUE 40 MINUTES

The water game

It was not just the storyline but also the effort and passion that went into the shooting of *Aquaman* that makes it a much-awaited film, says its cast



Can you tell us James, what was the most important part for you to get right in creating this world and telling this story visually?

James Wan: Probably one of the biggest visuals I wanted to get right was the costume of *Aquaman*. That was definitely something we worked hard and long on. I really wanted to capture the vibrancy of Atlantis and all the underwater kingdoms and do justice to the comic book while obviously, filtering it through my own sensibility.

Mera is fierce. She goes toe-to-toe with the bad guy. What are you most proud of in terms of this character — the way she was written and the way you portrayed her?

Amber Heard: Well, I feel really lucky to have worked with people who wanted to maintain the integrity and strength of the original character. Mera never was anything other than a bad-ass superhero. She is no damsel in distress. Mera is a kick-ass woman and doesn't need any help from anyone. It was amazing to get to play a character like her.

Orm is the villain of the film but

he also has a point about humankind destroying the oceans. What was it like playing the many sides of this complex character?

Patrick Wilson: Well, his fight is perfectly understandable. There's a long history of Aquaman protecting oceans, fighting whaling, saving fishermen, all throughout comic history. I like that they left the pollution up to Orm because it enables you to have a really violent response. And I think there's something cathartic for an audience watching that. I think you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who didn't think we were destroying the oceans; of course we are. And, of course, it's something we all need to take heed of — not that, that's the main theme of the story, but certainly that's Orm's track when he sets out to combine his armies and take on the surface. Everybody says, "Yeah, I get it. So, it's a fun way in, because then you've got conflict. You sort of wonder, so he's the little brother of an older brother he never had?" He knows deep down he is the firstborn, so there are all those very Shakespearean complex emotions that he's dealing with. But you start him from a very organic place, then you can go as big as you want, which we do.

James, what was your biggest challenge, and why Jason?

James Wan: Ultimately, it is just bringing his personality to this character — not bringing him to *Aquaman*, but bringing *Aquaman* to him. And what I

love most about it is I get to be the one to showcase the other side of Jason Momoa that not many people have seen, which is the funny side of him. And after this movie comes out, people are going to see what a great potential romantic lead he is as well.

Jason Momoa: I just want to speak English. I don't want to fight anymore.

James Wan: But that's what I love about Jason — he comes in and just makes a statement with this character, and that's what this first movie really needs.

When you first learned that you were going to play Aquaman, how did it make you feel to know you'd be taking on one of the most iconic heroes known in comic books?

Jason Momoa: When Zack (Snyder, the director) first told me I'd be the cast... I wish I had a picture of my face because, I am the last person he should be hiring. I thought I'd be playing a villain. It was an honour. Zack's perspective is so radical, and what it offered to the team in Justice League was something we hadn't seen. And it's not until the end of this movie that we get to him being a king.

With so many water effects in this movie, what were some of the challenges you ran into?

James Wan: You hear it all the time from filmmakers that making movies with water is not the most pleasant thing. It's uncomfortable and slows down the speed of the film. The irony is all the sequences



that are actually fully submerged in this underwater world — that was actually shot dry for wet. And that's literally what it sounds like, in these rigs that simulate swimming, floating, and how your body moves underwater. But we did play with a lot of water as well. I don't think you can make an *Aquaman* movie and actually not have anyone get wet. And, again, the irony is that when we're actually above the water — when we're dry — that's when I have to drench the actors nonstop. When they're actually out of water, that's when they're dripping wet. But when you're underwater, people actually look dry, so that's why we shot it without water.

The biggest water set that we had in this film was the submarine sequence at the beginning. We built the submarine over a water tank and would just submerge it again and again. As we'd play out the scene, we would submerge it, and then bring it back out of the water tank, blow dry it down, and then do take two, and then take three. It was quite a laborious process. And, a bit of a pain.

Jason, this movie is going to mean something to Aquamanfans, but do you think it has something specific to say for people who are half-Asian or hald-native Hawaiian?

Jason Momoa: Coming from the Polynesian islands, there are so many water gods that we have and so much folklore and mythology about how the islands came about — from Kanaloa to Tomaloa and Maui. It's the *Poseidon* story and I get to play that. To be the first mixed-raced Super Hero in 2018 is a huge honour. And also just to play it so close to who I am, with all of Arthur's imperfections. I don't have to be Superman — I'm not. But I got to play it as someone who really is split between those two worlds, and I'm excited for the world to see it.

What is the one thing you really hope people will take away from this film?

James Wan: For the fans out there who have stood by Aquaman all these years while people made fun of him, his comic book and all the characters in his world — I want them to see that this is finally the opportunity to get revenge. This movie is made with a lot of passion. I want people to know that I respected the source material in making this film. And then, on the other side, I want to introduce all these characters to a whole new generation of kids that didn't grow up with Aquaman, and so I want the two separate worlds to come together.

IMMERSIVE 60 MINUTES

GALLERIA 25 MINUTES

Game of colours

Artist VINITA KARIM says that landscape will always be an important part of any art discourse, despite the rising trend in conceptual and digital pieces. By TEAM VIVA

From fiery oranges and yellows, myriad shades of blue, to black, green, rich hues of red and even copper, silver and gold, artist Vinita Karim's canvases are a glorious riot of colour.

"I love colours. I just can't work in black and white. There is no fun in that," tells Vinita.

Born in Myanmar, educated in Sweden and the Philippines, originally from India — Vinita Karim's nomadic lifestyle takes her all over the world. She channels her constantly changing surroundings into her passion for art and no matter where she goes, through her paintings, sculptures and installations, Vinita carries with her the rest of the world.

Her new collection of abstract cityscapes titled *Magical Musings*, were created in the last five years, replicate fantastical cities in the artist's mind on to the canvas. The exhibition also showcases eight sculptures, which she did not sculpt but painted.

The imaginary spaces featuring clusters of houses against robust skies, and sometimes beautifully coloured streams or rivers, are products of Vinita's entire life, which she has, quite literally, lived out of a suitcase.

The artist is a fan of all things layered, and her paintings are no exception. Sometimes they are layered with different painting techniques, at other times she uses different mediums like acrylic, oil and embroidery to tier her works.

Vinita explains further that her works are literally layered with geographies, histories and the cultures of different places while physically they are the paints, lines and embroidery.

As she travelled from one city to another, each place left a mark. She imbibed their spirits that got intertwined in her head, giving birth to cities of her own.

"My father was part of the Indian Foreign Service and I have lived in over 10 countries. I am like a sponge who has absorbed everything around me. It was not just travelling for me. I was living in these cities. And when you live in a city, you become very intimate with its culture and people. The best thing is that all these different cultures also get embedded in your own psyche," says she, who is inspired by Austrian landscape artist Hundertwasser, "yet I consistently link back to my roots in India." Richly coloured canvases combine the sand dunes of Egypt with the islands of the Philippines, the ghats of Varanasi with the rivers of Bangladesh. These are not just pretty pictures, they are "living landscapes", she explains.



Odyssey

Her rendition of the holy city of Varanasi, for instance, is overwhelmingly rich, particularly the waters.

She uses impasto, a technique where one paints with a palette knife, to render almost a three dimensional texture to the Ganges river in the painting. The canvas made using acrylic, gold and copper on linen, is colourfully chaotic in its juxtaposition of the multi-layered blues of the river, with multi-coloured boats.

"Like I have a lot of different roles other than being an artist, a mother, a wife, similarly in my painting I want to use different mediums. I don't want a single flat painting. Instead, it needs to have depth in it. I need my works to be layered because they represent many histories combined with a lot of my imagination," says she.

Oil is her favourite medium even if it takes longer to dry out. She says that it is rich, soft and offers a distinctive depth to the works.

Vinita recreates similar imaginary cities with her work on sculptures too, at the risk of making a viewer feel her work was repetitive, but not in a boring way, largely because of the judicious use of colours.

Vinita has painted landscapes as she strongly believes that it will always be an important part of any art discourse, despite the rising trend in conceptual and digital art.

(The exhibition is on display till January 5 at Gallerie Ganesha.)



Above: Sky meets Earth; Below: Nocturnal dream



FRAGILE BEAUTY

The tapping was gentle yet insistent and then a sudden shattering sound echoed around the studio. Two flowers broke off from a green decorative glass piece and made a clatter triggering collective ohs and sighs from the 10 odd people that were hovering around the glass artists crafting the piece at Studio Glass Sutra in Chhattarpur.

"One has to go very slowly to remove the glasswork from the rod as the bottom part is cold and the upper part is soft. The upper part couldn't take the shock and that is the reason it broke," says Reshmi De, founder Studio Glass Sutra.

The piece, an exquisite green, opaque figurine, was work under progress for quite sometime and entailed frequent trips between the furnace and the heating chamber where the flowers are kept. If the glass was heated a little less, the flowers don't stick, if it was melted a little bit more, then there was always the danger of the flowers falling off. This meant that it was not a simple process and needed constant switches between the two places. Brent Sheehan, a glass artist from California who had been holding the piece at the end of a blowing rod, shrugs at the loss. Reshmi says, "This doesn't break our heart but yes, we do feel bad."

Reshmi, an Economics graduate from Assam, ventured into glass around 1999. She made the long journey from her state to Delhi in search of doing something different where, "I could tell a story of life, experiences and my journey." And that was despite

RESHMI DE discovered the story of her life and breaking its contours with glass, says SAIMI SATTAR

her parents opposition who wanted her to do masters in the subject or appear for the UPSC exams. But she was yet to decide upon how she was going to pursue her calling. Initially she sat for MBA exams, qualified for some institutes, then attended workshops on Mass Communications and but realised that her heart was not in any of it.

"Then I saw some coloured glass pieces with light passing through," and it was as if her life too was illuminated. She asked the person who had brought them questions similar to the ones that she now fields often— about how it was made, the technique and more. Initially she started with marketing them but did not want to sell something without understanding it. "I started studying online. I wanted to go to Firozabad but everyone objected. There were only two trains to the place and that too without any reservation. But I stood by my decision and headed there. I remember distinctly that it was May 1999 and after so many years, I am still at it," she says. But there were some recurrent problems. She studied online but when she wanted something similar created, there was a skill, understanding and aesthetic gap among the craftspeople. So there was always a discrepancy between her visualisation and the final output. "So I decided that I should do things which

they understand."

It was as if seeing her persistence, doors seemed to open automatically. In two months, an institute called Centre for Development of Glass Industry came up which was commissioned by Government of India and United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). "They invited Czech glass master Petr Novotn who is ranked as one of the three world celebrities in the field of glass art craft by experts. He was accompanied Martin Janecky, his assistant and after all these years we are still in touch.

It was from them that Reshmi learnt that glass has an art side also. "Here I learnt that it was important to understand the material and the design after which you think through the whole process and create it yourself," she recalls.

She crafted her pieces and sold them to stores, as well as at places like the Blind School Diwali Mela. "The ones at the latter were more like hand crafted organic tableware pieces," she says.

In 2007, she branched out into installation art. "I started doing commissioned pieces. My most expensive piece was a wall installation for a corporate on sustainability which was priced at ₹27 lakh and a chandelier which cost ₹25 lakh."

Reshmi works with different methods of glass making. Hand blown glass is where glass is melted in a furnace at a temperature of 1050-1100 degrees centigrade temp. The molten glass which has the viscosity of honey is blown through the end of a pipe and given shape. This is the most difficult of the techniques. "While most people claim that they are doing this, it is the blowing where borosil test tubes are attached at the end of a machine and given shape as well as design is what they are actually doing."

Then there is flame work which is used to create more intricate and often smaller pieces like jewellery. "I have even created a 3x90 feet chandelier with this technique. Then there is fusing or slumping which is used to make platters and large installations.

However, while working with glass there are some things that need to be kept in mind. If the glass is not cooked properly, it breaks. At her studio, she maintains the highest of international standards. The glasses that they wear to protect the eyes are made of didanium and there is proper hand gear.

Reshmi wants to create an understanding and an awareness about art where people can see the beauty of glass and craftsmanship. "There is design touching the boundary of art, with an infusion of craft. I am trying

functional art as well. So there is a transition from design to art to craft," she says.

Reshmi also points out that there are different types of glass that are involved. While for the coloured pieces, she works with recycled glass for the clear ones, it is the fresh glass that is used. To infuse colour she prefers the glass bars from Krugler or Reichenbach which are German based brands to camouflage the quality of the glass. Her devotion can be measured from the fact that often when the glass is being melted she shifts bag, baggage and dog to the studio where she sleeps on the first floor to keep a check on the furnace. "Glass needs to be melted at 1300 degrees celsius for 12-14 hours to be perfect," she says.

She prefers to not make more than four to five pieces of each of her work as, "I get bored," she says.

The pieces can start at ₹1,000 for the tiniest one. The bespoke luxury ones begin at ₹7,000 and can go up to a few lakh while the installations start at ₹3 lakh upward. For the India Design Week, she is working on a range of lighting which incorporated textile with glass.

As for her future plans she wants to work with women and give them the hope and skill set to improve their lives as well as try and get the study of glass incorporated in some institute.

CONVERSATION 30 MINUTES

'Need to respect our culture first'

The first Indian chef-restaurateur to get a Michelin star, VINEET BHATIA believes that combining our nation's rich heritage and vibrant food legacy makes for the best of everything. AYUSHI SHARMA spoke to him about being a part of the Tasting India Symposium



How does the Tasting India Symposium initiate a dialogue on India's gastronomic heritage and culinary tourism?

It's a fantastic concept to have something like this as it gets plenty of people from across the country to come and discuss various issues and that's what the industry needs — to reach not only the chefs but also the suppliers. It also gives chefs exposure and enlightens them with what's on the market and to come and interact with. In the end it's a journey in process. The symposium has done an amazing job in getting everybody under one roof to initiate the advocacy initiative.

What are the ways that can promote culinary tourism potential in India?

Tourism in India is on a rise and we need a lot of support from the government. It is a land of plenty with its history and heritage and culture. Food is a very important part in tourism because wherever we go we want to eat and enjoy the diverse cuisine of India, right from Rajasthan to Kanyakumari to Nagaland and Sikkim. If you combine the scenic beauty with some amazing food, there is nothing more than one needs.

What are the challenges to a sustainable food culture in India?

Education and awareness are very important. We talk about sustainability but we also need to have fair trade for farmers. They have to be looked after and given exposure. Train the people at grassroot level from farmers to people working at lower positions in hotels and pay them decent salary. The farmers must be edu-

cated about new methods and techniques.

What is your idea of the Indian cuisine? How do you think it is being appreciated by international chefs and present in the global palate?

India is a sleeping giant. It is just awakening. There is a change for sure, we have been trying to push this for many many years in London and as chefs we do seminars and workshops. When you are there even if you are not

an am ambassador you are still representing India, and we try to show it in a very humble and approachable manner. It's a misconception that Indian food is spicy and oily as that's not the case at all. Nobody eats that on a daily basis. We have to learn to respect our culture first. The exposure and awareness has been phenomenal now with Google and the internet in place. Also the media has started appreciating what we have, which was not the case initially when I started. Journalism is very structured and constructive now.

What are some of the global food movements and revolutions today?

It's all going back to basics in many ways — going back to flavours, good tastes and respecting which part of the world you are from. Everyone wants to eat healthy and as local as possible. We have 14 restaurants globally and we try to incorporate ingredients from that region. You have to respect sensibilities around you. You have to also support the local communities and help them earn their bread and butter.

What do you have to say about the current food culture in India?

India for the past few years has been all

about molecular which had already been passed over by Europe 20 years back. It's a phase passing by. At my restaurant a lot of dishes are inspired from home cooking and mothers' cooking. They are about childhood memories, they bring nostalgia. If somebody eats something and that touches them, they always want to go back to that place. So for us if we can send our guests with one happy memory, our job is done. I am biased about food. I love the food that is cooked from the heart.

How has your cooking evolved over the years?

It keeps evolving. It never stops. Also from the business point of view, you have to have that USP in order to be ahead from everybody else. Why would someone want to come to my restaurant when there are 10,000 other restaurants that are doing the same job. A lot of chefs become very complacent after a while, but what we do is we step in and change the existing.

There is no new technique, but it's the approach towards food. Right from doing food which is very singular to deconstructing it. Now the trend is to enjoy a variety of food. I am a big fan of street food and we try bring that authentic flavours in our restaurant so that those who can't stand on the roadside can enjoy it too.

What are some of the most successful food experiments that you have mastered?

We always keep trying — the smoking technique from Rajasthan to samosas or making biryanis in dum. Fortunately I have travelled a lot in India because of the travel shows and I picked up a lot on the way. It's a constant process, we never stand still.

How do you think cooking food is an art?

It is a big art form and it is also a science. You have to have the basic understanding and learn the things, and then you can learn to modify it. Everybody can cook but if you can transform basic food into something very special, it's an art. There is a whole technique and understanding of variety of ingredients you use. As chefs we try to learn the food in the best way. It's not only cinematic art but it is also an art for your palate.

STICKATHON



Aus face Dutch in last 4 tie

Two-time defending champion play Netherlands while Belgium to take on England in WC semifinal



PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Rare history awaits two-time defending champions Australia as they chase a record hat-trick of titles, taking on Netherlands in the semi-finals at the Kalinga Stadium on Saturday.

World No 1 Australia is second only to four-time champions Pakistan, having won the world title thrice before, which includes back-to-back Gold medals in the last two editions of the tournament in 2010 and 2014.

Come on Saturday, the Kookaburras will be chasing their third consecutive world crown.

But it would be easier said than done as in world No 4 Netherlands a tough contest awaits Australia.

The Dutch, who have won the title thrice before — the last time being in 1998 — too would be desperate to break their 20-year-old jinx.

Netherlands would be high on confidence especially after their hard-fought 2-1 win over home favourites India in the quarterfinals on Thursday.

Going by form and world ranking, it is expected to be an edge of the seat thriller between the two teams, who

prefer to play totally contrasting style of hockey.

While attacking hockey is the back bone of Australia, the Dutch mostly prefer to play waiting game with a compact defence and relying more on counters to surprise their opponents.

There is hardly anything to differentiate between the two sides going by recent head-to-head record.

Since 2013, Australia and Netherlands have played each other 11 times with the Kookaburras winning five and losing four while two ended in draws.

The Australians made a slow start but grew in confidence as the tournament progressed.

After a hard-fought 2-1 win over Ireland in their opener, Australia stepped on the gas and registered convincing wins over England (3-0), China (11-0) and France (3-0).

The Dutch, on the other hand, started with a bang and mauled Malaysia 7-0 before losing 1-4 to Germany.

They defeated Pakistan 5-1 in their last pool match before beating Canada 5-0 in the cross-overs and eking out a close 2-1 win over India in the quarterfinals.

AUSTRALIA-HOLLAND IN WORLD CUP				
Year	Venue	Result	Score	
1971	Barcelona	Holland beat Australia	1-0	
1978	Buenos Aires	Holland beat Australia	3-2	
1981-82	Mumbai	Australia beat Holland	3-2 (league)	
1981-82	Mumbai	Australia beat Holland	4-2 (third place match)	
1990	Lahore	Australia beat Holland	1-0	
1994	Sydney	Holland beat Australia	3-1	
1998	Utrecht	Holland beat Australia	6-2	
2002	Kuala Lumpur	Australia beat Holland	4-1	
2010	New Delhi	Australia beat Holland	2-1	
2014	The Hague	Australia beat Holland	6-1	

ENGLAND-BELGIUM IN WORLD CUP				
Year	Venue	Result	Score	
1973	Amsterdam	England beat Belgium	5-2	
1978	Buenos Aires	Belgium beat England	1-0	
2014	The Hague	England beat Belgium	3-2	

Faisel Features

And Saturday's encounter will provide the Dutch an opportunity to avenge their loss four years ago.

But in the last four years since they met in the final of 2014, much has changed.

The likes of Jamie Dwyer, Mark

Knowles and Glenn Turner have retired but the Kookaburras have rebuilt brilliantly under coach Colin Batch since the disappointment of Rio Olympics and have returned to the top of the world rankings.

The Dutch, on the other hand, are unquestionably much tougher under Max Caldas now than they were four years ago.

Australia's Daniel Beale too agreed that it would be a tough, exciting battle on Saturday for a place in Sunday's summit clash.

"We are into the crucial stage of the tournament. We got to watch last night's match between Holland and India. So we have learnt a lot from that. We are expecting a very tough match tomorrow," he said.

"We have very proud history. There is no special formula. We work hard, we train hard. We are fiercely competitive. Every tournament we go to win."

Beale said what happened four years ago will hardly have any impact in Saturday's must-win game.

"In 2014 Australia had great success in the final but that was a long time ago and this group has changed immensely. So we are looking to create a bit of history," Beale said.

"Holland are a very tough team. They have quality players. Billy (Bakker), (Robert) Kemperman, (Valentin) Verga. We will do our homework and try to nullify them."

Meanwhile, Olympic Silver medalist Belgium too would be looking to create history by making their maiden World Cup final appearance when they take on England in the first semi-final earlier in the day.

SINGLES

PINK PANTHERS BEAT PUNERI PALTAN 36-23

PANCHKULA: Jaipur Pink Panthers began their home leg with a comprehensive win as they beat Puneri Paltan 36-23 in Vivo Pro Kabaddi Season 6. Deepak Hooda with 8 raid points and Sunil Siddhigavale with 8 tackle points were the heroes of the match for Jaipur. Puneri Paltan lost their way after the first 10 minutes of the match. GB More top scored for Pune with 5 raid points. Jaipur Pink Panthers still have an outside chance of making it to the playoffs while Puneri Paltan are not in contention.

AGUERO, BRUYNE CLOSE TO CITY RETURN

MANCHESTER: Sergio Aguero and Kevin De Bruyne are both on the verge of a return to action for Manchester City as a busy December programme gathers pace, manager Pep Guardiola said on Friday. Aguero, City's leading scorer, has missed their past four matches with a groin problem but has been able to train without discomfort and could face Everton at the Etihad Stadium on Saturday. Belgium midfielder De Bruyne suffered ligament damage to his right knee in August and although he returned in October, he then injured his left knee during the League Cup win over Fulham on November 1.

TOKYO IN LINE TO HOST ATP FINALS

LONDON: Tokyo and Singapore are battling London to host the ATP Finals from 2021 to 2025, the governing body of men's tennis announced on Friday. The shortlist for the end-of-season showpiece also includes the northern English city of Manchester and Italy's Turin, while the London deal, which runs until 2020, could be extended. The announcement of the candidates follows an extensive bid application process that began in August, in which more than 40 cities worldwide expressed an interest in hosting the event. The final phase will see the ATP visit the cities, with a decision on the successful candidate to be made not before March 2019.

RANJIT SINGH EMERGES AS TOP PICK

NEW DELHI: Indian attacker Ranjit Singh emerged as the top pick in the first Pro Volleyball League auction which also saw six foreign and 117 Indian players going under the hammer here on Friday. Singh was the costliest Indian player with Ahmedabad Defenders shelling out ₹ 13 lakhs for him. The Pro Volleyball League (PVL) scheduled to begin from February 2 in Chennai and Kochi will have six franchisees that includes Ahmedabad Defenders, Chennai Spartans, U Mumba Volley, Black Hawks Hyderabad and the Kochi Blue Spikers. Each of the six teams will have 12 players including two foreign players, one Indian icon player and two Indian U-21 players.

50 PUGILISTS CALLED FOR BOXING CAMP

NEW DELHI: Asian Games Gold medalist Amit Panghal, CWG winner Gaurav Solanki, Mandep Jangra, Sachin Siwach, Shiva Thapa and Gaurav Bidhuri are among the 50-odd boxers selected for the elite men's camp. The camp, which continues until January 15 next year, will be supervised by 14 coaches and headed by performance director Santiago Nieva. As per the standard guide line, the list will be pruned to 46 players and 12 coaches at the end of a trial conducted along with the performances review of the selected 50 players at the camp. The selected boxers then will be part of a camp starting from January 16, as the players will be trained for the upcoming Asian Championship in April and World Championship in September, which also happens to be an Olympic Qualifier. **Agencies**

PTI ■ GUANGZHOU

Olympic Silver medalist P V Sindhu continued her unbeaten run while debutant Sameer Verma also qualified for the knockout stage with a straight-game win in his last group B match at the BWF World Tour Finals, here on Friday.

Playing her third successive year-ending finale, Sindhu dished out some deceptive strokes and showed precision during the 35-minute contest to prevail over world No 12 Beiwen Zhang 21-9, 21-15 in a one-sided women's singles contest to top Group A.

"I was down 2-6 initially but I picked up the lead, so after that I was fine," Sindhu, the last edition's runner-up, said after the match.

"I have played a few matches against her after the Indian Open final, so I took it as a fresh match," said the 23-year-old referring to her Indian Open final loss to Zhang at New Delhi early this year.

"I am happy with the three wins, it is a positive thing. I hope to move forward with the same positivity and do well in the semifinals," added Sindhu, who won all the three matches of her group and will now take on world No 8 and 2013 world champion Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand in the semifinals.

On the adjacent court, 24-year-old Sameer showed great athleticism and produced a masterful performance to

SINDHU KEEPS CLEAN SLATE, SAMEER TOO QUALIFIES

Kento Momota, Sameer, who qualified for the tournament after defending his title at Syed Modi International last month, recovered well to come up trumps against his other two opponents in Group B.

He will now face All England champion and World championship Silver medalist Shi Yuqi of China in the semifinals.

"I have played him before at Swiss Open so I knew how to go about it. In the second game I was losing so after some advice from my coach, I kept my patience and now I am ready to play the semifinals," said Sameer.

"It has been a great experience playing my first world tour finals." In the women's singles, Sindhu,

who had stunned world No 1 Tai Tzu Ying in her previous match, didn't make a good start against Zhang, conceding a 0-4 lead early on.

But she clawed back at 6-6 after producing some angled returns, which included a delightful over-the-head-cross court return.

The Indian then sealed the opening game comfortably in 15 minutes when Zhang failed to reach a shot at the fore court.

After the change of sides, Sindhu continued to dominate the proceedings to accumulate the first five points before hitting long.

Zhang seemed to suffer from indecision and ended up committing too many unforced errors.

The Indian managed a 11-9 advantage at the interval after Zhang went long again.

The Indian committed three unforced errors before sealing the contest, following her opponent's miscued shot which went long.



AC Milan crash out of Europe

AFP ■ PARIS

Olympiakos dumped AC Milan out of the Europa League on Thursday after beating the seven-time European champions 3-1 in a pulsating clash in Greece, while Eintracht Frankfurt fans ran riot during the German side's win at Lazio and Celtic made the knockout stages despite losing to Salzburg at Celtic Park.

Captain Kostas Fortounis' penalty nine minutes from time saw the Greeks move into second place in Group F ahead of Gennaro Gattuso's Milan, who thought they had squeaked through when Cristian Zapata had pulled a goal back less than two minutes after putting the hosts 2-0 up with a comical own goal.

Olympiakos finished level on 10 points with Milan but qualified ahead of the Italians thanks to their superior goal difference following Milan's 3-1 win over the Greeks in October, and they end the group stage two points behind group winners Real Betis, who drew 0-0 at Dudelange.

Eintracht had already comfortably taken top spot in the group thanks to winning all five of their previous games, while Lazio were also in the last 32 regardless of the result of the match, won 2-1 by the away side as they came back from a goal down thanks to second-half strikes from Mijat Gacinovic and Sebastian Haller.

Last year's runners-up Marseille finished bottom of that group after losing 3-1 at home to Apollon Limassol and ending the group stage with just a single point.

CELTIC GET ONE OVER ON RANGERS

Celtic looked to be following Old Firm rivals Rangers out of the competition after Steven Gerrard's

side fell 1-0 at Rapid Vienna earlier on Thursday, but Tore Reginussen's equaliser four minutes from time for Rosenberg at RB Leipzig allowed Brendan Rodgers's side to qualify second from Group B, two points ahead of the Bundesliga outfit.

Second-half goals from Munas Dabbur and Fredrik Gulbrandsen meant that Salzburg topped the group with a 100 percent record after a 2-1 win, while Olivier Ntcham's stoppage-time penalty meant nothing for the result nor the final standings.

Chelsea, who had already won Group L, looked to be on their way to a perfect sixth win from six, but could only scrape a point at eliminated Vidi thanks to substitute Olivier Giroud's late free-kick, after an Ethan Ampadu own goal and Loic Nego's sumptuous volley had put the hosts a goal ahead.

BATE Borisov qualified alongside Chelsea after winning 3-1 at rock-bottom PAOK.

Alexandre Lacazette confirmed Arsenal's dominance of Group E with the only goal of a low-key 1-0 win over bottom side Qarabag, while second-placed Sporting Lisbon cruised past Vorskla Poltava 3-0.

Malmö are in the knockout stages after snatching a 1-0 win at Besiktas that saw the Swedes leapfrog their Turkish hosts in the extremely tight Group I.

All four teams in the group were in contention for qualification on Thursday, but Genk managed to hold on to first place after hammering Sarpsborg 4-0.

Sevilla took top spot in Group J from Krasnodar thanks to a 3-0 win, while Rennes pipped Astana to the knockout rounds with a 2-0 victory.

Bayer Leverkusen ensured first place in Group A with a 5-1 hammering of Larnaca, while Zurich drew 1-1 at Ludogorets.

Saina-Kashyap tie knot

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Star Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap tied the knots in a simple ceremony here on Friday.

"Saina got married as per court rules today at about 11.30 (AM)," her father Harvir Singh said.

The wedding took place at Saina's residence in Orion villas at Raidurgam in Cyberabad.

"It was a small gathering of about 40 guests, including relatives of the Saina and Kashyap's families. "It was a very simple ceremony and December 16th will be the reception," Singh said.

The guests included Governors

of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, according to Singh.

Saina posted a photograph with Kashyap on Friday, announcing her marriage.

"Best match of my life...#just-married," she wrote in *Twitter*.

Kashyap said, "We are very happy. Today was a north style wedding and 16th midnight is the muhurtam for the South Indian wedding."

While Saina wore a powder blue lehenga with minimal makeup and jewellery, Kashyap was dressed in a pink kurta and white pyjamas.

Saina and Kashyap, who met at Pullela Gopichand's academy, were in a relationship for quite some

time now. But the couple never came out in the open regarding their relation.

Saina had confirmed the news of their wedding in October but the hectic international badminton schedule kept them busy.

Last month, they started extending their wedding invitation to important personalities, including Telangana MLA KT Rama Rao, film star Chiranjeevi, owner of Hyderabad Hunters (PBL franchise) VRK Rao.

Saina and Kashyap's wedding is the latest among a string of high-profile weddings involving sportspersons. Last year, India cricket captain Virat Kohli had married Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma in Italy.



Australia ahead despite India's strikes

Harris, Finch and Head score half centuries to put host in commanding position on Day 1



PTI ■ PERTH

India recovered from a patchy start to reduce Australia to 277 for six on the opening day of the second Test but the hosts still walked out with advantage considering the bowler-friendly conditions, here on Friday.

A 112-run opening stand between Marcus Harris (70) and Aaron Finch (50) vindicated their decision to bat on green top before Indian bowlers made a decent recovery by taking three wickets each in the last two sessions.

With the pitch offering better assistance from the post lunch session and the Indian bowlers managing to rectify their line and length, the visitors made inroads into the Australian batting line-up.

Skipper Tim Paine (16 not out) and Pat Cummins (11 not out) were unbeaten at stumps after enduring a testing spell from Jasprit Bumrah.

Pacer Ishant Sharma (2/35) and spinner Hanuma Vihari (2/53) took two wickets apiece while Bumrah (1/41) and Umesh Yadav (1/68) accounted for one batsman each.

Following a good start, Shaun Marsh (45) and Peter Handscomb (7) looked to extend their fourth-wicket partnership but could only manage to add three runs as Sharma broke through early in the final session.

Handscomb looked to cut away too close to his body, and Virat Kohli held a stunning one-handed catch at second



slip to dismiss him in the second over after tea.

Marsh and Travis Head (58) then added 84 runs for the fifth wicket, and in doing so took Australia past 200 in the 69th over. India could have broken through early, but Rishabh Pant put down a regulation catch from Marsh (on 24) off Vihari in the 67th over.

India were looking in better again when Marsh fell against the run of play, trying to cut Vihari and edging to first slip where Ajinkya Rahane made no mistake.

Head reached his third Test half-century off 70 balls but threw it all away as he square cut a wide delivery off

Sharma six overs later and was caught at wide third man.

Earlier, India struck thrice post lunch as Australia were reduced to 145-3 at tea.

Jasprit Bumrah (1/41) and Umesh Yadav (1/68) struck during a tight spell in the second hour of play after lunch, as Australia lost three wickets for 22 runs.

Post lunch, Marcus Harris had brought up his maiden Test half-century off 90 balls as he took his opening stand with Aaron Finch (50) to 112.

Their 100-stand had come up in the 34th over, with India leaking another 48 runs in the hour's play after the



ASHWIN INJURY COULD UNSETTLE INDIA: HUSSEY

PERTH: Former Australia batsman Michael Hussey believes the loss of star off-spinner R Ashwin to injury could unsettle India and may prove to be a big blow to the visitors' hopes of securing victory in the second Test. Ashwin, who took six wickets in the first Test at Adelaide Oval, was ruled out of the second Test due to a left abdominal strain. "It'll definitely throw the team balance out

quite a lot I would have thought," Hussey, who played 79 Tests for Australia during his career, was quoted as saying in *cricket.Com.Au*. "You could tell quite clearly in Adelaide they liked to use the spinner — much like Australia really — to bowl a lot of overs from one end and then rotate the faster men from the other end." Ashwin had returned figures of 6 for 149 in Adelaide. **PTI**

break. Mohammed Shami (0-63) conceded 23 runs in his four-over second spell after lunch.

Finch too reached his second Test half-century off 103 balls as Australia reached a position of strength. But things turned thereafter as Bumrah struck first up in the 36th over, trapping Finch lbw with a fuller delivery.

KL Rahul dropped Harris (on 60) off Shami in the 45th over, with the fielder failing to time his jump at second slip. It didn't cost India too much though as four overs later, he hit a surprise bouncer from Vihari straight at Rahane at slip.

In between, Yadav used the pressure built and etched out Usman Khawaja's (5) wicket, out caught behind in the 46th over as India gained the fruits of their hard work in this second hour of play.

In the morning session, Australia defied a green-top wicket and made

steady progress to reach 66-0 at lunch.

The Perth wicket at the Optus Stadium was talked up a raging green-top wicket, but the Australian openers defied all that speculation. For their part, Indian pacers chipped in with all possible help and bowled a poor first spell with the new ball.

Shami was India's best bowler of the first session as he bowled with immaculate control from the very beginning. He came on to bowl in the 12th over and immediately troubled the batsmen.

Finch survived an lbw shout on account of height as India wasted a DRS review. They had another loud shout turned down on the very next ball, but this time no review was taken.

India bowled better in the second hour of play and conceded only 19 runs in 13 overs. But the damage had already been done as the duo were set and the new ball had been wasted on a fresh pitch.

WE HAVE TO BE DISCIPLINED ON DAY 2: VIHARI

PTI ■ PERTH

All-rounder Hanuma Vihari says key for Indian batsmen will be to remain disciplined on a pitch which has got better for the fast bowlers after a good contest between ball and bat on the opening day of the second Test.

The pitch was slow in the morning, but it quickened up after lunch. The Indian bowlers adjusted well to take six wickets.

"For us the important thing is to not think about those aspects too much. If it is up and down, you can't do much about it. If we can keep that out of mind, we will be successful. As batsmen, we will try to be as disciplined as possible, just how we did in the second innings of the last Test," Vihari said.

"You have to play ball by ball. That's what matters. If you are thinking about the previous ball, you won't react perfectly to the next ball. Keep that ball out of your mind," he added.

Indian bowlers were "disciplined" after an ordinary start on the opening day of the second Test and the target for day two is to restrict Australia to 320-odd in the first innings.

"The first hour tomorrow (on Saturday) will be very crucial. If we get them out for below 320, we are right back in the game. If we bat well, we have a good chance. The first hour is crucial," said Vihari.



Shreyas, Lad batter Baroda attack

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Shreyas Iyer slammed 11 sixes and 17 fours in a blistering knock of 178 and put on a double century stand with skipper Siddhesh Lad, who made a responsible 130, to power Mumbai to an imposing score of 439 for 8 against Baroda here on Friday.

Iyer was in punishing form, sparing no one from the visitors' ranks to compile his 12th first class hundred in his first game of the season as he rescued the hosts from 28 for 2 with a stand of 283 in just over 45 overs with Lad on day one of the elite Group A game.

Hardik Pandya, back in competitive cricket after recovering from a back spasm opened the bowling for Baroda and rocked Mumbai with a two-wicket haul for 21 in his impressive comeback spell of six overs.

Iyer smacked left arm spinner Bhargav Bhatt for three sixes in four balls to race to his century in 86 balls and then singled out veteran Yusuf Pathan for similar punishment by carting the off-break bowler for three successive sixes. A more sedate Lad, who faced 173 balls and struck two sixes and 12 fours, denied Baroda a wicket for more than four hours spread over the first two sessions.

However, Baroda grabbed five more wickets before stumps with Pandya snapping up one more victim, in-form all rounder Shivam Dube, to finish with end of day impressive figures of 3 for 74 in 15 overs.

Bhatt picked up four wickets while Pathan was the other successful bowler. Meanwhile, at Surat, despite skipper Priyank Panchal's 94, Gujarat were bowled out for 216 against Karnataka. For the visitors, Vinay Kumar, Prateek Jain, Ronit More, Krishnappa Gowtham and Shreyas Gopal picked two wickets each.

At New Delhi, Vidarbha reached 243 for 6 against Railways with skipper Faiz Fazal top-scoring with 53.

And at Nashik, Saurashtra batsmen hammered a listless Maharashtra attack to end the opening day at 269/3.

ODISHA BUNDLE OUT RAJASTHAN

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha bowlers produced a spirited show as they bowled out Rajasthan for a meagre 135 on the opening day of their Elite Group C encounter.

For Odisha, the Mohanty duo — Basant and Rajesh — both right-arm pacers — did the job as they shared nine wickets among them.

Basant returned with exceptional figures of 6-20 and was ably supported by Rajesh (3-63) as Rajasthan batters had a horrid time at the Vikash cricket ground here.

For them, only skipper Mahipal Lomror (85) played a valiant knock to ensure that the side crossed the 100-run mark.

Lomror, who was the last man to be dismissed, struck 14 fours and a six, as he waged a lone battle.

In reply, Odisha lost four wickets and were 78/4 at close of play, still adrift by 57 runs. Debasish Samantray (30 not out) and Abhishek Raut (22 not out) are holding the fort.

Meanwhile, in Agartala Pratyush Singh-led Tripura's fightback as the hosts reached to 247/7 at stumps on day 1. They were 128/6 at one stage.

At Lucknow, Ishank Jaggi (76 not out) and all-rounder Shabbaz Nadeem (70 not out) took Jharkhand to a respectable 278/6 after the side were teetering at 157/6 against Uttar Pradesh.

In Goalpara, Puducherry's Fabid Ahmed hogged the limelight with an all-round show on a day 22 wickets tumbled in their Plate Group match against Arunachal Pradesh.

The Kerala recruit top-scored with an unbeaten 41 before Puducherry were bundled out for 136.

Ahmed then foxed the Arunachal Pradesh batsmen with his off-spin on way to career-best figures of 6/29.

Former India pacer Pankaj Singh (3/20) also chipped in with crucial breakthroughs as Arunachal Pradesh folded for 82 at their adopted home venue.

Under fading lights, Arunachal Pradesh's Upadhyal Deendyal dismissed both the openers for a total of 22 wickets on the day.

At stumps on day one, Puducherry were 28/2, leading by 82 runs.

'AUS PACERS CAN LEARN FROM INDIA'S MISTAKE'

PTI ■ PERTH

Former skipper Allan Border feels the Australian pace battery will have the advantage of learning from the mistakes of Indian seamers, who bowled a "little bit short" on the opening day of second Test.

"Given the amount of deliveries that went past the outside edge India will feel they could have had a better day. They bowled well but if I'm being supercritical they were a little bit short," he wrote in a column for *Foxsports*.

"With so many balls passing the outside edge you've got to err on the fuller side. You may occasionally get hit down the ground but any ball that moves off the seam is good chance of catching the edge.

"The good news for Australia is their bowlers will have learned from what worked and what didn't, and when it is their turn to bowl they will be confident. There



were just enough balls bouncing awkwardly or moving off the seam to encourage them."

With R Ashwin injured, India drafted in Umesh Yadav in the playing XI, making it a four-men pace attack — only the third time in their Test history.

Part-time spinner Hanuma

Vihari, who was included in the team in place of the injured Rohit Sharma, took two wickets and Border hinted India might have missed a trick by not opting for a specialist tweeker, looking at the variable bounce.

"Moving forward in this Test we'll see whether or not India has missed a trick by not picking a specialist spinner," he wrote.

"Despite part-time off-spinner Hanuma Vihari's two bonus wickets, I still think this is a seamer's wicket."

The former Australia batsman said the hosts' first-innings runs might prove to be gold on this pitch.

"Both teams went hard on Friday but Australia finished it with their noses in front. On a surface like this runs on the board, particularly in the first innings, are like gold.

"At the same time, we won't have a true sense of where this game stands until India has also had the chance to bat on it."

Malinga back as SL skipper

AFP ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Friday brought back Lasith Malinga after a long hiatus as captain of its limited-over squads to lead the national team against New Zealand.

Sri Lanka Cricket said the 35-year-old right-arm fast bowler was named skipper of a 17-man squad for three one-day internationals and one T20 starting January 3.

Malinga led Sri Lanka to the T20 World Cup in 2014. But since captaining Sri Lanka against the UAE in February 2016, he has not led the national team.

He had lost his captaincy as well as his place in the team after recurring injuries which forced him to sit out many tournaments.

However, he captained an ODI match against India in August last year.

The latest squad for the shorter forms of the game was ratified by President Maithripala Sirisena in the absence of a sports minister, the cricket board said.

Sri Lanka is effectively without a government since a disputed cabinet appointed by Sirisena



was defeated in a no-confidence motion last month.

Sri Lanka squad: Lasith Malinga (captain), Niroshan Dickwella (vice captain), Angelo Mathews, Danushka Gunathilaka, Kusal Janith Perera, Dinesh Chandimal, Asela Gunaratne, Kusal Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva, Thisara Perera, Dasun Shanaka, Lakshan Sandakan, Seekkuge Prasanna, Dushmantha Chameera, Kasun Rajitha, Nuwan Pradeep and Lahiru Kumara.

Lyon will enjoy bowling at Perth: Finch

PTI ■ PERTH

Australian opener Aaron Finch believes the second Test against India is going to be a "real grind" and off-spinner Nathan Lyon will play an important role considering the amount of bounce on offer at the Perth wicket.

"It's going to be one of those games that'll be a real grind for both sides. The position we're in we would have taken at the start of the day, no doubt, especially winning the toss and batting," Finch told reporters.

"I think Nathan Lyon will enjoy bowling with the amount of bounce on this track, no doubt he will be excited to bowl here," added the opener, who scored 50 in Australia's first innings on Friday.

Asked about making the Indian bowlers work hard, Finch said, "Our plan was to bat on this wicket regardless of what happened in Adelaide, the heat and



getting miles into their legs.

"That was our plan to bat first anyway and take that challenge head on. No doubt it might play a factor later in this game, or third or fourth Test, but it was always our plan to bat (after winning the toss)."

Talking about his partner young Harris, who scored his maiden Test half-century at his home ground, Finch said, "I think what everyone's seen from him so far, not a lot fazes him. He's a pretty chilled out character who just goes with the flow and that's the way he's always been.

B'desh cruise to series win

AFP ■ SYLHET

Tamim Iqbal and Soumya Sarkar slammed half-centuries as Bangladesh cruised to an eight-wicket win over the West Indies in the third and final one-day international to take the three-match series 2-1 on Friday.

Friday hit an unbeaten 81 while Soumya added 80 off 81 balls to guide Bangladesh to 202-2 in 38.3 overs after Mehidy Hasan's career best 4-29 helped the home side restrict the West Indies to 198-8 in 50 overs.

Shai Hope fought a lone battle for the tourists, scoring his second successive hundred of the series but it was in vain as no other batsman provided support.

Fresh from an unbeaten 146 off 144 balls in the previous match, Hope struck another unconquered knock of 108 off 131 to prop up the visitors, taking his tally in the series to 297 runs.

Bangladesh made a steady response, with Tamim and Liton Das hitting 45 runs for the



opening wicket before Liton offered a catch to Rovman Powell at mid-on off Keemo Paul.

Soumya and Tamim denied the West Indies any momentum, putting 131 runs in their second wicket stand, which all but sealed the contest and the series. Mushfiqur Rahim was unbeaten on 16 at the other end.

Earlier, skipper Mashrafe Mortaza and spinner Shakib Al Hasan claimed two wickets each after man-of-the-match Mehidy rattled the West Indies' top-order.

"It was a good match — Hope played an excellent innings," Mashrafe said after the

match.

"Our bowlers have been very good. Spinners have been tight and pacers also stuck to the plans," he added.

Earlier, Hope defied the spirited Bangladesh attack, hitting Shakib over the long off to bring up his fourth ODI century after the ninth wicket had fallen for 177 runs.

The opener, who was named player of the series, also hit 10 fours in his fine innings.

Bangladesh won the first match by five wickets on Sunday before the West Indies levelled the series with four-wicket win in the second match two days later.