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LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 5, 2018; PAGES 16 ₹3



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MAN UTD HOST ARSENAL IN PREMIER LEAGUE
16 SPORT

Bulandshahr Inspector's murder pre-planned

4 arrested; armed to the teeth, Bajrang Dal activists specifically targeted Subodh Kumar Singh, say police

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH/SP SINGH ■ BULANDSHAHR

Bulandshahr Police has arrested four persons for the murder of Inspector Subodh Kumar Singh Rathor who was posted at Siana police station in the district.

Subodh was murdered by a mob of Bajrang Dal activists who were protesting the presence of a cow carcass in sugarcane field of Mahav village under the jurisdiction of Siana police station on Monday.

"It appears to be a cold-blooded murder as rioters had come fully armed with arms, iron rods, spears and wooden sticks and they specifically targeted Inspector Subodh," a police officer said on the condition of anonymity. Circle Officer (CO) of Siana Satya Prakash Sharma escaped death as police force arrived on time and he was taken out to safety from a locked room.

Inspector Subodh could not escape as rioters attacked with deadly sharp weapons and did not allow the rescue team to take him to hospital. By



Police officials carry the mortal remains of Inspector Subodh Kumar Singh after the wreath-laying ceremony in Etah on Tuesday

carcass of cow was found hanging in a sugar field on Monday morning.

"Inspector Subodh Kumar, who had reached the spot immediately after getting the call, tried his best to assuage the irate crowd and he was joined by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Siyana who kept on announcing via a loudhailer that exemplary action was being taken against those found guilty of killing coes. However, there were certain elements who were not in a mood to listen and they egged on the irate crowd to take revenge. Situation went out of hand and soon there was free of all as the police team led by Inspector Subodh Kumar was outnumbered. The mob, that was baying for his blood, targeted Inspector Subodh Kumar and snatched away his .32 bore licensed gun and three cell-phones, including the one with the CUG number of the Uttar Pradesh Police. They shot in the head with his revolver. As other policemen tried to take him to hospital, the mob attacked them," said police.

Police have named 27 persons in the FIR under various IPC Sections and Section 7 of the Criminal Amendment Act. According to the FIR lodged on the statement of Sub-Inspector Subhash Chand of the Siana Police station who witnessed the gory murder of

his immediate superior Subodh Kumar, 27 accused who were identified have been named in the FIR. They are: Yogesh Raj, Vishal Tyagi, Satendra Rajput, Chaman, Devendra, Upendra Raghav, Ravi Saini, Ashish Chauhan, Shikhar Agrawal, former Pradhan Raj Kumar,

Jeetu alias Fauzi, Sachin, Ramesh Joshi, Vineet, Saurabh, Sumit, Chhotu, Satish, Vikas Tyagi, Pawan, Vikrant Tyagi, Bablu, Ankur, Robin, Tinku, Guddu and Harendra. Names of about 60 persons have been mentioned as unidentified.

Continued on Page 7

None will be spared: Yogi CM announces ₹10-lakh aid to kin of Sumit

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Shaken by the series of sensational incidents, including violence in Bulandshahr, killing of BJP leaders in Lucknow and Ghaziabad and torching of a girl in Shahjahanpur, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath rushed back to Lucknow on Tuesday night.

Taking a serious view of the Bulandshahr incident, Yogi said that it was a premeditated attack by vandals and a part of a larger conspiracy. He added that all those involved in cow protection, either directly or indirectly, would not be spared. The CM announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh to the kin of Sumit who died in the violence.

On reaching Lucknow, he summoned senior officers at his Kalidas Marg residence on Tuesday night and expressed displeasure over unsavoury incidents taking place in the state. The meeting



with senior officials began at 10 pm and continued for two hours.

Besides Chief Secretary Anoop Chandra Pandey, Principal Secretary (Home) Arvind Kumar, DGP OP Singh, many senior officers, including ADG, Law and Order, Anand Kumar, were present during the meeting. DGP Singh elaborately narrated to the CM the sequence of events leading to the Bulandshahr mob violence. The CM was also apprised of the details of the investigation conducted so far by the inves-

tigating officer. Later, Principal Secretary, Home, Arvind Kumar informed mediapersons that the CM sternly told officials that anyone fiddling with the law and order issue and taking crime incidents flippantly would be shown the doors.

Sources said that Adityanath, while warning police officials, made it clear to them that the law and order was the top priority of his government and that he would make no compromises on axing them if any laxity on their part came to light. He directed them to take all necessary measures to maintain peace.

The Chief Minister also asked them to act swiftly on matters related to communal or caste dispute so that clashes could be prevented. Adityanath also directed them to take stern action, irrespective of the status or association of the person.

CAPSULE

LEARN ABOUT RELIGION FROM INDIA: DALAI LAMA
Farrukhabad: Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Tuesday said Muslim countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Syria should learn about religion from India so that there is peace in the world.

SC TO BIHAR, KERALA: SPL COURTS FOR MPs, MLAs
New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked Bihar and Kerala to set up special courts in each of their districts for the trial of pending criminal cases against present and former MPs and MLAs.

EX-RS MEMBER GETS 3 YRS JAIL FOR LTC SCAM
New Delhi: Former Rajya Sabha member from Mizoram, Lalhingm Liana, has been sentenced to three-year jail by a Delhi court for forging air tickets to claim reimbursement of leave travel allowance (LTC).

I-T RETURNS UP BY 50% TO 6.08 CR: CBDT CHIEF
New Delhi: The number of people filing Income Tax returns has increased 50 per cent to 6.08 crore so far in the assessment year 2018-19 compared to the year-ago period, the CBDT top official said on Tuesday.

WE'LL WORK OUT THINGS ON S-400, SAYS MATTIS
Washington: US Defence Secretary James Mattis appeared to be confident on resolving the pending CAATSA sanctions on India for it deciding to buy the multi-billion dollar S-400 missile defence system from Russia.

Centre brings Michel back for Agusta justice

After UAE Govt's extradition nod, scam middleman flown to Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a big diplomatic victory, the Indian Government on Tuesday night brought back AgustaWestland chopper scam prime middleman Christian Michel from the UAE. On arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Michel was formally arrested and taken to the CBI headquarters. He will be kept in a safe house before being produced in Patiala House Court on Wednesday. The agency will seek his custodial interrogation, said a senior CBI official.

The CBI press release said the deportation of Michel from the UAE was coordinated by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and CBI interim chief M Nageswar Rao.

According to senior officials, the UAE Government ordered Michel's deportation on Tuesday afternoon and within hours Michel was handed over to Indian authorities, led by CBI Joint Director Sai Manohar, who were in Dubai for the past two days. UAE Government's final

Brownie points for Modi Govt!

During the trial court proceedings in Italy, the prosecution produced documents and communications between Michel and his partner Guido Haschke and alleged that Michel paid around ₹400 crore as a bribe to Congress leaders



The communications showed Michel claiming to Haschke that he (Michel) shared proximity with then Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her political secretary Ahmed Patel, who is named in the communication as AP

The communication between Michel and Haschke showed that five per cent of the deal value that is ₹3,600 crore was to be shared with "The Family"

order on the deportation came after Michel lost his appeal in the apex court there. Incidentally, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is in Dubai for high-level talks with her UAE counterpart.

The Modi Government had approached Dubai authorities in early 2015, demanding the deportation of Michel, who was the main middleman accused of bribing top Congress leadership for the controversial purchase of 12 VVIP helicopters from Italian firm AgustaWestland.

Michel entered into conspiracy with co-accused, including public servants, by altering the tender guidelines and downgrading service ceiling from 6,000 metres to 4,500

metres. Service ceiling denotes the operational height at which a helicopter can operate.

During the trial court proceedings in Italy, the prosecution produced documents and communications between Michel and his partner Guido Haschke and alleged that Michel paid around ₹400 crore as a bribe to senior politicians and Indian Air Force officials in the ₹3,600 crore deal.

The communications showed Michel claiming to Haschke that he (Michel) shared proximity with then Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her political secretary Ahmed Patel, who is named in the communication as AP.

Continued on Page 7

Won't contest 2019 LS polls: Uma Bharti

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Union Minister Uma Bharti on Tuesday said she won't contest the next Lok Sabha elections. The senior BJP leader's announcement came days after her Cabinet colleague Sushma Swaraj said she won't contest the next general elections.

Bharti said she will instead concentrate on the issues of Ram temple in Ayodhya and cleanliness of the river Ganga for the next one-and-a-half years. The Union Drinking Water and Sanitation Minister, however, clarified that she was not quitting politics.

When asked about Sushma's announcement, the Jhansi MP said, "I am so sorry. I have said so (won't contest elections) one or two years ago. Sushmaji has said it now. Don't link both these things which are same, but the time and reasons are different."

Bharti announced that she would set out on a 2,500-km yatra (pilgrimage) along the Ganga river on foot from Makar Sankranti in January next year for nearly one-and-a-half years by "leaving power".

"I believe that one has to go to the banks of the Ganga river by leaving power and I am doing so for next one-and-a-half years. But I will be campaigning and would do politics till my last and that too with energy," Bharti told reporters at her official residence.

My father was against violence over religion: Inspector's son

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The son of the police inspector killed in mob violence over alleged cow slaughter in Bulandshahr said his father wanted him to be a good citizen who doesn't provoke violence over religion.

"My father has lost his life in this Hindu-Muslim dispute. Whose father is next?" Abhishek Singh said.

Inspector Subodh Singh, who had initially probed the 2015 lynching of Dadri resident Mohammed Akhlaq over rumours about beef consumption, and a 20-year-old man were killed Monday during an attack on policemen.

The Inspector's sister alleged the killing was a "conspiracy" by the police. "My brother was killed in a conspiracy by the police as he was probing a cow slaughter case (the Akhlaq lynching case)," Sunita Singh told



reporters Tuesday.

"He should be given a martyr's status and a memorial should be constructed in his name in our native place," she said. "The cow is our mother, I accept that. My brother has given his life for her. The CM used to chant 'gau, gau, gau'. Why can't he come for cow protection?" she said in an emotional outburst against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Abhishek Singh said the last time his father called he asked about his studies and if he had eaten.

Maurya defends VHP, Bajrang Dal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Defending Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal in the Bulandshahr violence on Monday, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that it would be premature to name a Hindu outfit for the fracas before the probe was completed. "I am deeply saddened by the incident in Bulandshahr where an inspector and a youth were killed. The State Government has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) which is probing the matter threadbare and will submit its findings in the next two days. Hence, it will be hasty to hold a Hindu outfit responsible for the incident," said Maurya in Lucknow on Tuesday.

"We should wait for the SIT findings and until the probe is completed it will not be proper to draw conclusions," he asserted. "What happened in Bulandshahr was deeply tragic and we are saddened by the incident. The locals should have shown restraint and the police should also have been careful in dealing with the development.

SC lets I-T Dept re-assess tax of Rahul, Sonia in Herald case

But apex court bars punitive action against Cong leaders

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the Income Tax Department to re-assess the tax of top Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi for 2011-12 in connection with the National Herald case.

The apex court, however, restrained the department from "giving effect" to its order in the proceedings against Rahul, who is the Congress president, and his mother Sonia till the pendency of the matter before the court.

A Bench of Justices AK Sikri, Ashok Bhushan and S



Abdul Nazeer said that it is not going into the merit of the case but passing an interim order as the limitation period for completing the assessment is expiring.

"Since the limitation period for completing the assessment is expiring, in the meantime, it would be open to the Assessing Officer to complete the assessment and pass the assessment order as well. However, till the next date of

hearing that would not be given effect," the bench said. The limitation period was to expire on December 31 and assessment has to be completed before that.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Income Tax department, said the court should not restrain it from implementing the assessment orders against the Gandhis and others.

Continued on Page 7

Govt rejects service pay hike demand, Army to seek review

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Army is upset over the Government's decision to reject a long-pending demand for enhanced Military Service Pay (MSP) for more than one lakh personnel and will seek a review.

The MSP is given besides salary in recognition of the condition and hardship faced by the armed forces while performing their duties. This concept was introduced in India in the Sixth Pay Commission.

Many European countries have implemented MSP to boost the morale of its armed forces.

The armed forces this time round had sought a hike from ₹5,500 as recommended by the Seventh Pay Commission in 2016 to ₹10,000 per month in MSP for Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and other low-ranking officers in Army, IAF and Navy. The proposal was turned down by the Finance Ministry thereby impacting 1.12 lakh personnel, including 87,646 JCOs and



25,434 of the same ranks in IAF and Navy, sources said here on Tuesday. If the proposal had gone through, the financial spending would have amounted to ₹610 crore, they added.

The MSP has two categories, including one for officers and another for JCOs and jawans. The Seventh Pay Commission had fixed ₹5,200 as MSP per month for JCOs and jawans. This special

allowance was fixed at ₹15,500 for officers between Lieutenant-rank and Brigadier-rank.

Elaborating upon the Army's anguish over the rejection of hike in MSP for JCOs, sources said JCOs perform a crucial role in the overall command structure and are link between officers and men. Appreciating their relevance, the Government had granted

JCOs the status of gazetted officers (Group B) last year. Officials said it was not the right thing to treat the JCOs on a par with the jawans as regards granting MSP since JCOs are gazetted officers with long years of service.

Pointing out that the Army had taken up the issue strongly with the Defence Minister, they said the matter was discussed also among the three

services and the Defence Ministry were on the same page on the issue.

On the rationale for MSP, they said soldiers and their civilian counterparts in Central Government services cannot be compared given the fact the nature of duties performed by jawans and JCOs are more difficult. It is in this context that the armed forces for long were demanding a separate MSP for JCOs.

The MSP was introduced in India to provide special allowances keeping in view intangible aspects of military service.

Army operates in all kinds of terrain and weather conditions ranging from Siachen where temperatures range from minus 10 to minus 30, hot deserts of Rajasthan, inaccessible areas along the 750-km long Line of Control with Pakistan and 4,000-km Line of Actual Control facing China from Ladakh in the north to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. Similarly, Navy and IAF perform operational duties in tough conditions, they added.

Maya blames govt policies for poor law, order in state

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Opposition parties continued to attack the BJP government over the deteriorating law and order with BSP chief Mayawati terming the government's policies as 'irresponsible' and 'wrong' while Congress leaders took out a candle march and staged a silent protest to highlight the BJP regime's failure at GPO Park in Hazratganj on Tuesday.

Mayawati said that the state government policies were responsible for the mob violence in Bulandshahr in which an inspector was among the two killed.

"Killing of an inspector and another youth in Bulandshahr violence is due to the irresponsible and wrong policies of the BJP government. Strict action should be taken against those involved so that the people can feel that there is a government. Due to patronage to unscrupulous elements by the BJP, there is 'jungle raj' in the state," Mayawati said.

Condoling the death of

BULANSHAHAR VIOLENCE

Azam questions carcasses theory

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan on Tuesday questioned the circumstances leading to the slaying of inspector Subodh Kumar in Bulandshahr on Monday and asserted that if carcasses found in the vicinity were indeed of cattle, it must be probed as to how the remains were brought there.

Khan also questioned the credibility of Special Investigation Team set up by the state government to probe the violence in Bulandshahr. "It remains a mystery as to who is behind the cow slaughter in the village where carcasses were found. There is no Muslim population within several square kilometres of that village and the SIT must specifically probe this aspect," said Azam Khan in Rampur on Tuesday.

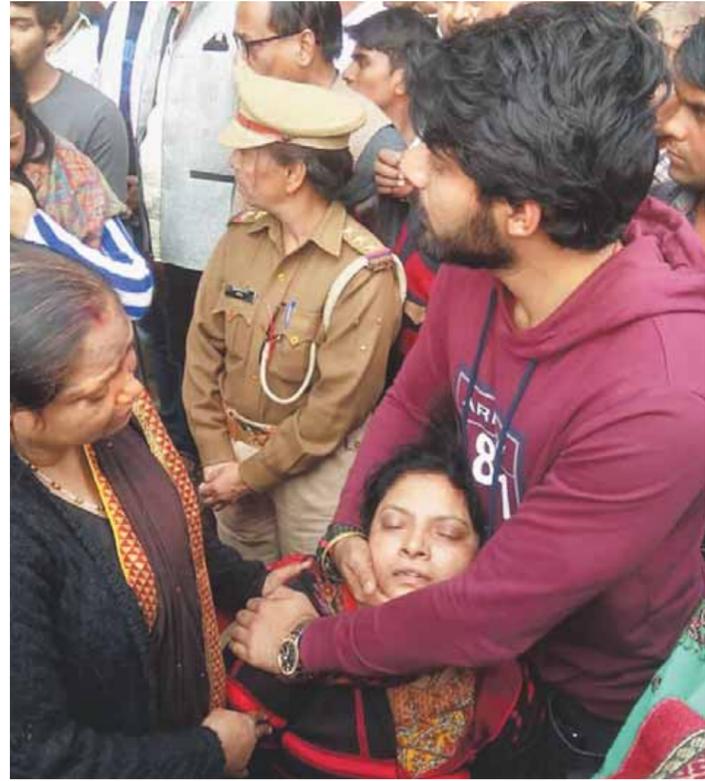
The former UP minister added: "I do want to say more about the incident as it would vitiate the atmosphere." He also asserted that the situation could have been much worse and added: "In the city, there were people returning from a religious congregation 'Ijtema' and the incident could have taken an ugly turn."

those who died in the violence, the Dalit leader said that there was a need to establish a rule of law to prevent mob attacks. Inspector Subodh Kumar Singh, who had probed the

Akhlaq lynching case initially, and a 20-year-old local, had died of gunshot injuries on Monday as rampaging vigilantes protesting against alleged cow slaughter torched a police post and clashed with cops.

On the killing of a BJP leader in Lucknow on Monday night, the BSP chief said that the saffron party's leaders were also suffering 'due to violence and aggression promoted by (the) BJP government'. She said that it seemed that the BJP government had failed to discharge its duties.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Congress, who on Monday attacked Yogi's government over poor law and order, demanded a probe into the Bulandshahr violence by a retired judge. Party leaders and workers took out a candle march and later sat at GPO Park to silently protest on Tuesday. They mourned the death of inspector Subodh Kumar Singh and young Sumit, who were killed in violence on Monday and held the state government responsible for it.



Rajani, wife of slain police inspector Subodh Kumar Singh, mourns during his funeral in Etah on Tuesday

Maurya defends VHP, Bajrang Dal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Defending Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal in the Bulandshahr violence on Monday, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that it would be premature to name a Hindu outfit for the fracas before the probe was completed. "I am deeply saddened by the incident in Bulandshahr where an inspector and a youth were killed. The state government has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) which is probing the matter threadbare and will submit its findings in the next two days. Hence, it will be hasty to hold a Hindu outfit responsible for the incident," said Maurya in Lucknow on Tuesday.

"We should wait for the SIT findings and until the probe is completed it will not be proper to draw conclusions," he asserted. "What happened in Bulandshahr was deeply tragic and we are saddened by the incident. The locals should have shown restraint and the police should also have been careful in dealing with the development. Tragedy has struck the families of inspector Subodh Kumar Singh and 20-year-old Sumit, who died in the incident. I want to assure that those responsible for the incident will be brought to justice," said the Deputy CM.

Meanwhile, known for speaking through the hat, BJP MP from Bahriach Savitri Bai Phule targeted Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath saying: "His love for Dalits is only for public consumption. If he actually has love and affection for Dalits then he should honour them by appointing them as priests of temples. Brahmins, who are only three per cent of India's population have monopoly over temples."

VHP is engineering riot: Rajbhar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Controversial Cabinet minister and BJP ally SBSP chief Om Prakash Rajbhar accused the Vishwa Hindu Prishad of engineering the riot in Bulandshahr which claimed the life of an inspector on Monday.

Rajbhar said that the video circulating on social media had proved the involvement of VHP and Bajrang Dal activists and alleged that both outfits were fomenting communal frenzy for obvious political gains.

Earlier, ahead of the Dharma Sabha at Ayodhya on

November 25, the VHP had demanded the dismissal of Rajbhar for his comment against the Ram temple at Ayodhya, charging him with stabbing the BJP in the back.

On Tuesday, Rajbhar claimed that among the three arrested in connection with the violence, one was from the BJP and one each from VHP and Bajrang Dal. He said that he would meet Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and complain about the activities of VHP and Bajrang Dal and demand stern action against both.

The UP minister alleged that the Bulandshahr violence

was planned and people were instigated to indulge in violence. He said that the big question was as to why traffic on the highway was blocked for several hours.

Later, reiterating his opposition to Ram temple at Ayodhya, Rajbhar said: "Before Ram temple, we need temples of education like primary schools for the poor and downtrodden children. No one has the time to debate about issues of the common man and the BJP is pursuing the agenda of charging the Congress with creating hurdles in the path of the BJP government at the Centre."

Rajbhar also took exceptions to Yogi Adityanath's 'Lord Hanuman was Dalit' remark, saying that it was wrong to divide gods into castes and that the CM was creating a controversy with such statements.

While addressing a rally in Rajasthan's Alwar, Yogi had said: "Hanuman was a forest dweller, deprived and a Dalit. 'Bajrang Bali' worked to unite all Indian communities, from north to south and east to west." "Due to the controversial statement, members of Dalit community are demanding to take over Hanuman temples," Rajbhar said.

Yogi enjoying laser show: Opp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Opposition parties attacked Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Tuesday, saying he was "enjoying" a laser show and presenting kabaddi prizes in Gorakhpur when Bulandshahr was rocked by violence.

Demanding Adityanath's resignation, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress deplored him for attending the events rather than promptly reviewing the law and order in the state in the wake of the violence on Monday.

UPCC spokesperson Ashok Singh said: "Instead of enjoying a laser show and later giving away prizes at a kabaddi event in Gorakhpur, Adityanath should have been in Lucknow." "Adityanath should resign on moral grounds. Who is responsible for the 'goonda raj' in the state? Law and order situation in UP is in shambles," Singh said.

Echoing similar views, SP spokesperson Sunil Singh Sajjan said: "Adityanath was seen in the midst of 'light, camera and action' in Gorakhpur last night." Sajjan said that Adityanath should resign as "he is unable to manage the state of affairs in the state."

SP chief spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary said in a statement that when UP was burning in the fire of anarchy, the chief minister was busy seeking votes for his party in other poll-bound states. "It is like Nero fiddles, when Rome burns," he said.

Adityanath, along with his Chhattisgarh counterpart Raman Singh, had on Monday night attended a sound and light show on Nath sect in Gorakhpur; the video footage of which went viral on TV news channels.

More lawlessness comes to fore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Deteriorating law and order continued to nag the state government as a fresh case of the sensational killing of a sadhvi of 'Juna Akhara' was registered in Shahjahanpur while BJP leaders were attacked during a 'padyatra' in Etawah on Tuesday.

Earlier on Monday, two BJP leaders were killed in Lucknow and Ghaziabad respectively, while two persons, including an inspector, lost their lives in mob violence in Bulandshahr. On Tuesday, sadhvi Koyal Giri of Juna Akhara in Shahjahanpur was having a property dispute with the local land mafia. The dispute took an ugly turn when the mafiosi's hitmen attacked Koyal Giri and later set her ablaze before fleeing from the scene of crime. Critically-injured Giri was rushed to the district hospital and from there was taken to a private hospital in Bareilly, where she succumbed.

IG, Bareilly Range, Prem Prakash later directed SSP of Shahjahanpur to arrest the accused and initiate stern action. Sources said that an FIR was registered in this connection with Tilhar police station and five persons were named. Raids were conducted but the accused had absconded.

Meanwhile, in Etawah, BJP workers and leaders in the presence of minister in charge of the area Manvendra Singh, along with district BJP chief Shiv Mukesh Dubey, media

incharge Jitendra Gaur, took out a padyatra in Behda hamlet of Bakewar on Tuesday afternoon, when they were attacked by goons. Over half a dozen BJP activists were injured in the attack. Senior police officers immediately rushed to the spot but the miscreants escaped.

CM lays stress on self-discipline

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stressed self-discipline in life on Tuesday and claimed that only educated persons could help in building a strong nation. Speaking at a function on the Foundation Day of Maharana Pratap Education Council in MP Inter College ground in Gorakhpur, Yogi said: "For progress in life, one has to be self-disciplined as it makes a man great."

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh was the chief guest at the programme.

Addressing students and others at the function, Yogi also stressed on education and sports in life and said that while education helped build up a strong nation, sports helped an individual to be healthy in life.

Hailing the services of the council towards educating over 50,000 children in the region, the CM said that it was a mat-



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath presenting a memento before flagging off Shobha Yatra in Gorakhpur on Tuesday

ter of pride for him to attend its Foundation Day function which was organised every year. He said that the council was also running courses for making students self-reliant. Yogi also

highlighted the contribution of Maharana Pratap towards the Indian society and urged the audience to follow the path shown by him. Students from over 40 institutions also took out

a 'Shobha Yatra' on the occasion. Besides, Yogi Adityanath and Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh, Sports Minister Chetan Chauhan was also present at the function.

Booze shops' renewal demanded

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Demanding the renewal of liquor shops without imposing any condition, Lucknow Liquor Association (LLA) office-bearers on Tuesday warned of taking to the streets if their genuine problems were not effectively addressed by the state government.

The government is to decide the excise policy for the 2019-20 fiscal in mid-December. The Association held a meeting chaired by its president on Tuesday and passed the resolution to this effect.

Giving details, LLA general secretary KL Maurya said that 2018-19 fiscal was an unprofitable year for liquor businessmen as the new excise policy was implemented and it took time in settling the things. "In April and May, the portal was not functional and goods were not available in the market due to which the business was dull. Besides, the availability of beer and country liquor was minimal during this period causing heavy losses to traders. If the shops are not renewed, we will further incur heavy losses," he said. Maurya said that the state government

was planning to fix target of sale for liquor businessmen from the next fiscal. "This will burden the businessmen as they will have to pay five times more money to run the business. Besides, the sale of liquor cannot be forced on customers. We are also getting lower margins out of sale as compared to traders of other states," he pointed



President of Lucknow Liquor Association SP Singh addressing a press conference on Tuesday

out. LLA vice-president Vikas Srivastava said that the sale of liquor beyond 40 per cent was not possible. "Next year is an election year and businessmen will face a lot of hardship. It will not be possible for them to sell liquor as per quota given and huge losses would be incurred if the products go unsold," he said.

Srivastava warned that liquor businessmen would take to the streets if their demands were not met. He said that businessmen purchased products, made huge investments and the government profited from that. "But we are yet to sell out these goods. If the shops are not renewed or any condition is imposed on us, it will be practically very difficult for us to run the business," he pointed out.

LLA vice-president Neeraj Jaiswal and treasurer Suresh Pratap Singh said that the Excise department had to shut 330 shops in the current fiscal due to its faulty policies. "We get a commission of 11 per cent on the sale of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), while in Uttarakhand, our counterparts reap a 25 per cent commission on its sale," they said.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

Be it known to all that I have changed my name from Atul Kumar to Atul Kushwaha. Atul Kushwaha, S/o Parashuram Prasad R/o A-3/188, Sushant Golf City, Sultanpur Rd, Lucknow-226030

NOTICE

No. JC-701505 P Sub/Na/K Sathesh Kumar R/o AMC Lucknow-2, in my service record my wife name is wrongly mentioned as Divya K. Sathesh, whereas as her correct name is Divya K. Kurup vide official document here DOB is 23.5.1978

DELHI JAL BOARD OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WEST-III

ANGLOI PH-III: NEAR BARAT GHAR: NEW DELHI-41

N.I.T No. 29 WEST-III(2018-2019)

S. NO.	Description	Amount Put to Tender	Tender Fee	Earnest Money	Date of release of tender in e-Procurement Solution	Last date/Time for tender download through e-procurement solution
1.	Replacement of old and damaged AC 300 mm dia water pipe lines by DI pipe on main Ladpur Jaunti road in Mundka Constituency 08.	Rs. 40,89,470/-	Rs. 500/-	Rs. 82,000/-	01.12.2018 ID No. 2018_DJB_162886_1	17.12.2018 at 03.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at (https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in)

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V.-560/2018-19

Sd/- EX. ENGINEER (WEST-III)

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EX. ENGINEER (SOUTH)III

A BLOCK GREATER KAILASH I NEW DELHI-48

N.I.T. No. 42/S-III(2018-2019)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost/ Earnest Money	Date of release of tender in e-procurement Solution	Last date /Time of receipt of tender through e-procurement Solution
01	Replacement of badly silted up sewer line of Block No. 05 Dakshinapuri Extn. under South-III (AC-47)	4569720/- 91400/-	2018_DJB_162669_1 02.12.2018	17.12.2018 up to 3.00 PM
2.	Replacement of badly silted up sewer line of some part of B & C Block Tigri Extn. under South-III (AC-47).	3945003/- 78900/-	2018_DJB_162669_2 03.12.2018	17.12.2018 up to 3.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 564/2018-19

Sd/- (RAM KISHORE) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)III

2 held for BJYM leader's murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two brothers were arrested in connection with the grisly murder of Bharatiya Janata Party Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader Pratyush Mani Tripathi on Tuesday afternoon. They had reached a court to surrender dodging the cops who were searching for them. Tripathi was stabbed to death in a lane opposite a petrol pump near Badshah Nagar Colony on Monday night.

The police claimed that the accused — Salman and Adnan of Pattharwali Gali in Aminabad — had an old enmity with Tripathi and they killed him to exact revenge.

Kaiserbagh SHO Dharendra Pratap Kushwaha was placed under suspension for shoddy probe into a case which Tripathi had lodged against Salman, Sheebu (also of Patthar Wali Gali) and their 20 unidentified aides on November 26. In his complaint, Tripathi had alleged that Salman and his aides looted Rs 50,000, attempted to kill him and acted fresh with his wife & sister-in-law. He had also stated that Kushwaha saved him from the attackers at that time.

A police spokesman said that SSP Kalanidhi Naithani took laxity on the part of Kushwaha as a serious lapse and ordered his suspension.

It further surfaced that Salman's sister had lodged a case against Tripathi for eve-teasing on November 26 and also alleged that the latter forced her to become her Facebook friend. The case was registered at Kaiserbagh police station. The police sat on the case under the pressure of local residents who supported Tripathi.

"Pratyush's wife Pratima Tripathi lodged a case in which she accused Salman, Adnan, Sheebu, Rohit, Dhruva Verma (all of Pattharwali Gali in Aminabad) for Tripathi's mur-



The protesters stalled the autopsy and the deadlock continued for hours before police succeeded in mollifying them

Pioneer

der. We registered a case of murder at Mahanagar police station and arrested both the named Salman and Adnan," trans-Gomti ASP Harendra Singh said, adding further investigations were underway and efforts were on to nab others named in the FIR. Interestingly, the police had no CCTV footage or witness to buttress the claim that Salman and Adnan killed Tripathi. Meanwhile, sources said the Lucknow police heaved a sigh of relief when it surfaced that a cross-FIR was registered in the ongoing brawl between Tripathi and

Kaiserbagh SHO Dharendra Pratap Kushwaha was placed under suspension for shoddy probe into a case which Tripathi had lodged against Salman, Sheebu (residents of Patthar Wali Gali) and their 20 unidentified aides on November 26

his attackers. "The cops started to hunt for those named in the FIR which Tripathi had lodged and nabbed the accused," the sources said. They said both Salman and Adnan planned to surrender before the court to avoid being arrested by the police. "Mahanagar and Kaiserbagh cops had no clue about the same. Some cops talked to their sources in the legal fraternity and thus they succeeded in tracking the accused," the sources said.

Tripathi died of excessive bleeding

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The autopsy report revealed that BJYM leader Pratyush Mani Tripathi died of excessive bleeding in the absence of timely medical aid. Doctors who conducted the autopsy disclosed that Tripathi was stabbed two times in his chest below the left shoulder.

"The cut wounds were deep and the knife had ripped his left lung apart. He bled profusely and died of shock and haemorrhage," the doctors said. To tone down the gravity of the incident, Mahanagar SHO Vikas Pandey had claimed on Monday night that Tripathi died in a road accident. "Tripathi was attacked in a lane. He remained unattended for hours. The police reached the scene when a man informed the control room. However,



File photo of BJYM leader Pratyush Mani Tripathi

the police tried to fake it as a case of road mishap. It was only after mediapersons confronted them with a volley of queries that the Mahanagar police admitted Tripathi was murdered," sources said.

SSP Kalanidhi Naithani was flayed for his "double standards" in initiating action against cops. "Kaiserbagh

SHO Dharendra Pratap Kushwaha was given the marching orders for failing to provide safety to the slain BJYM leader, but no action was taken against Mahanagar SHO Vikas Pandey. The fact is that the murder took place at a time when there was traffic on Faizabad road. Tripathi was attacked in the lane and he must have cried out of pain, but it is strange that the Mahanagar police had no eye-witness or clue about the murder," the sources said. They said the police were yet to find out why Tripathi visited the area on Monday night. The police had recovered Tripathi's bike which was found lying at the crime scene. "The Mahanagar police got the information about the incident only after a control message alerted them," they said.

Protesters send cops into tizzy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Hundreds of workers of the BJP and its frontal organisations thronged the morgue where the body of Pratyush Mani Tripathi was sent for autopsy on Tuesday. Forces from Kaiserbagh, Chowk, Wazirganj, Aminabad, Mahanagar, Hasanganj and neighbouring police stations were deployed around the morgue to preempt trouble.

IG, Lucknow Range, Sujet Pandey himself monitored security arrangements. He succeeded in mollifying the irate workers after which

the autopsy was started. Later, the body was handed over to the kin, who along with the workers, moved to BJP office in Hazratganj. The family demanded a compensation of Rs one crore and government job to one of the dependents of Tripathi.

For Lucknow police, it was a hectic affair since Monday night after the news of murder of Tripathi spread. The workers assembled in a huge number outside the KGMU Trauma Centre and demanded removal of the SSP for failing to control law and order. They said Tripathi had complained to the police fear-

ing a bid on his life a week back but the cops failed to provide him adequate security. "He was framed in a case which was lodged by the sister of the accused. He had also lodged a case or murderous assault and loot but the police did not initiate any action," they alleged.

On Tuesday morning, huge number of workers assembled at the mortuary and stopped the autopsy while demanding arrest of the miscreants. Their protest made the cops develop cold feet and they started counseling the protesters. The deadlock continued for several hours.

GRAMIN BANK OF ARYAVART Possession Notice
REGIONAL OFFICE, LUCKNOW REGION.
Aryavart Bhawan, 589/20/K/1, Sneh Nagar (VIP Road), Alambagh, LUCKNOW (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised officer of GRAMIN BANK OF ARYAVART, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand notice in the account mentioned hereunder on the date mentioned before their names calling upon the borrower and guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice along with interest within sixty days from the date of receipt of said notice. The Borrower and the guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and guarantors in particular and the public in general that the bank has taken the possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act read with relevant Rules on the date mentioned against property. The borrower and guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealing with the under noted properties will be subject to the charge of GRAMIN BANK OF ARYAVART for the amount with interest and other charges etc. thereon. "The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act. In respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets." Details of Properties whose possession has been taken are as follows:-

Sl. No.	Name of Borrowers & Guarantors	Amount Outstanding	Description of Property & Name of Owner	Date of Demand Notice / Possession taken
Branch : Sameshi, Lucknow				
1.	Borrower: Mr. Deshbandhu Verma S/o Ram Sumiran Verma R/o Nabi Nagar, Nagam, Mohanlalganj, Lucknow - 227308	Rs. 2,34,421.24 + interest thereon	All that part and parcel of the Residential Property Plot No-962, Gata No-2235, New No-962/0.180 Village - Nagam, Paragana & Tehsil - Mohanlal Ganj, District - Lucknow, in the name of Mr. Deshbandhu Verma s/o Ram Sumiran Verma bounded as under EAST: Baagh Raj Narayan Aadi, WEST: Nagam - Ganga Ganj Road, NORTH: Plot Rajesh Aadi, SOUTH: Aaragi Seller after Agriculture Land Rakesh Kumar etc., AREA : 65.05 Sq. m.	30.08.2017 30.11.2018
Branch : Rajajipuram, Lucknow				
2.	Borrower: Mr. Sharwan Kumar Sahu s/o Bhawani Bheekh Sahu R/o Plot No -3, Ketan Vihar Colony, Sanipura Alam Nagar, Lucknow - 226017	Rs. 3,01,680.00 + interest thereon	All that part and parcel of the Residential Property Khasra No - 276, Village - Dular Mau, Malihabad, Lucknow, in the name of Sharwan Kumar Sahu s/o Bhawani BheekhSahu, bounded as under EAST: Bagh rafik Khan, WEST: Road Dular Mau, NORTH : Bagh Dilshad etc, SOUTH : Khet Sarvan Kumar Sahu, AREA : 0.082 Hect	14.07.2017 30.11.2018

Date: 05.12.2018, Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer, Gramin Bank of Aryavart

Fun ride for wheelchair cricketers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

On the occasion of the "International Day of Persons with Disabilities" the Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC) organised a two-way special Metro train ride from Transportnagar to Charbagh for the Indian Wheelchair Cricket players from Uttar Pradesh and Haryana between Transportnagar and Charbagh.

To mark the observance of this significant day, an interactive session was also organised in the presence of Mridu Goel, chairperson of Handicare Foundation, along with squadron leader Abhay Pratap, captain of the Indian Wheelchair Cricket team, who addressed the players and Metro officials stressing upon the importance of sensitisation towards the differently-abled and immensely appreciated the special care taken by Lucknow Metro to address their needs for a barrier-free and convenient public transport system.

During the visit, the players were briefed about the facilities available for the differently-abled at the Metro stations and inside the Metro



Indian Wheelchair Cricket team skipper Abhay Pratap speaking at an interactive session on Tuesday

trains. Indian Wheelchair Cricket players expressed their contentment on seeing the specially-marked spaces available for wheel chair passengers.

Dedicated push buttons are installed at these spaces, which when pressed alert the train operator to extend the duration of the train stoppage to facilitate easy boarding/de-boarding for the differently-abled.

Mridu Goel, who addressed the athletes, said: "Lucknow Metro is a unique gift for the people of Lucknow and I am so happy to see that finally there is a public transport system for the differently-abled. I have been working towards sensitising people in this direction for many years now and even today we can't take buses, auto-rickshaws etc to commute in the city. I am so proud to see that the

LMRC has trained all its staff in handling and catering to the needs of the differently-abled so well." "Moreover, staff-assisted wheelchairs are available at all the Metro stations to assist the passengers along with wider AFC (Automatic Fare Collection) gates for convenient passing of wheelchairs through them. To facilitate the visually-impaired passengers audio messages are continuously broadcast inside the trains, platform level, door chimes, lifts and escalators indicating the direction of the lift movement and opening and closing of doors. Additionally Braille plates are installed on lift buttons and inside trains for priority seats there," an LMRC official said.

To ensure independent movement on the station, tactile lines are installed at all the stations which lead to the platform, where the train door opens. Abhay Pratap also expressed his views after reviewing the Metro train facilities and remarked that he had used and availed himself of the other Metro services in both India and abroad but his experience with Lucknow Metro had been the best so far.

Crowd goes berserk at Punjabi night

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Chaos reigned supreme as the crowd went out of control and indulged in vandalism at Lucknow during the Punjabi night on Tuesday. The media centre was also damaged by the rampaging crowd.

The VIP entrance was closed before the start of the performance as the cultural pandal was packed to capacity. A large number of youngsters, specially young boys, tried hard to enter the main pandal and were restricted. The cops had to caneharge the crowd at one point. Fans were seen perched on poles and fences to have a glance at Guru Randhawa, the singing sensation who sang fast-paced numbers. Huge crowd jostled with the authorities to enter the venue till the last moment.

Randhawa stepped on the stage after an elaborate warm-up by a female member of the group who sang a mix of



The crowd jostled with cops to have a look at Guru Randhawa (right)



Pioneer

Bollywood, Punjabi and even Awadhi numbers. Randhawa made an entry with the song "Nakhra tera ni.." even as fans shouted in excitement. He made the fans sing along. "I love to come to Lucknow for the kind

of warmth I receive from the people here. I adore the place as it is much better than Mumbai," he told the crowd.

He called three persons from the crowd to join him on the stage and told the youngsters

to respect the elders. He then sang 'Banja tu meri rani..' and followed it up with "Tenu suit suit kardaa.. He set the tone for the night with the song 'Lagdi Lahore di..' and belted out one hit after another.

लखनऊ महोत्सव

25 नवम्बर से 5 दिसम्बर, 2018

अटल संस्कृति-अटल विरासत

का

समापन श्री राम नाईक

माननीय राज्यपाल, उत्तर प्रदेश के कर-कमलों द्वारा

दिनांक : 5 दिसम्बर, 2018
समय : सायं 6:00 बजे

स्थान

मान्यवर कांशीराम सांस्कृतिक स्थल, राजा बिजली पासी किला, आशियाना, लखनऊ

सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम

पद्मश्री सोमा घोष- 'गायन'

कार चालक सीट बेल्ट अवश्य पहनें, ये है आपकी सुरक्षा के कीमती रहने।

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STF, police finally nab former president of students' union

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Special Task Force (STF) and Civil Lines police claimed to have arrested the former students' union president of Allahabad University, Arijit Singh Yadav, on Monday evening.

Yadav was carrying a reward of ₹25,000 on his head and was wanted in connection with a case involving firing and hurling of crude bombs during the students' union election. Besides several cases were pending against him at the Civil Lines and other police stations of the city.

It may be pointed out here that Arijit Singh Yadav was also accused of issuing threats to a coaching owner and trying to extort money from him. The

inspector, Civil Lines, Shivmangal Singh, said that Yadav was arrested from the Sangam area here on Monday evening. Yadav had been evading arrest following which a reward of ₹25,000 was declared on his head by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Singh added.

A case of attempt to murder was lodged against him at the Cantonment police station while six cases for various serious offences were lodged against him at the Georgetown and Colonelganj police stations.

Meanwhile, the police teams had picked Jharkhand natives as suspects from the slums in the Kareli area here in connection with the burglary at the Union Bank ATM on

Wednesday night.

It may be recalled here that the miscreants cocking a snook at the guardians of law had decamped with ₹60 lakh after cutting the cash tray of the ATM. The police officials investigating the theft suspected that the goons involved in the incident might have links with the gang which had committed the sensational burglary at UCO Bank a few months ago. The police had arrested some persons from Jharkhand for the burglary in UCO Bank but had failed to recover the stolen ornaments. On finding striking similarities in the modus operandi in both the cases the police suspected that burglars from Jharkhand could have been involved in this incident as well.

The thieves broke the CCTV cameras and the DVR installed at the ATM before they started cutting the vault and the cash tray.

The burglars at the UCO Bank had also disabled the cameras before entering its premises.

It may be pointed out here that earlier the police had cracked the case by tracking down the whereabouts of the culprits on the basis of the address of the agency given on the cylinder.

SP (City) Brajesh Kumar Srivastava, said that the police had detained some suspects for questioning. CCTV footage in the area besides all nearby crossings was being scanned to identify the suspects, the police said.

Labourer engaged in Metro construction falls to death

Lucknow (PNS): A labourer, hired by a contractor carrying out construction work for Lucknow Metro project, fell to death in Ghazipur police area on Tuesday evening. He was identified as Akhilesh, a native of Lakhimpur Kheri. He was

staying with his brother Rakesh in Indira Nagar (sector 14). He and his brother were hired by contractor Ashutosh. Around 9 pm, Ramu fell down from a height while carrying a block to an elevated platform. He had his head banged against a slab and he suffered serious injuries. His colleagues rushed him to Ram Manohar Lohiya Hospital where he was declared brought dead.

ALLEGED
A nurse employed at the Neurosurgery department of

KGMU accused a technician of acting fresh with her. She lodged a complaint with the Chowk police. As per complaint, the woman alleged that the accused, whom she identified as Amit, had an evil design in his mind for her. "He grabbed my hand after he found me all alone in the operation theatre. She said she somehow managed to escape from his clutches.

THIEVES STRIKE AGAIN
Thieves made off with Rs 10,000 in cash, a mobile phone and ornaments worth lakhs of

rupees from the house of a photo studio owner in Gudamba on Monday night. Mohammed Yaseen of Kalyanpur locality in Gudamba, along with his family, had gone out of the city for some work on December 1 and the house was locked. "I reached my house on Monday night and found that locks were broken. When I entered the house, I found the articles strewn across the floor. When I checked, I found cash, mobiles and ornaments missing," he stated in the complaint.

उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा विविध विस्तार प्रस्ताव इस कार्यक्रम की ई-निविदा संख्या 153-वि.पा.मं.प्र.ल./2018-19 जो कि दिनांक 04.12.2018 को खोली जानी थी, अब किन्हीं अपरिहार्य कारणों से दिनांक 10.12.2018 को 16:00 बजे तक अपलॉड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 11.12.2018 को 13:30 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य विषय व शर्तें सूचीबद्ध रहेंगी। अधिष्ठाता अभियन्ता, विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड का कार्यालय 111 से 114, यू.ए.सी., लखनऊ पत्रांक 2408 दिनांक 4.12.2018 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय"

उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा संख्या-56 से 57-ईंटीसी(वीओ)/2018-19 अनुमती फार्म/ठेकेदारों/अधिकृत विक्रेताओं/निर्माताओं से जो कि ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in में पंजीकृत हो निम्नलिखित कार्य/आपूर्ति हेतु मोहर बन्ध निविदाओं को भरणों में निविदा खोलने की दिनांक के 12:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो उसी दिन क्रमशः 15:00 बजे भाग-1 एवं 16:00 बजे भाग-2 सार्वजनिक रूप से अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में निविदादाता/उनके अधिकृत प्रतिनिधियों को उपस्थित होना चाहें के समक्ष, अधोहस्ताक्षर/उनके अधिकृत प्रतिनिधि द्वारा आनलाइन खोली जायेगी। यदि निविदा खोलने की तिथि पर अवकाश पड़ता है तो निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस पर निर्धारित समय तक स्वीकार की जायेगी एवं निर्धारित समय पर खोली जायेगी। भाग-1 में निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य (गान रिफ्लेक्टिव) एवं धरोहर धनराशि जो कि (S.E. ETC, Varanasi) के खाता संख्या 4045002101942734 एवं IFSC कोड PUNB00404500 बैंक पंजाब नेशनल बैंक, शाखा मिर्जापुर, वाराणसी में अलग-अलग RTGS/NEFT द्वारा जमा करना होगा, (किन्हीं अन्य माध्यम से निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य एवं धरोहर धनराशि स्वीकार नहीं किया जायेगा।) निविदा प्रश्न, पैर कार्ड, व्यापार कर, जीएसटी पंजीकरण एवं इनकम टैक्स रिटर्न प्रश्न एवं समान कार्य का अनुभव प्रमाण पत्र की स्वयं प्रमाणित छायाप्रति एवं निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य, धरोहर धनराशि जमा करने का प्रमाण पत्र जो कि बैंक द्वारा प्राप्त हो तथा तकनीकी बिड यदि कोई हो, संलग्न करना अनिवार्य है। भाग-2 में दरें एवं वाणिज्यिक नियम व शर्तें होनी चाहिये। (1) ई-निविदा संख्या-56-ईंटीसी(वीओ)/2018-19-विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम वाराणसी के अन्तर्गत 132 केवीओ उपकेंद्र कैंन्ट की क्षमता वृद्धि हेतु स्थापित 40 एम्पीओए परितर्क को हटाकर 63 एम्पीओए परितर्क को लगाने एवं अन्य सम्बन्धित का कार्य। निविदा खोलने की तिथि- 29.12.2018। निविदा प्रश्न का मूल्य-₹50,50,999 (जीएसटी@18%) / धरोहर राशि-₹50,50,000/- (₹50 पांच हजार पांच सौ मात्र)। (2) ई-निविदा संख्या-57-ईंटीसी(वीओ)/2018-2019-विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, साहूगंजी के अन्तर्गत 132 केवीओ उपकेंद्र 40 दीन दयाल उपाध्याय नगर पर विभिन्न जंग लगे उपकरणों एवं फायर स्टैंड इत्यादि की पर्यटन का कार्य। निविदा खोलने की तिथि- 29.12.2018। निविदा प्रश्न का मूल्य-₹1,16,00,000 (जीएसटी@18%) / धरोहर राशि-₹1,16,00,000/- (₹1.16 करोड़ मात्र)। निविदा का भाग-1 (निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य धरोहर धनराशि, प्रमाण पत्र एवं तकनीकी बिड मूल रूप में एवं पैर कार्ड, व्यापार कर, जीएसटी पंजीकरण इन्कम टैक्स रिटर्न प्रश्न एवं समान कार्य का अनुभव प्रमाण पत्र की स्वयं प्रमाणित छायाप्रति एवं भाग-2 प्राइसबिड (दरें एवं शर्तें) निविदा खोलने की तिथि के 12:00 बजे तक वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलॉड की जा सकती है। निविदा का भाग-1 उसी दिन 15:00 बजे एवं भाग-2 16:00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से आनलाइन खोला जायेगा। कृपया वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर विस्तृत जानकारी, विवरण/आनलाइन तथा अन्य किसी प्रकार के संशोधन/विस्तार हेतु निविदा खोलने की तिथि को 12:00 बजे तक लॉग ऑन करें। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी अथवा सभी निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/विनाशित करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा। अधिष्ठाता अभियन्ता, विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, साहूगंजी वाराणसी संख्या-598 दिनांक 4.12.2018 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय।"



Women participating in BJP's 'Kamal Sandesh Padayatra' near Chhota Imbarana in Lucknow on Tuesday

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, साहूगंजी द्वारा जमा करना होगा, (किन्हीं अन्य माध्यम से निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य एवं धरोहर धनराशि स्वीकार नहीं किया जायेगा।) निविदा प्रश्न, पैर कार्ड, व्यापार कर, जीएसटी पंजीकरण एवं इनकम टैक्स रिटर्न प्रश्न एवं समान कार्य का अनुभव प्रमाण पत्र की स्वयं प्रमाणित छायाप्रति एवं निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य, धरोहर धनराशि जमा करने का प्रमाण पत्र जो कि बैंक द्वारा प्राप्त हो तथा तकनीकी बिड यदि कोई हो, संलग्न करना अनिवार्य है। भाग-2 में दरें एवं वाणिज्यिक नियम व शर्तें होनी चाहिये। (1) ई-निविदा संख्या-56-ईंटीसी(वीओ)/2018-19-विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम वाराणसी के अन्तर्गत 132 केवीओ उपकेंद्र कैंन्ट की क्षमता वृद्धि हेतु स्थापित 40 एम्पीओए परितर्क को हटाकर 63 एम्पीओए परितर्क को लगाने एवं अन्य सम्बन्धित का कार्य। निविदा खोलने की तिथि- 29.12.2018। निविदा प्रश्न का मूल्य-₹50,50,999 (जीएसटी@18%) / धरोहर राशि-₹50,50,000/- (₹50 पांच हजार पांच सौ मात्र)। (2) ई-निविदा संख्या-57-ईंटीसी(वीओ)/2018-2019-विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, साहूगंजी के अन्तर्गत 132 केवीओ उपकेंद्र 40 दीन दयाल उपाध्याय नगर पर विभिन्न जंग लगे उपकरणों एवं फायर स्टैंड इत्यादि की पर्यटन का कार्य। निविदा खोलने की तिथि- 29.12.2018। निविदा प्रश्न का मूल्य-₹1,16,00,000 (जीएसटी@18%) / धरोहर राशि-₹1,16,00,000/- (₹1.16 करोड़ मात्र)। निविदा का भाग-1 (निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य धरोहर धनराशि, प्रमाण पत्र एवं तकनीकी बिड मूल रूप में एवं पैर कार्ड, व्यापार कर, जीएसटी पंजीकरण इन्कम टैक्स रिटर्न प्रश्न एवं समान कार्य का अनुभव प्रमाण पत्र की स्वयं प्रमाणित छायाप्रति एवं भाग-2 प्राइसबिड (दरें एवं शर्तें) निविदा खोलने की तिथि के 12:00 बजे तक वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलॉड की जा सकती है। निविदा का भाग-1 उसी दिन 15:00 बजे एवं भाग-2 16:00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से आनलाइन खोला जायेगा। कृपया वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर विस्तृत जानकारी, विवरण/आनलाइन तथा अन्य किसी प्रकार के संशोधन/विस्तार हेतु निविदा खोलने की तिथि को 12:00 बजे तक लॉग ऑन करें। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी अथवा सभी निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/विनाशित करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा। अधिष्ठाता अभियन्ता, विद्युत प्रेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, साहूगंजी वाराणसी संख्या-598 दिनांक 4.12.2018 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय।"

Researchers present work through posters at IPPC-2018

Lucknow (PNS): Three plenary lectures, as many lead lectures and 15 other session lectures were presented on the third day of the 4th International Plant Physiology Congress (IPPC-2018), jointly organised by National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) and the Indian Society for Plant Physiology (ISPP) at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan.

Apart from the lectures, research scholars and scientists also presented their work through more than 400 posters. Among the plenary lectures, Christine Foyer from University of Leeds (UK) discussed the role of various oxidants and anti-oxidants in the regulation of processes related to plant development and plant responses to different stress conditions. She spoke about the redox reactions, which are the base of metabolic processes for energy generation and its uses in the cell. There are special molecular signalling systems which control these reactions for plant growth, development and plant responses towards various environmental conditions. Jaime Martinez Garcia from the Centre for Research in Agricultural Genomics (Spain) said plants sense the presence of competing neighbouring vegetation as a change in the ratio of red to far-red light. She also discussed the mechanism behind it and how the shade plants adapt and sustain. OP Dhananker from Massachusetts University (USA) discussed the consistently rising problems of fuel and food availability for human population.

LUCKNOW MAHOTSAV SNIPPETS



Most interesting items on display at PAC stall



The PAC stall set up by the Uttar Pradesh Police Department has one of the most interesting items on display for the visitors to the Lucknow Mahotsav. The PAC has displayed the weapons which they use for the purpose of any combat. Constables Arbaaz Khan and Prateek Singh Yadav who are in charge of the stall, while talking to 'The Pioneer' said that it had been set up with the purpose of apprising the people as to how well the Police Department was equipped to protect the lives of the general public from any kind of threat. "The people should know that we are well equipped with the best of the weapons and this will make them feel secure. They should know that we can protect them from any threat such as a terrorist attack," he added.

The constables said that the weapons which they had put on display were the AK-47s, mortar guns, 9 mm Glock pistol which is a small weapon, INSA Light Machine Gun, 303 Light Machine Gun and AMOK carbine. Prateek Singh Yadav said that the children were particularly attracted to the guns and the items of combat and added that they were getting a good response at their stall. He said that they had the latest technology in terms of handling combat and all the newly-

acquired weapons had also been showcased at the Lucknow Mahotsav. He admitted that the AK-47 catches the maximum attention of the visitors to the stall since most people are familiar with it. On being asked why this weapon was much preferred by the terrorists, he said that it was one of the most convenient weapons which could be put to use. Yadav pointed out that the AK-47 was used mostly by the people because it was easy to carry, easy to fire and most of all required no maintenance. "It does not require any maintenance hence is mostly opted by the terrorists," he said. A visitor to the stall said that it was one of the most interesting things to watch because one normally does not get to see such weapons. "We hear about the AK-47 so frequently and when one gets to see with one's own eyes does one understand the importance of this weapon. Such ventures are also good in the sense that they provide a platform to the general public to directly interact with these men which was otherwise not possible," he said.

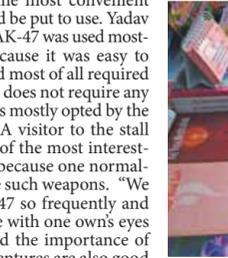
RAJASTHANI JEWELLERY ATTRACTING FAIR SEX

In their colourful attire they look interesting but what is more interesting about these Rajasthan women is that they are selling Rajasthani jewellery at various points on the Lucknow Mahotsav ground. The women dressed in colourful lehengas and their heads covered in pallus make a pretty picture as they sell the typical handmade jewellery of Rajasthan with all its colourful tassels and tuffs. The jewellery has triple jhumkas, a variety of earrings and the multi-layered necklaces which they wear around the neck. These women attract the attention of numerous girls and women for purchasing these pieces

because the buyers actually see them wearing them. For all those who are ready for some creeps the 'Bhoot Bangla' offers an open invitation with a creepy facade that catches the eyes of every passerby. The house has a warning printed outside about those who cannot enter it which include people with weak hearts and pregnant women.

THIS PARTICULAR STALL HIGHLIGHTS SPIRITUALITY

In the midst of all entertainment and fun is a stall which is highlighting spirituality and the importance of religion. The Brahm Kumaris have set up a stall at the Lucknow Mahotsav which is currently going on at the Smriti Upvan here. Brahm Kumari Uma Devi, who is in charge of the stall, while talking to 'The Pioneer' said that it was attracting a large number of visitors. The Brahm Kumaris have put up an exhibition on how to follow the way of God. She said that through the exhibition they wanted to show that God was not about religion and how to reach Him was crucial and the need of the hour was to cut down the message of communalism. She said that through each and every poster



they showed how God could be reached and that one should remember Him at all times. "The response which we are getting is great. People are not only listening but also imbibing what we tell them with all the seriousness that is required," she added. On being asked that with the Mahotsav being a venue for entertainment primarily why the people were not in the mood to listen to something which was spiritual. How have they managed to pull the crowds? she quipped and added that there was no dearth of people. The stall has also put up a book exhibition which highlights the importance of moral education. "We also spread the message on 'Raj Yog' in which we tell people how divine powers can be obtained with the help of this yoga. This also helps in increasing self-confidence and memory and relieves stress to a large extent," she added.

CITY BRIEFS

SUMMIT

PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UP) is holding 'Uttar Pradesh Green Energy Summit 2018' on December 7. The summit will be inaugurated by minister Brajesh Pathak. The PHD Chamber will provide a platform to bring together various stakeholders, senior bureaucrats from relevant government departments, policy-makers, who's who of the city, and decision-makers working in this sector to highlight challenges being faced by them, discuss the possible solutions to them, showcase new technologies and different models for adapting green energy.

CONFERENCE

Giri Institute of Development Studies and Association of Socio-Economic Development Studies (ASEDS) are jointly organising a two-day conference on emerging issues on society, economy and governance with special reference to Digital India on December 6 and 7. Anuradha Kakkar from GIDS said the conference would provide an ideal platform where the experiences and thoughts can be shared and assimilated to come up with a unified understanding of redefining e-business, e-society and e-governance



Commuters stuck in traffic jam near LMC headquarters on Tuesday

issues for brighter digital India.

MOU

An MoU between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Coal India Ltd and SGPGIMS Joint Collaborative Programme on BMT in Thalassemia will be signed on Wednesday whereby a funding of Rs 2 crore for 20 Thalassemic patients will be received from Coal India Ltd

for treatment.

MEETING

The 17th meeting of Board of Directors of Bundelkhand Saur Urja Limited (BSUL) was held at the Lucknow office on Tuesday. The meeting was chaired by BSUL chairman Ramesh Kumar. He also inaugurated the 'Herbal Park' inside the office premises at Gomti

Nagar with plantation of a rudraksh sapling. BSUL director Chorian Mathew and chief executive officer SK Dubey also planted saplings.



SCHOOLSCAN

IYMC-2018

The third-day of the four-day International Young Mathematicians' Convention (IYMC-2018), organised by City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus I, proved to be interesting as well as enlightening. The young mathematicians of different countries showcased their skills in junior and senior category quiz and relay competitions. They also presented a spectacular show in a mathematical drama.



EXHIBITION

City International School (Balaganj) organised a science exhibition on Tuesday. The students made different models based on science such as drone, motorboat and vacuum cleaner. The students and their parents learnt concepts of rocket launch, balloon rocketry and telescope. Explaining her model on rainwater harvesting, class 6 student Muniza Zehra said people should understand science carefully and save the earth using technology. School manager Shahab Hyder said it is necessary for every student to understand science to be able to face the challenges of the world.

Vocalist Parveen Sultana casts a spell on audience

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The silky voice of noted vocalist Parveen Sultana of the Patiala Gharana and her easy approach to the higher octave notes enthralled the audience at the North Central Zone Cultural Centre during the Shilp Mela on Tuesday evening. Parveen Sultana began with 'Raag Pooriyadhanashri' in slow tempo set to ekt taal but her roaring taans captivated the audience. From her famous album she rendered Bhawani Dayani to send the audience deep into the ocean of devotion. Payal ki Jhankar was also the favourite of the audience. She was accompanied on the tabla by Vinod Lele and on the harmonium by Vinay Mishra. Immediately after this captivating vocal Ragini Chandrashekhar stood on the



stage for her Bharatanatyam dance which began with a 'pushpanjali'. Her expressions in Ardh Narishwar dance on Lord Shiva were worth mentioning. It was followed by folk dance performances from different states. The Shilp Mela of the NCZCC is pulling thousands of people everyday. Some visit it for making purchases while the others come in the evening just to enjoy the cultural programmes and go for mouth-watering dishes from several states.

'Procurement of pulses, oilseeds up by 13 times'

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Procurement of pulses and oilseeds by the Government from farmers shot up by 13 times during the four-and-half-year rule of the Modi regime as compared to the procurement done during the UPA period. This benefited as many as 54 lakh farmers whose annual income registered an increase of ₹80,000 on an average, the Government has claimed.



According to the Agriculture Ministry, between 2009-10 and 2013-14 — when the Congress — led UPA was in power — only 7.28 lakh metric tonnes of pulses and oilseeds valuing ₹3,117.38 crore was procured at the minimum support price (MSP) whereas from 2014-15 to 2018-19, a quantity of 93.97 lakh MT of pulses and oilseeds valuing ₹44,142.50 crore was procured. Of these, procurement of 78.84 Lakh MT amounting to ₹35,800 crore alone has been contributed by the States of Madhya Pradesh,

Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

"The country has reported production of 25.23 MT of pulses during 2017-18 against production of 14.66 Million Tonnes in the year 2009-10, an increase of 72.10 per cent. Similarly, the production of oilseeds has increased from 24.88 Million Tonnes to 31.3 Million Tonnes during the same period, registering an increase of 25.80 per cent," the note said. For the procurement, the Cabinet has already sanc-

tioned an additional guarantee of ₹15,053 crore, it said.

As against a Government guarantee of ₹2,500 crore up to the year 2013-14, a Government guarantee of ₹18,250 crore for the Years 2018-20 has been made available for smooth conduct of Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme (PPSS). "Besides, this is the first time that Food Corporation of India (FCI) is participating in these operations for ensuring MSP for pulses and oilseeds growing farmers," it said.

In 2017-18, prices of most

crops including pulses and oilseeds fell below Government announced support prices following a record harvest. Part of the reason for the plunge in prices to levels significantly lower than MSP is the missing trader-the key price maker in the market.

Food Corporation of India and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) will procure 44 lakh tonne of oilseeds and pulses under the new scheme — Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanraksh Han Abhiyan (PM-AAASHA) — aimed at ensuring assured and better returns to farmers.

The NABARD All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey (NAFIS) shows that average agriculture household income has increased from ₹6,426 to ₹8,931 per month in 2016-17. Apart from a paltry income, farmers are facing rising indebtedness, lesser financial inclusion, and absence of insurance facility, according to the report.

Jaitley praises Centre's policies for improving lives of people in rural areas

New Delhi: Blaming the Congress for agrarian distress, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Tuesday said the policy of the NDA Government to pump in more resources into rural areas has improved agricultural productivity and the quality of lives of the people in villages.



Jaitley said with the current level of investment in the next two decades, the infrastructure in rural areas will come at par with that in the cities.

The Minister's remarks came in the backdrop of Opposition party's allegations of ignoring rural India and agriculture sector and the last week's massive protest in the national Capital by farmers across the country. "The NDA Government has pumped in resources into the rural areas, which have improved infrastructure, the quality of life of people living therein and increased agricultural productivity, Jaitley wrote in a blog titled 'India's rural sector'.

The Government, he noted, has increased expenditure on rural roads, housing and healthcare as well as launched schemes like Swachh Bharat, rural electrification, JanDhan, Ujjwala Yojana and Mudra Yojana with an aim to improve the agrarian sector. **PTI**

Coal scam: ED attaches ₹117-crore property of Prakash Industries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached movable and immovable properties worth ₹117 crores of Prakash Industries in a money laundering case in connection with coal block allocation scam.

The CBI had registered an FIR against Prakash Industries Ltd., alleging that the company had applied for allocation of Coal Block vide an application dated January 12, 2007 to the Ministry of Coal in response to an advertisement issued on November 13, 2006.

According to the CBI FIR, the application was found to be containing false net-worth details and on the basis of such misrepresentation, the company got allocated Fatehpur Coal Block on February 6, 2008. The block was subsequently de-allocated in the year 2014 after the coal scam was unearthed. Taking cognizance of the CBI FIR, the ED registered a case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act August 30, 2014.

The ED probe revealed that the company filed false declaration with the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) on November 17, 2007 intimating allocation of the coal block which was actually awarded on

February 6, 2008 jointly to Prakash Industries Ltd. and SKS Ispat Power Ltd.

"As a result of filing of this false declaration, the shares of M/s Prakash Industries recorded an astronomical rise in their value. At one point in time i.e. on 02.04.2007, the share price was ₹31 per share whereas on 04.01.2008, the share price was ₹351 per share," the ED said in a statement.

In order to encash the artificially created rise in the share value, the company issued 62,50,000 preferential shares at a premium of ₹180 per share and sold these shares to five selected companies. In the process, the company generated ₹118.75 crores in the form of share capital.

The amount of ₹118.75 crores, which was generated as a result of the offence under PMLA and amounted to 'proceeds of crime'.

"On investigation to the effect, it was found that the above said proceeds of crime had been generated and used in the continuous expansion related to manufacturing activities, therefore the value of ₹117.09 crores was attached in the form of movable and immovable properties of the company under the provisions of PMLA," the agency statement added.

CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST MPS AND MLAS

SC: Set up special courts in each district of Bihar, Kerala

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked Bihar and Kerala to set up special courts in each of their districts for the trial of pending criminal cases against present and former MPs and MLAs.



Earlier in the day, the top court was informed that there were 4,122 criminal cases pending, some for over three decades, against present and former members of Parliament and legislative assemblies.

A bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S K Kaul and K M Joseph passed the directions for setting up special courts in every district of the two states and also sought compliance reports from the Patna and Kerala high courts by December 14.

The apex court directed the high courts to send back cases from special courts, which were already constituted, to jurisdictional district courts.

The Supreme Court has given the liberty of constituting as many courts as required in the districts of these two states for trial of cases against the legislators.

The apex court also said the special courts would take up life term cases on a priority while hearing pending matters against MPs and MLAs.

The court was hearing a PIL filed by lawyer and BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay seeking a life time ban on politicians convicted in criminal cases besides the setting up of special courts to expeditiously try cases involving elected representatives.

The apex court had sought detailed data on the pending criminal cases against the present and former legislators from the states and various high courts so as to enable the setting up of adequate number of special courts for expedited

trial in these cases.

Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria who is assisting the court as amicus curiae in the matter along with advocate Sneha Kalita had filed the data received from states and high courts and submitted it to the apex court.

The data compiled had stated that in 264 cases, trial has been stayed by high courts. Further, the report said in several cases which have been pending since 1991, charges have not yet been framed.

In a previous hearing, the apex court had considered the submission of Hansaria that earmarking a particular court in each district both at sessions and magisterial level and directing them to treat the cases on a priority basis could be a viable option to ensure timely completion of proceedings.

The top court was also informed that 12 special courts set up to try lawmakers exclusively have not been constituted on a uniform pattern, and their number needs to be raised to 19 for trying cases at the sessions level. **PTI**

After row, HRD Min withdraws Kashmiri translations under 'Bhasha Sangam'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of the row it generated, the HRD Ministry has withdrawn the Kashmiri translations of certain sentences under its 'Bhasha Sangam' initiative.

Last week, the Ministry's Department of School Education and Literacy had initiated the 'Bhasha Sangam', a celebration of linguistic diversity, with an aim to familiarise every child with simple dialogues in all the 22 languages under Schedule 8 of the Constitution.

The row erupted over the wrong translations of sentences from English to Kashmiri, from Kashmiri to Roman and from Kashmiri to Devanagari.

"Sentence translations in Kashmiri under Bhasha Sangam were prepared by NCERT in association with language experts from Dept of Education, J&K & University of Kashmir. @HRDMinistry is sensitive to the comments raised & has therefore decided to withdraw them," the Ministry said in a tweet.

Naidu calls all-party meet day before start of Winter Session

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to build a consensus for a smooth conduct of the proceedings in the Upper House, Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu has called an all-party meeting on December 10, a day before the commencement of Parliament's winter session.

The Rajya Sabha chairman has called the meeting of the floor leaders of all the parties in the Upper House at his residence. Among others, the meeting is expected to be attended by Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad and the Leader of the House, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

This will be the last full-fledged Parliament session before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Government will be keen to make it productive. For the Opposition, it will be the last chance to take on the Government in the House.

The Government will push for the passage of the 'triple talaq' bill pending in the Rajya Sabha in the upcoming session.



It had earlier promulgated an ordinance to make the practice of instant triple talaq a penal offence.

The results of the Assembly elections in five states, in which both the ruling BJP and the Congress have high stakes, are bound to cast a shadow on the parliamentary proceedings. The results of the Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram Assembly polls will be announced on December 11.

On several occasions, Naidu has expressed concern over the deadlock between the ruling and the opposition sides that has halted the smooth functioning of the House.

Modi-Xi meet in Wuhan: India, China review ties

New Delhi: Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale on Tuesday held talks with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou and reviewed the progress made in the bilateral ties since the Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping.

The External Affairs Ministry said the two sides also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest.

"The two sides reviewed the progress made in India-China bilateral relations since the Informal Summit between the Prime Minister and President Xi Jinping in April and discussed the agenda for bilateral engagement in the coming months," it said.

The meeting between Kong and Gokhale took place 10 days after border talks between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi at Dujiangyan in China's southwestern Sichuan province.

In their informal summit in Chinese city of Wuhan, Modi and Xi decided to issue "strategic guidance" to their militaries to strengthen communications so that they can build trust and understanding.

The informal summit had taken place seven months after the Doklam standoff.

Troops of India and China were locked in a 73-day face-off in Doklam from June 16 last year after the Indian side stopped the building of a road in the disputed area by the Chinese Army. The impasse ended on August 28. **PTI**

Issue notice to Shah for making communal atmosphere in T: Cong to EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday urged the Election Commission (EC) to issue a notice to BJP chief Amit Shah for a statement he had made in Telangana, which the Opposition party alleged was aimed at creating a communal atmosphere in the poll-bound State.

Senior Congress leaders Ahmed Patel, Kamal Nath and Kapil Sibal met EC officials and raised a number of issues, ranging from EVM-related complaints in Madhya Pradesh and Shah's statement to the arrest of the Opposition party's working president in Telangana.

Shah's statement in Telangana was absolutely false and misrepresented some points of the Congress's poll manifesto in the southern State, Sibal told



Congress leaders (L-R) Vivek Tankha, Kapil Sibal, Kamal Nath, Ahmed Patel, and others leave after a meeting with Election Commissioner at Nirvachan Sadan in New Delhi on Tuesday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

reporters after meeting the EC officials. The statement of the BJP chief was aimed at creating a communal atmosphere, he alleged, adding that the Congress had urged the poll watchdog to

issue a notice to Shah for his remarks.

Sibal said the other issue they raised with the EC was of the arrest of Telangana Congress working president A Revanth

Reddy, who had called a "bandh" to protest against Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) chief and the state's caretaker Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's public meeting in the Kodangal

Assembly constituency.

"He (Reddy) was arrested at 3 am and was not told why he was arrested. We requested (the EC officials) that such arrests should not be made during the time of elections," he added. Reddy was taken into preventive custody early Tuesday. The other issue that was raised with the EC was of the Telangana Chief Minister calling a Cabinet meeting and giving directions, Sibal said.

Sibal also criticised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for choosing to attend election campaigns in Telangana instead of looking after the situation in his State where senior police official was killed by a mob identified from right wing group.

Nath said the issue of complaints related to electronic voting machines (EVMs) at various places in Madhya Pradesh was also raised with the EC officials. "We have demanded that action be taken against the officials at these places, from where such complaints are coming," the Madhya Pradesh Congress chief said. Sibal said they cited examples such as EVMs being transported in private school buses without registration numbers. Another issue that was raised was that the second round of counting of votes should start only after the process for the first round was over, he said.

While Assembly elections have already been held in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana will go to polls on December 7 and the results for all the five States will be announced on December 11.

Muslim nations must learn about religion from India: Dalai Lama

Farrukhabad (UP): Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Tuesday said Muslim countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Syria should learn about religion from India so that there is peace in the world.

"There are various religions and traditions in India having population of over 125 crore. Muslim countries should learn from India. So that there is peace. There is coordination among all the religions here and due to non-violence principle, modern India is developing," the Dalai Lama told reporters during a brief interaction here.

Asked about Doklam dispute, the spiritual guru only said, "Both the countries should sit and resolve the issue. The slogan of 'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai' should be relevant." **PTI**

Kartarpur in Pak territory because of then Cong leaders' lack of vision: PM

Jaipur: Stepping up his attack against the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday alleged Kartarpur went to Pakistan at the time of independence because the party leaders of that time had no vision and did not respect Sikh sentiments.

Referring to the recent opening of the Kartarpur Sahib corridor across the India-Pakistan border, Modi said, "Correcting Congress's mistakes was my destiny."

As electioneering for December 7 assembly polls in Rajasthan nears its end, the prime minister addressed rallies in Hanumangarh, Sikar and Jaipur.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi also held a series of



public meetings in the state.

At one rally, Modi took on Gandhi for mocking him for chanting 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' at every meeting. The prime minister said he will continue to do so despite Gandhi's 'fatwa' on it.

Gandhi had taunted in Alwar that Modi should begin his meetings by saying 'Anil Ambani ki Jai', 'Mehul Choksi ki Jai', 'Nirav Modi ki Jai' and 'Lalit Modi ki Jai'.

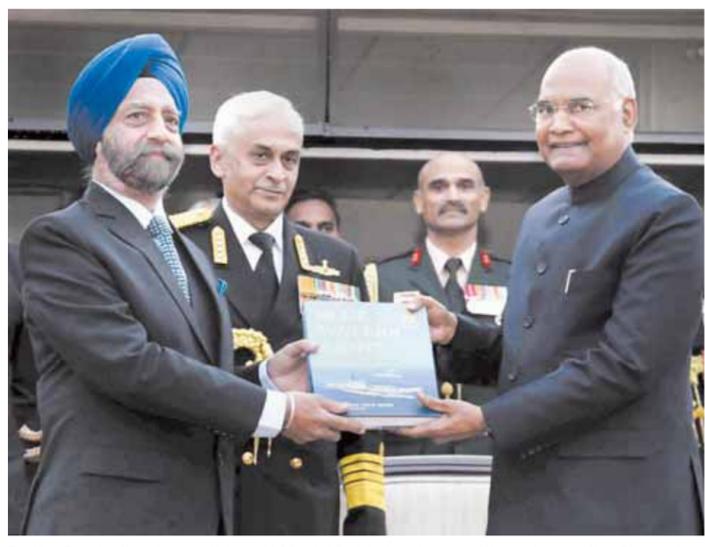
Modi suggested that the Congress leadership had bun-

gled during Partition.

"They could not see anything beyond the 'Rajgaddi' (power), so Kartarpur went to Pakistan," he said.

"The then policy makers of the Congress in the country were in a hurry to come to power. Partition happened and in that too several mistakes were made because of which Kartarpur Sahib went to Pakistan," he said.

"A little bit of wisdom and sensitivity at that time would have ensured that Kartarpur, which is just 3 km away (from India), would not have been taken away from us. It was their lack of vision and sensitivity that they did not respect the sentiments of the Sikh community," Modi claimed. **PTI**



President Ram Nath Kovind, along with Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lamba, releases a publication during the Navy Day reception in New Delhi on Tuesday. **PTI**

INSHORT

MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME: SC FINES 5 STATES, DELHI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday slapped a fine on five States and Delhi, saying they were "not taking seriously" the matter related to implementation of the mid-day meal scheme in schools. The apex court directed Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir to pay ₹1 lakh each as costs for their failure to create an online link along with a chart meant for monitoring the implementation and hygiene of mid-day meal scheme in Government-run schools.

SC REJECTS PIL OVER JUDGES APPOINTMENT

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has refused to entertain a PIL seeking centralised system for selection and appointment of judicial officers in lower courts across the country. A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi on Monday dismissed the plea, filed by an NGO, seeking enforcement of the apex court's decisions of 1991 and 1996 which had favoured setting up of 'All India Judicial Services' to fill vacancies of judges in lower courts.

67% UNDERTRIAL CASES: TAKE STEPS, SAYS SC

New Delhi: Concerned that as many as 67 per cent prisoners in the "overcrowded" jails across India are undertrials, the Supreme Court on Tuesday sought urgent steps for early conclusion of cases against them.

INDIA, SUDAN REVIEW BILATERAL RELATIONS

New Delhi: India and Sudan reviewed bilateral relations, including in areas of trade, defence and capacity building, during the eighth session of the Foreign Office Consultations, the Ministry of External Affairs said

CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS' DATA NEEDS TO BE STUDIED

New Delhi: The "huge amount of data" collected by the Government and the NCPCR in their social audits on child care institutions across India needs to be analysed, the Supreme Court said Tuesday while hearing a matter related to abuse of children at orphanages and CCIs.

RaGa ATTACKS MODI OVER KURIAN JOSEPH'S CLAIM

New Delhi: Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over ex-Supreme Court judge Kurian Joseph's claim about alleged interference in administration of justice by the apex court, alleging that the "chowkidar" had made a judge his "court-puppet".

7th phase of J&K panchayat polls end with 75% turnout

KHURSHED WANI ■ SRINAGAR

Amid freezing cold and separatist sponsored shutdown in several poll bound areas, the authorities on Tuesday conducted seventh phase of panchayat polls in Jammu & Kashmir recording an overall poll percentage of 75.3 per cent turnout.

According to the Chief Electoral Officer J&K Shaleen Kabra an impressive 84.8 per cent polling was witnessed in Jammu division and 30.3% in Kashmir division. Giving district-wise details, Kabra said that Bandipora witnessed 25.2% polling, Kupwara 45%, Baramulla 17.8%, Ganderbal 30.9%, Budgam 13.1%, Anantnag 15.5%, Ramban 83%, Reasi 86.7%, Samba 85.5%, Jammu 83.7%, Rajouri 84% and Poonch 86.6%.

The polling was held at 2714 polling stations across the State including 576 in Kashmir division and 2138 in Jammu division. At the end of 6 Phases of Panchayat Polls, an overall voter turnout of 73.6% was recorded across the State, with a poll percentage of 46.1% in the Kashmir division including Leh & Kargil and 82.8% in the Jammu division for the first 6 phases. Pertinently in phase 6 of panchayat polls held on December 1, overall poll percentage of 76.9% was witnessed across the State including 84.6% in Jammu division and 17.3% in Kashmir division. In Phase-5 which went to polls on November 29, the State wit-



nessed a polling percentage of 71.1% including 33.7% in Kashmir division and 85.2% in Jammu division. In Phase-4, the state witnessed a polling percentage of 71.3%, including 82.4% polling was witnessed in Jammu division and 32.3% in Kashmir division.

In Phase-3, the State witnessed a polling percentage of 75.2% which includes 55.7% in Kashmir division and 83.0% in Jammu division. In Phase-2, overall 71.1% polling was witnessed across the State with an overwhelming 80.4% polling in Jammu division and 52.2% in Kashmir division. Similarly, in the Phase-I of Panchayat Polls, 74.1% polling was recorded across J&K including 64.5% in Kashmir division and 79.4% in Jammu division. As per CEO, the results have been announced for all these Phases by the respective Returning Officers. Adequate security arrangements had been made including deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in the poll bound areas. The separatist leadership known as Joint Resistance Leadership-JRL had called for shutdown in all poll bound areas in Kashmir region.

1984 anti-Sikh riots: SIT to have two members now

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Modifying its earlier order, the Supreme Court Tuesday said the three-member SIT set up to supervise further probe into 186 cases of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots will now have two members only as one of those appointed has declined to be a part of it.

A bench headed by Justice Madan B Lokur passed the order as the Centre had earlier informed the court that one of three members appointed in the special investigation team (SIT), retired IPS officer Rajdeep Singh, had declined to be a part of the team on "personal grounds". The other two members are — former Delhi High Court judge Justice SN Dhingra and serving IPS officer Abhishek Dular. The apex court had on January 11 this year constituted the SIT headed by Justice (retired) Dhingra and comprising Singh and Dular to supervise further probe into the 186 riots cases, in which closure reports had been filed earlier.

Large-scale riots had broken out in the national capital in the aftermath of the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her two Sikh security guards on the morning of October 31, 1984. The violence had claimed 2,733 lives in Delhi alone. The Centre and the counsel for the petitioner had Monday told the top court that it may not be necessary to substitute Singh and the other two members should be asked to continue with their work. During the

brief hearing on Tuesday, Additional Solicitor General Pinky Anand, appearing for Centre, said, "Let us have the two member SIT and they should proceed".

"Counsel for the parties are in agreement that order of January 11 may be modified in view of the fact that Rajdeep Singh, retired IPS officer, had declined to be a member of the committee on personal grounds," the bench, also comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and Hemant Gupta, said in its order. "It is agreed by the parties that the committee should now consist of Justice (retired) SN Dhingra and IPS officer Abhishek Dular. Accordingly the order dated January 11 is modified," the bench said.

On February 5, the Centre had moved the court requesting it to include former DGRank officer Navneet Rajan Wasan, who had earlier served as the Director General of Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), in the SIT to replace Singh.

Wasan, now retired, is a 1980-batch Andhra Pradesh cadre officer and had also served as Special Director General in the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The top court had appointed the three-member SIT after the Ministry of Home Affairs and counsel for petitioner SGS Kahlon arrived at a consensus with regard to the persons who could be appointed in the fresh SIT. The court had said the previous SIT did not carry out fur-

ther probe into the 186 cases in which closure reports were filed, and had directed setting up of a fresh SIT comprising a former high court judge and two police officers.

Justice Dhingra, who had retired from Delhi High Court, had dealt with several high-profile cases including the 2001 Parliament Attack case as a trial judge. As the judge of the trial court, he had dealt with many of the 1984 riot cases, and his verdicts had resulted in conviction in 16 cases. On August 16 last year, the apex court had appointed a supervisory panel to examine the earlier SIT's decision to close 241 cases.

The Centre had said that out of 250 riots cases which were probed by that SIT, closure reports were filed in 241. It had said some cases were still being investigated by the SIT, and two by the CBI.

The earlier SIT was headed by Pramod Asthana, an IPS officer of 1986 batch, and had Rakesh Kapoor, a retired district and sessions judge, and Kumar Gyanesh, an additional deputy commissioner of Delhi Police, as its members.

Petitioner S Gurlal Singh Kahlon had told the court that a total of 293 riot-related cases were taken up for scrutiny by the earlier SIT which later decided to close 199 of them. Kahlon, a member of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, had sought the top court's direction for setting up another SIT to ensure speedy justice to the riot victims.



Devotees walk on embers during Sri Veerabhadreshwara Swamy Kendotsava in Chikmagalur in Karnataka on Tuesday PTI

Will there be an operation Lotus to destabilise HDK lead K'taka Govt?

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

All is not too well in the Karnataka Congress. At the time former Chief Minister and chairman of the coordination committee Siddaramaiah is fighting hard to finalise the list of some of the Congress candidates to be included in the expansion of the four months old fragile coalition, the rebellion hit century old party is on the defensive and shaken.

Siddaramaiah has said the party will take a decision of inclusion of candidates and expansion on Thursday, already waves of dissent has started hitting them, making them more cautious in their entire operation. Kumaraswamy has been invited to attend the meeting.

In a significant political development on Tuesday a powerful Congress leader from the Belagavi and MLA Satish Jarkiholi who turned a rebel to the Congress leadership has openly said that many MLAs in the party are unhappy and party leadership is trying to convince them. This has sent shock waves and the Congress and JD(S) leaders which include Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy, powerful lobbyist and Congress strongman DK Shivakumar and former Chief Minister

Siddaramaiah in consultation with JD(S) supremo HD Devegowda have been trying to douse the fire.

"Some of them are not happy. They may not be 25 to 30 in numbers but there are 6 to 7 of them. MLAs are unhappy and our leadership is convincing them," Jarkiholi said.

"The opposition party is trying since the beginning to form the government by the support of Congress legislators by horse-trading the MLAs, but as of now, there are only 6-7 MLAs who are unhappy and we will convince them," he added.

Jarkiholi also said that he, however, is not leaving the party and claimed to be more powerful than many ministers.

"I had a word with our president Dinesh Gundu Rao on this issue. The high command is active and our State leadership is working on it," he said. "They are not going anywhere and especially I am not going to any party or anywhere else. I am much powerful than some ministers but I have asked for one more ministerial post for Belgaum district. Let us wait and see, everything will be cleared soon," he added.

Meanwhile BJP chief BS Yeddyurappa has got into a rejuvenating centre in Kerala for his pain in the hand amidst all these

developments. Even if BJP poaches 7 to 8 MLAs can destabilise the present coalition government ahead of 2019 elections.

In May this year, the election result for 222 out of 224 assembly constituencies of Karnataka had resulted in a fractured mandate, with the Bharatiya Janata Party emerging as the single largest party with 104 seats, only nine seats short of the simple majority mark of 113. However, the Congress party with 78 seats and JD(S) with 37 seats, along with two independent candidates, stitched up a post-poll alliance with a total of 117 MLAs.

In another related political development an audio-clip containing an alleged conversation between a confidant of a former Ballari BJP MP B Sriramulu and a Dubai-based businessman has triggered allegations of attempts being made by the BJP to topple the Congress-JD(S) coalition Government in Karnataka. However Sriramulu strongly refuted the charges and blamed the Congress hatching a conspiracy to defame the BJP.

In the audio, which has gone viral, the confidant is allegedly saying at least 10 to 11 lawmakers from the Congress and JD(S) were ready to switch sides with specific names being mentioned.

Nuts bolt away from Signature Bridge

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After dangerous selfies and multiple accidents on Delhi's newly built Signature Bridge, it is now the turn of thieves who have started lifting nuts and bolts from the iconic bridge thus endangering the very structure of the bridge that hinges on nuts and bolts.

"Thieves are emboldened since there are no CCTV cameras on the bridge. To make matter even worse is the absence of security guards that has given an unbridled run to these enterprising thieves. Though construction is still going to finish the incomplete work, anti-social elements are having a field day especially during nights," said an official on the condition of anonymity. According to Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC) engineers, on Monday they found 12 nuts and bolts installed at the bridge which connect the pylon with the surface missing.

Talking to *The Pioneer*, an engineer at the site said now they are left with only one choice that is to weld the whole section to avoid such theft incidents in the future. "These parts were not missing earlier, this is an extremely shocking act. If the sufficient numbers of bolts are removed, this seemingly simple act of vandalism can become a safety hazard which can risk lives of people. We will find a solution with stronger welding or by deploying guards," said the DTTDC official adding that he had written a letter to authorities to install CCTV camera at the bridge.

The work is still pending on upper segments where the viewing gallery will be built, hence the DTTDC has not yet handed over the bridge to the Public Works department (PWD). The DTTDC has planned to close down the bridge from 11 pm to 5 am for completing the unfinished work. The vandalism at the Delhi's Signature Bridge is not new as recently a few transgen-



ders were seen stripping in public and posing for photos which had resulted in unruly scenes at the spot.

After a chain of accidents were reported at the Signature Bridge in Wazirabad, the Delhi Police has deployed 12 traffic police personnel from 8 am to 8 pm at the bridge and its approaching road from Khajuri side in

the national Capital. "There is no complaint by DTTDC officials. We on daily basis do 'Integrated Checking' where local police personnel, traffic police and a PCR man are deputed on a picket to keep a check on any mischievous activity. Our pickets are organised at the end of the bridge and we avoid pickets at peak hours time for smooth traffic flow," said a senior police official. The Signature Bridge inaugurated by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on November 4 is a cantilever spar cable-stayed bridge which spans the Yamuna River at Wazirabad section, connecting Wazirabad to East Delhi. It is India's first asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge. The pylon of the Signature Bridge is the tallest structure in Delhi and is double the height of Qutub Minar with its 154-metre high viewing box, which acts as selfie points for visitors. It shortens the travel time between north and north-east Delhi.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

BULANDSHAHR...

"The arrests were made under Sections 147, 148, 149, 124 (a), 332, 333, 353, 342, 336, 307, 302, 427, 436, 395 and 7 of Criminal Law Amendment Act, and Public Property Damage Act 3 and 4. Four other persons have been taken into custody and are being interrogated. There was heavy deployment of security forces in the area and tension spiralled as angry families demanded justice for the deceased. Troopers of Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and State Police are patrolling the area in riot gear to block entry of mischievous elements into the riot affected village.

Policemen had to run to their safety. The mob went on the rampage and caught hold of Satya Prakash Sharma and locked him in a room. The CO sent frantic SOS messages on the wireless. Soon force arrived and he was saved from the clutches of the marauding mob after policemen were able to break open the lock and rescue him safely," stated Sub-Inspector Subhash Chand of the Siana police station in his written complaint. Chand had gone to the spot with Inspector Subodh Kumar and witnessed the gory incident. Senior police officials of the Uttar Pradesh Police were camping in the area to supervise investigations and to restore normalcy.

Additional Director General of Police (Law & Order) Anand Kumar said, "Four persons identified as Chaman and Devendra of Naya Baans area, Ashish a resident of Bugarasi, and Satish Chauhan of Chandpur have been arrested in this connection after their identities were established on

the basis of video footage".

ADG (Law & Order) Anand Kumar later told reporters six police teams were working on the case and trying to identify the accused by monitoring video footage.

"Tension has subsided in Bulandshahr and efforts are on to ensure there is no trouble in future," he said. Though both Singh and Sumit died of gunshot injuries, the inspector, who was posted at the Siana Police Station, also received injuries from hard and blunt objects, Kumar said.

A heavy police force, including five companies of Rapid Action Force (RAF) and six companies of PAC have been deployed in the village Chingraothi on Bulandshahr Siana road where carcasses of cows were unloaded from the tractor trolley. In the incident a villager Sumit was also injured who was rushed to Meerut for better treatment but he succumbed to his injuries in the hospital. In the meantime ADG Intelligence SB Siradkar has reached Bulandshahr. The UP Government has asked him to submit his report within 48 hours. In addition to the FIRs and the seeking of report within 48 hours, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted which will investigate under what circumstances the violence sparked and why the inspector was left alone by the colleagues.

SC LETS I-T...

He said the court should hear the matter and pass appropriate orders. To this, the bench said, "It is just an interim order which should be equitable to both the parties." It further said: "We make it clear that since the

matter is still at the preliminary stage and limitation is expiring, aforesaid course of action is adopted without going into the merits of the case." The court noted in the order that due to certain reasons it was not possible to take up the matter for hearing and the bench was not sitting in the afternoon session. It adjourned the matter for further hearing on January 8, 2019. The tax matter is related to the National Herald case in which the Congress leaders are also facing criminal proceedings. The Gandhis and senior Congress leader Oscar Fernandes have challenged the Delhi High Court's September 10 verdict which dismissed their plea against the re-assessment of their tax for 2011-12. The apex court on November 13 had said it would hear final arguments on December 4 on the matter as it required "consideration". It had not issued formal notice on the petitions filed by Rahul, Sonia and Fernandes as the I-T department was represented by its counsel. In the last hearing, their lawyers had said the question was whether the reasons given in the notice by the department were right or not.

Senior advocates Kapil Sibal, P Chidambaram and Arvind Datar have been appearing for the Congress leaders. The I-T probe against the Congress leaders has arisen from the investigation into a private criminal complaint filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy before a trial court here in connection with the National Herald case, in which the trio is out on bail. Sonia and Rahul were granted bail in the case by the trial court on December 19, 2015. A tax eva-

sion petition (TEP) was also addressed to the finance minister by Swamy. In the complaint before the trial court, Sonia, Rahul and others have been accused of conspiring to cheat and misappropriate funds by paying just Rs 50 lakh, through which Young Indian (YI) had obtained the right to recover Rs 90.25 crore that Associated Journals Ltd (AJL) owed to the Congress party. It was alleged that YI, which was incorporated in November 2010 with a capital of Rs 50 lakh, had acquired almost all the shareholding of AJL, which was running the National Herald newspaper. The I-T department had said the shares Rahul has in YI would lead him to have an income of Rs 154 crore and not about Rs 68 lakh, as was assessed earlier. It has already issued a demand notice for Rs 249.15 crore to YI for the assessment year 2011-12.

CENTRE BRINGS...

The pictures of both leaders were shown to Haschke during the trial by Italian prosecutors and he confirmed that Michel was handling these politicians where as he himself (Haschke) was handling officials in Defence Ministry and Indian Air Force through agents. The communication between Michel and Haschke showed that five per cent of the deal value was to be shared with "The Family". In another communication, Michel said that the deal was through as "Sonia Gandhi had communicated to Government that she will not at all fly in old Mi-8 helicopters."

Congress leaders alleged that Modi had made deals with foreign leaders to make

Michel as approver to implicate top Congress leadership. After the scam broke out in late 2012, British citizen Michel fled to Dubai to escape from the Italian investigators. Two years ago, Michel came in front of the media and gave a series of interviews accusing the Modi Government for targeting him for the political gains.

According to CBI, Christian Michel is a historical consultant of AgustaWestland Helicopters with technical and operational knowledge of the aircraft. Michel worked with Westland Helicopters, UK since 1980. Michel's father, late Wolfgang Michel, too had been consultant for AgustaWestland. Wolfgang was blacklisted by MoD and then his son took over his father's role. Michel was a frequent visitor to India and was operating as middleman for defence procurements through a wide network of sources in Indian Air Force (IAF) and Ministry of Defence (MoD) at different levels, including retired and serving IAS officers. He was tracking the movement of procurement process files and was sending periodical reports and dispatches on the developments on the accused persons in the case. He used to transmit the details through fax and other means to his counterparts sitting in Italy and Switzerland. Wolfgang promoted three companies — Entra Corporation, UCM International Trading Limited and Ferro Imports Ltd. Entra Corp earned two million Euros from India. Dubai police arrested Michel in February 2017 at the behest of Interpol notice against him issued on a request from the CBI and the ED.

Cancellation/Diversion/Regulation of Trains		
In order to upgrade the rail infrastructure, Northern Railway will undertake Non-Interlocking in connection with doubling work between Parsipur-Bhadohi stations on Janghai-Varanasi section in Lucknow Division. To execute this work, there will be Traffic Blocks from 05.12.2018 to 07.12.2018. As a result, the following trains will temporarily be affected as under :-		
CANCELLATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Date of Cancellation (from originating station)	
14204/14203 Lucknow Jn.-Varanasi - Lucknow Jn.Intercity	07.12.2018	
54255 Varanasi-Lucknow Passenger	07.12.2018	
54256 Lucknow-Varanasi Passenger	06.12.2018	
54292/54291 Pratapgarh-Varanasi-Pratapgarh Passenger	07.12.2018	
75115/75116 Ghazipur City-Prayag-Ghazipur DEMU	07.12.2018	
DIVERSION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Date of Cancellation (from originating station)	Diverted Via
11107/21107 Gwalior/Khajuraho-Varanasi Bundelkhand Exp.	06.12.2018	Allahabad-Allahabad City-Manduadih-Varanasi
14265 Varanasi-Dehradun Express	07.12.2018	Varanasi-Zafarabad-Faizabad-Lucknow
13005 Howrah-Amritsar Mail	06.12.2018	Varanasi-Zafarabad-Sultanpur-Lucknow
15017 Lokmanya Tilak T. - Gorakhpur Express	06.12.2018	Allahabad-Allahabad City-Manduadih-Varanasi
15018 Gorakhpur-Lokmanya Tilak T. Express	07.12.2018	Varanasi-Manduadih-Allahabad City-Allahabad
REGULATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Date of Cancellation (from originating station)	Duration of Regulation
15159 Chhapra-Durg Samath Express	07.12.2018	For 90 minutes at Varanasi Station
11072 Varanasi-Lokmanya Tilak T. Kamayani Express	06.12.2018	For 60 minutes at Varanasi Station
14203 Varanasi-Lucknow Intercity	06.12.2018	For 40 minutes at Varanasi Station
12356 Jammu Tawi-Rajendranagar Archana Express	05.12.2018	30 minutes Controlled enroute
Note: For any kind of Information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in.		
Security Helpline No. 182 and Passenger Complaint Helpline No. 138		
Please join us on		
NORTHERN RAILWAY Always at your service Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in		
3076/18 Public Relations-Northern Railway		
Serving Customers with a Smile		

Not in the cow's name

With cops being killed at Bulandshahr, vigilantism cannot be allowed to run amok or deployed as a political ploy



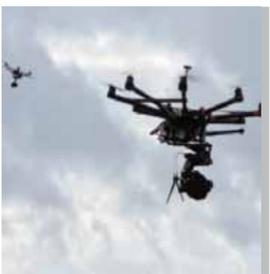
The brutal killing of policemen by a mob of cow vigilantes in Bulandshahr, which ran amok enraged by the sight of carcasses in the fields, shows that nothing has changed in the badlands of Uttar Pradesh when it comes to frenzied attacks based on religious polarisation. First, it shows a complete disrespect for and erosion of the law and order machinery. Second, it shows that no lessons have been learnt from the killing of Mohammad Akhlaq, who was killed in Dadri over falsified

charges of refrigerated beef at his home. Regardless, the needle of suspicion continues to be always pointed at a pre-determined threat based on religious insecurities and identity politics. Ironically, the policeman investigating that case and who had found some inconvenient truths was killed here for doing his job, trying to separate fact from fiction. Earlier, he was transferred, this time he had to pay with his life. Third, rumour-mongering, be it social media or plain hearsay, continues to be a volatile tool in the hands of the fringe elements to justify their relevance, propaganda and foment chaos. Finally, it gives credence to the theory that for all conciliatory talk, there's no ridding the common polity of a planted Islamophobia. There are many questions about how the allegedly slaughtered cows were dressed up at the site all too conveniently and how the provocative incident happened on the last day of a three-day congregation of Muslims. The intent of majoritarian muscle-flexing was all too clear.

These are indeed serious concerns that have stemmed from the overuse of votebank politics by every party concerned over time. But to use retrograde ideologies for dominance has been disastrous particularly over the last few years. Yogi Adityanath may be campaigning for his party in poll-bound states as the new doer leader but there's nothing new or path-breaking that he has to show for himself as Chief Minister of a state considered the political crucible of India. True the BJP may want to play up its Hindutva agenda in the run-up to the general elections in 2019 to appeal to its core constituency, now that the Supreme Court has even pushed back a ruling on Ayodhya, but letting the fringe loose can certainly do more harm than good. Because not many will be sold on the idea of polarisation given that this time a serving policeman was murdered on duty. Yes, faith has its followers and logic but as the local body polls in Sabarimala prove, the BJP failed to reap any political dividend despite its shrill campaign on not allowing women of all ages into the shrine. It got only two of the 39 seats in its kitty, the Left literally romping home. Time has come for all States to address the issue of reining in vigilantism and organised mob fury and curb election time thuggery and bogeyism. In September, the Supreme Court took a stern view of the fact that only nine of the 29 States and two of the seven Union Territories had so far complied with its slew of directions to deal with mob violence and cow vigilantism. It had even warned that if the remaining states and UTs did not do the needful, any default would be viewed seriously and their home secretaries would have to appear before it. Still this is not being taken seriously. If there is no example set of a corrective action being taken in a case such as the one in Bulandshahr, then the nation runs the risk of legitimising mobocracy. For if not anything, the victim this time is the institution of law and justice. And that is a dangerous precedent to set.

Buzz in the sky

Drones can fly in the Indian airspace from December 1 with a lot of caveats. But they will require strict monitoring



The Government's decision to allow commercial drones will definitely allow India to spread its wings in the sky. With this move, we have joined the league of advanced economies like the US, UK and Australia among others that have been using the drone technology for years for socio-economic benefits while keeping an eagle eye on security protocols. It would definitely help us realise the full potential of a digital society and access services and conveniences, cheap and on time, without the baggage of maintaining a huge infrastructure or a workforce. The immediate beneficiary will be the healthcare sector; hospitals and institutions can now airlift organs, blood units and other medical supplies faster within the golden period of treatment and hence save lives. Not only between cities but to far flung areas as well. You do not need to create green corridors along congested road networks. Drones have wide application in agriculture as they can be used for monitoring, mapping and planting purposes. In fact, a drone's reconnaissance capacity, that makes it a favourite military tool, can be used to harvest data for many site studies and on-ground projects.

However, there has always been a debate about invasive drones being a threat to our security network. And it is because of this that the government took longer than usual to iron out a fullproof protocol, given our risks to internal security, particularly from terrorism. Also in the absence of an international flying code for unmanned aerial vehicles, the Civil Aviation Ministry had to evolve its own rules that will be upgraded with changing circumstance. The caveats appear to be well thought out and if implemented right should eliminate threat perceptions and fears of misuse by private operators. Under the new law, drones will be required to keep to a certain payload, tag their aerial vehicles with a name and a unique identification number. Operators will also have to obtain a series of approvals like the 'Unmanned Aerial Operator Permit' and an insurance cover. Barring exceptional cases, drones will be allowed to fly only during the day with a condition that they remain prominently visible. These restrictions have been put in place to ensure that in the event of a complaint, authorities can zero in on violators in no time. But as sensible as they may appear, practically speaking, for any regulation to acquire teeth, there must be strict vigilance and implementation of codes. Therefore, a task force to oversee operations is essential. The applicants must be screened thoroughly too with a clear statement of the purpose of his/her drone services. Besides, the entire process of procurement of licences should be frictionless and cost-effective, else there will be no takers. Flying codes must indeed be kept sacrosanct. Drones cannot be allowed to trespass in restricted zones, particularly in congested metros. What happens in the outside case of a bird-hit or a slightly off-course manoeuvre hitting a building? While technology can provide life-altering benefits, it is also susceptible to human manipulation by way of being hacked into and used as a tool of terror. Perhaps it is for this reason that retail deliveries have been kept out of the ambit for the time being, a move that could revolutionise e-commerce and logistics.

Heal past wounds

There will be hurdles but we must strive to improve the state of tribals and put our best foot forward in implementing the recommendations of a truth commission



AJOY KUMAR

James Baldwin, a renowned novelist and one of the most recognised and respected voices of the civil rights movement in the United States of America, famously said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced." Baldwin's quote eloquently explains that while dealing with any form of exploitation or injustice, it is near impossible to move forward from it without exposing it in its barest and most brutish form. In this week's article, I will focus on how we as a country need to examine the state of tribals in India and discuss the historical injustice that has been meted out to them to enable us to move forward and actually begin to heal the wounds of the past.

The tribal population in India happens to live in States that are extremely rich in minerals and other resources, such as the State of Jharkhand. Though it may be difficult for many to appreciate, the relationship of tribals with their land is not one of mere ownership or possession but a relationship with significant cultural significance. Since land is considered to be sacred to a number of tribes who view the preservation of their land as preservation of their culture, each tribe has its own customary laws that typically govern their land and these customary laws have been in existence even prior to British rule. The nature of this unique relationship of tribals with their land was recognised by the British as well as the Indian Constitution, as is evident from the Fifth Schedule of our Constitution.

Over time, however, these rights have been increasingly diminished as the rights of the tribals to their land were weighed against the need to develop such areas and the demand for the resources in this land. This led to a systematic diminishing of rights, which has now made the tribals among the most exploited communities in the country, where even though tribals account for less than 10 per cent of the total population of the country, they account for over 40 per cent of the total population that has been displaced due to infrastructure projects in India since Independence.

What is worse is that more than 75 per cent of the tribals who have been displaced are estimated not to have been rehabilitated in any way, leaving them without a home, any means of earning a livelihood and devoid of their cultural heritage. To make matters worse in Jharkhand, the Raghubar Das-led BJP Government has through its tenure pushed amendments to the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, 1949 and introduced the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Jharkhand Amendment)



Act, 2017, all of which are anti-tribal and have made the displacement of tribals much easier.

We, therefore, as a country must take a moment and introspect. The question is how do we try to move forward and exhibit sincerity and commitment in addressing these wrongs? One way in which atrocities of the past have been dealt with in other countries is through a truth commission that examines and documents the extent of injustices that has been suffered.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is probably the most well-known commission which sought to heal South Africa by uncovering the truth about the human rights violations that occurred during the period of apartheid. While all such truth commissions seem to have a common thread running through them, that of laying bare the truth of the exploitation suffered by a community, an examination of the Truth and Justice Commission in Mauritius may be especially instructive.

The Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission examined a system of deprivation of land that extended to over 300 years and the mandate of this Commission was to gather information and enquire into the legitimate claims of persons and families who were dispossessed of their land, among other things.

The Commission as part of its mandate examined socio-economic class abuses and the possibility of reparations for the community.

While arguing for the creation of the Commission, the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Navin Chandra Ramgoolam, stated: "This Commission will pave the way to reconciliation, social justice and national unity through the process of re-establishing the historical truth. It is the legitimate expectation of everyone to know our true history. It is only after we have been faced with this reality that we can consolidate unity in our country. It is important, therefore, that we recognise our past history and lay that past to rest so that we can move on to reconciliation, justice and national unity."

As part of its report, the Commission recommended certain steps to heal the country, including memorialising slavery and encouraging a better and more inclusive account of Mauritian history and culture.

A similar approach is necessary and called for in the context of tribals in India in relation to the displacement that has been suffered by them. It is imperative for us to know our entire history including this one. Only after such recognition and documentation can we begin to heal the wounds of the past and start a constructive dialogue with those who have been displaced. Without it, we

will remain in the dark and be left prodding at the problem with willful ignorance rather than illuminating knowledge.

Critics of such an approach may state that establishing such a commission and conducting an enquiry to determine the displacement of tribals will require resources, commitment and a stomach for uncomfortable questions. It may also be argued that an examination of Truth Commissions around the world, including the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission, suggests that a number of recommendations of these Commissions have not been incorporated as yet and, therefore, the results are far from satisfactory.

To these critics, I would like to draw their attention to the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "Truth stands, even if there be no public support. It is self sustaining." Therefore, while there will be hurdles, we must strive to improve the state of tribals and put our best foot forward in implementing the recommendations of such a commission; it is important to remember that the pursuit, determination and documentation of the displacement and abuse suffered by tribals in our country are in itself a goal worth striving for and an end worth achieving.

(The writer is Jharkhand PCC president, former MP and IPS officer. Views are personal)

“
 THOUGH IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR MANY TO APPRECIATE, THE RELATIONSHIP OF TRIBALS WITH THEIR LAND IS NOT ONE OF MERE OWNERSHIP OR POSSESSION BUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE
 ”

SOUNDBITE

Investigative agencies must maintain professionalism, remain fearless and resist the temptation of rushing to media when a probe starts.



Finance Minister —Arun Jaitley

Preservation of cultural heritage is a promising sector and promoting cultural links is a priority for the strategic EU-India partnership.



EU Ambassador to India —Tomasz Kozlowski

I'm a first-generation American. I can understand what it feels like to be different. It's a struggle to identify who I am in a place where I don't fit in.



Actor —Rami Malek

What happened in Bulandshahr has left down humanity. The State Government said that whoever is responsible will be brought to justice.



Union Minister —Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Learning lessons

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "A curious case" (December 3). No one is indispensable in any field and that includes sports. There is no iota of doubt that Mithali Raj's contribution to Indian women's cricket has been immense.

In fact, she brought glory to the nation on several occasions by memorable knocks at the international tournaments. It is unfortunate that due to politics taking an upper hand, Mithali was sidelined in a crucial match in an international tournament. Even though she is at the fag end of her long illustrious cricketing career, the treatment meted out to her by coach, Ramesh Powar, and a member of BCCI, Diana Edulji, is deplorable.

Careers of many eminent Indian cricketers were cut short due to ego clashes. Hence, Mithali Raj should consider that aspect in this profession and continue to concentrate on her career. She has still got a few more years left before hanging up her boots and exit gracefully in style.

KR Srinivasan
 Secunderabad

Time to regenerate our damaged soil

Water and air pollution are hot subjects of discussions everywhere. Soil pollution has not received the same level of attention as the above two. Land degradation is destined to cause soil pollution. The chemicals emerging from industrial and agricultural practices act as catalysts. Untreated waste has also destroyed thousands of species of fish, birds and plants among others. Though soil has the innate property to filter out contaminants, it can do so only to a limited extent. The rest of the contaminants may trickle into the atmosphere to add to the air pollution and seep down below polluting water tables.

Considering the importance of soil, the International Union of Soil Sciences and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations have decided to observe December 5 as the World Soil Day. The crippling effects of soil pollution, including congenital health disorders, infective diseases and non-con-



tagious diseases like cancer, have awakened the health professionals to the dangerous possibilities of soil contamination. Environmental scientists may have in their armoury various remedies to combat soil contamination but the responsibilities of an individual as an active contributor to prevention and elimination of soil pollution cannot be overlooked.

Ganapathi Bhat
 Akola

Agrarian crisis

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Farmers' plank" (December 3). It is ironical that our farmers have to work hard in fields under all weather conditions to feed our mouths but themselves go to bed on an empty stomach. At times they even take extreme steps under

outstanding bank loans and debts. This burning problem cannot be afforded to be tackled by way of waiving short-term loans alone unless and until farmers are allowed to retrieve their costs and control over resources, like land, water for irrigation, insurance, knowledge management and market, and are also facilitated by the state-of-the-art agricultural technologies in terms of the cli-

mate resistant measures. A permanent solution to this perennial agrarian crisis is not only in the farmers' interest but in the national interest as well. Aggrieved over this very sorry state of affairs, the revolutionary Urdu poet Dr Mohd Iqbal had said: "Jis khet se dehqan ko mayassar nahi rozi us khet k har khosayen gandum ko jalado" (fire should be set to every corner of the field that can-

not provide two square meals to the farmers themselves).

Azhar A Khan
 Rampur

Keep courts free

Sir — The recent claim of Justice Kurian Joseph drew the attention of the entire nation creating a new controversy. He claimed that the previous Chief Justice of India, Dipak Misra, was working under the influence of an "external source", and this had impacted the delivery of justice.

Of course, it is a matter of concern that even our country's judiciary system is not spared from external interference. It is true that the entire nation blindly trusts the apex court but this kind of controversial remarks erodes the trust factor. Every institution, be it the CBI, RBI and now the Supreme Court, is getting tainted by allegations. The authorities must protect their autonomy.

Mohd Usmani
 Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Semi-finals before the 2019 face-off

Despite goof-ups, Rahul Gandhi's growing acceptability is the biggest challenge to Modi. A mixed poll result would be a face-saver for both



KALYANI SHANKAR

Will Congress President Rahul Gandhi emerge as a challenger to Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha poll? He could, if fortune smiles on him and the Congress improves its position in the five State Assembly polls currently taking place in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Mizoram and Telangana. Together they constitute 83 Lok Sabha seats. These elections are seen as the semi-finals before the 2019 General Election and also indicate where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stands. The first three States are ruled by the BJP while the Congress rules Mizoram and the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) rules Telangana. The BJP is a minor player in these two States. Stakes are high for both the Congress and its president.

This will be the first mini general election under Rahul Gandhi's leadership after he took over the reins of the party in March. Sonia Gandhi demitted office after the party had seen its worst by getting just 44 seats in 2014. And now if the Congress can improve, it will be a big gain for the Congress president. Early on, Rahul attempted to promote grassroots leaders up the ranks and infuse new blood at the top, but the old guard resisted him successfully. As vice-president, he tried to build his own core group comprising lightweights like Madhusudan Mistry, CP Joshi and Mohan Prakash, but once he became the president, he dropped them and turned to the tried and trusted veterans.

Moreover, for the first time since 2014, the Congress starts as the frontrunner in this round of elections. Much depends on the results of these elections as in 2014 the BJP had in Chhattisgarh won all 11 seats; in Madhya Pradesh, it won 26 out of 29 seats; and in Rajasthan, the party won all 25 Lok Sabha seats. An emphatic win for the BJP will be seen as a continuation of the Modi magic. But the challenge between Modi and Rahul is quite interesting. While the BJP will have to win a majority of these five States, Gandhi has to win just one State to bring his party on track. For the BJP, retaining power in the Hindi heartland is important to give a message that its base is intact ahead of 2019. Interestingly, there is no wave in these polls. The chief ministers face serious anti-incumbency. The issues are more or less state-specific but by and large they are power shortage, water, tribal welfare, Naxalism, agrarian crisis, petrol price hike, Rafale, demonetisation and GST.

Though polling is yet to be completed in Rajasthan and Telangana, pollsters and political pundits are predicting various scenarios on the election results. According to the CVoter survey, the Congress might sweep Rajasthan, win Telangana and perhaps Madhya Pradesh by a small margin. Even in Chhattisgarh and Telangana, the Congress is locked in a close contest. The satta market, which runs into crores in every election, expects a Congress win in Rajasthan and a close fight with a 50:50 chance for the BJP in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the Assembly elections. The best case scenario for the Congress would be winning 5-0 or 4-0. Enthused by the predictions, the optimists in the party have already begun to say that they might achieve an unexpected win in all States. Moreover, such a win would enthrone the Opposition and encourage the BJP-baiting parties to come together under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi. Already some efforts are going on for Opposition unity ahead of the upcoming election.

Despite some goof-ups, Rahul Gandhi has emerged as the main challenger to Modi as some recent surveys show the growing acceptability of Gandhi as one of Modi's biggest challenge. The Congress strategists are busy projecting Gandhi in a new avatar to counter BJP's Hindutva. Adopting a soft Hindutva line, Gandhi has been temple-hopping and self-proclaiming himself a devotee of Lord Shiva. The Congress has declared him a *jansevak* (wearer of the sacred thread) and a Kashmiri Brahmin. The Congress has everything going for it right now like anti-incumbency in three States, emerging local level leadership and a counter Modi narrative. Its strategy is to corner the BJP through issues like the agrarian crisis, unemployment and non-delivery of his 2014 poll promises. The BJP has begun to take the criticisms of Gandhi seriously. A defeat for the Congress in the Hindi heartland would be a further blow ahead of the polls.

For the BJP, a face-saving scenario is to win at least one of the three big States. A worst-case scenario for the party would be to lose all three, as it will have a cascading effect on the General Election.

(The writer is a senior political commentator)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

TRS IS NOT TELANGANA RASHTRA SAMITI, IT'S TELANGANA RASHTRIYA SANGH PARIVAR. IT'S A B TEAM OF THE RSS AND BJP.
 —CONGRESS PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI



THE PROBLEM WITH RAHUL GANDHI IS THAT HE DOESN'T REMEMBER WHAT HE SAID YESTERDAY, AND THAT, TOO, WHERE AND WHEN.
 —PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

CSR: A necessity, not a fad

For any company, profit-making is the most important agent for its survival. At the same time, it should not turn a blind eye towards social obligation



HIMA BINDU KOTA

While corporate social responsibility (CSR) was for a long time considered a voluntary matter to be exercised by companies in the interests of stakeholders, it is increasingly acquiring legal status in different countries, particularly like India, whereby, with the passage of Companies Act 2013, every company of a certain size has to offer a CSR policy. Following this amendment, India is the first country in the world to make CSR mandatory. Businesses can invest their profits in areas such as education, poverty, gender equality and food security. Large companies are required to spend a stipulated amount, ie, at least two per cent of their average net profits made during the three immediately preceding financial years, in pursuance of their CSR policy towards specified activities.

Over the past few years, CSR as a concept has been the focus of many deliberations and research. It has grown in importance both academically as well as in the business sense. It captures a spectrum of values and criteria for measuring a company's contribution to social development. As the term CSR is used continually, many complementary and overlapping concepts, such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management and sustainability have emerged. These extensive ranges of synonymously used terms indicate that multiple definitions have been devised for CSR, mostly from perspectives and by those in facilitating roles like the corporate sector, Government agencies, academics and the public sector.

Worldwide, there are enough examples of companies that have incorporated CSR in their operations. The New York-based natural foods company, KIND Snacks, which in its first 10 years has grown from zero to over 450 million units sold and with its famous rainbow-wrapped bars found in over 150,000 retail stores, believes in both "making profit and making a difference" by achieving mass distribution and making healthy products. There are several companies from start-ups to huge conglomerates that are increasingly incorporating social and environmental initiatives in their strategies. Microsoft partners with the non-profit NetHope to create IT apprenticeships in Kenya. The Disney Company is providing \$3 million in conservation grants this year to protect wildlife. Gap Inc. has a programme that teaches health awareness and literacy to women garment workers in Cambodia and India. JPMorgan Chase has The Fellowship Initiative, a programme designed to help American Black young men achieve academic and professional success. Mattel is committed to using sustainably sourced paper and wood fibre in its packaging and products.

Although good to achieve, initiating and sustaining social initiatives takes time, talent and resources. But increasingly, it is what investors, customers, employees and other stakeholders have come to expect and demand, particularly the young generation which makes for the industry's new and future customers and casts a particularly keen eye on companies' commitment to social impact. So how are the companies from emerging countries, who are fighting for survival and success in the global economy, paying attention to CSR? There are some high-profile examples of emerging multinational companies engaged in socially or environmentally impactful activities. Chinese battery maker BYD brought out the first mass-market electric plug-in car in 2008 and

ALTHOUGH GOOD TO ACHIEVE, INITIATING AND SUSTAINING SOCIAL INITIATIVES TAKES TIME, TALENT AND RESOURCES. BUT IT IS WHAT INVESTORS, CUSTOMERS, EMPLOYEES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS HAVE COME TO EXPECT AND DEMAND, PARTICULARLY THE YOUNG GENERATION



despite a rocky entry into the US market, it has built more than 1,000 electric buses and sold them in Asia, South America and Europe. Natura Cosmetics, one of Brazil's top cosmetics manufacturers, focusses on sustainability and social responsibility and is serving as a founding member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade, which promotes biodiversity conservation and uses only natural ingredients in its formula. It has forged alliances with indigenous Amazon Basin communities to source herbal raw materials. India's Tata Group, one of India's largest conglomerates with revenues of over \$100 billion, as a company, is long renowned for its commitment to social purpose and carries out various CSR projects, most of which are community improvement and poverty alleviation programmes. Through self-help groups, it is engaged in women empowerment activities, income generation, rural community development, and other social welfare programmes.

In the field of education, the Tata Group provides scholarships and endowments for numerous institutions. The group also engages in healthcare projects such as facilitation of child education, immunisation and creation of awareness on AIDS. In some cases, CSR should be designed to address the concerns of stakeholders and are strategic, not just philanthropic. For example, CSR programmes of big soda companies such as Coke and Pepsi are often focussed on issues such as obesity and water usage in developing nations. These are programmes addressing issues that people are concerned about with those companies. By addressing them, they reduce the likelihood of protest and aggressive regulation, and they also build relations with stakeholders who could otherwise be attacking them.

An ongoing project by Coke, in which the company is investing in numerous small African mango plantations, is helping small farmers in Africa to grow their livelihoods beside also creating a much bigger stock of mangoes for Coke to create a mango-based beverage globally. Through this the company is achieving the ultimate metric of CSR success of driving

shareholder value and accomplishing long-term sustainable performance.

However, when it comes to social impact, there are some differences between developed-world firms and emerging multinationals. In the developed countries, more companies have been dragged into this and they now realise the benefits whereas emerging markets display much more polarised strategies with some companies embracing corporate social responsibility from the beginning while other companies are reluctant or fail to see the value of it.

It is seen that Chinese companies in particular are slow in adopting socially purposeful activities overseas because of their own political system. They are of the opinion that the Government should undertake CSR activities as that is what happens in China and social development in the country is the Communist Party's responsibility. Businesses do not get involved. In other countries where Chinese multinationals operate, they have begun to build up CSR after a lot of protests for not being more responsible and for not doing the kind of things that Western companies do.

This clearly shows that an emerging multinational attitude toward social purpose may stem from the way it achieved its original business success. It might have had to "survive in a very difficult, fraught environment" and hence might be more inclined towards social responsibility. On the other hand, the companies that have been successful in taking advantage of a gap in the market and, therefore, built monopoly, through corruption or any Government kickbacks, don't think at all about CSR.

Odebrecht, a Brazilian conglomerate with a large construction subsidiary, is an example of a business that survived a difficult situation and nearly went bankrupt when the CEO reached out to suppliers and buyers for financial back-up. The company survived the crisis, and as a result, the CEO has always had this really strong relationship with his stakeholders — with the people in the supply chain and all around his facilities. The company, which does business in Africa, is involved not just in big construction

projects but is also trying to win the hearts of the people. For example, while competing for a large construction contract in Luanda, Angola, Odebrecht took the unusual step of taking on a street-sweeping contract, which gave them some very visible PR — the employees, sporting orange Odebrecht vests, were seen tackling one of downtown Luanda's fundamental problems by cleaning up its streets. Another bonus was that many of these individuals, who would eventually work on Odebrecht's construction sites, were acquiring basic job skills such as following processes and arriving on time. Odebrecht projects itself as a company that knows what it means to come from a poor country with a clear understanding of the basic problems and as a result, an ability to make a connection with the people.

By contrast, Brazil's EBX is a multinational that ignored CSR. Its chairman, Eike Batista, had a net worth of \$30 billion in 2012 but his wealth sank to \$200 million due to debts and his company's plummeting stock prices. His mines had nothing in terms of socially responsible behaviour and his company wasn't based on success in the community, which ultimately led to bankruptcy.

An emerging multinational in the healthcare space and the one very much focussed on social purpose is Narayana Hrudayalaya in India. This not-for-profit company, founded in 2000 and now with 56 facilities in India and one in the Cayman Islands, was started by heart surgeon Devi Shetty to provide low-cost or free cardiac procedures to the poor. It has since expanded to treat other medical conditions as well.

For any company, profit-making is the most important agent for its survival. At the same time, it should not turn a blind eye towards social obligation. Worldwide, businesses have moved from a shareholder model to the more encompassing stakeholder model. And to stay in tune with the times, companies have to recognise their responsibilities towards employees, customers, neighbourhoods and regions in which they operate.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)

No relief in sight for fertiliser prices

India is overwhelmingly dependent on imports for meeting its requirements. That makes us vulnerable to the changing global demand-supply scenario. The Government, will, therefore, need to explore innovative ways to increase self-reliance



UTTAM GUPTA

Farm distress refuses to go away. This time around, the steep rise in prices of fertilisers — a key input used in crop production — during the current year has increased farmers' miseries. During Kharif (April-September) 2018, the price of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), a major source of phosphate or 'P' nutrient supply, increased by 30 per cent over Kharif (April-September) 2017. Likewise, the price of complexes and muriate of potash (MoP) — main source of 'P' and 'potash' or 'K' nutrient — increased by 15-60 per cent during Kharif 2018 over Kharif 2017.

The escalating trend continued during Rabi (October 2018-March 2019) season as well. The price of

DAP had increased by a further 12-13 per cent during Rabi (October 18-March 19) over the level prevailing during Kharif 2018. The price of MoP during Rabi (Oct 18-March 19) is higher by 25-30 per cent over the Kharif 2018. This has affected farmers as minimum support price (MSP) for crops do not capture the impact of higher fertiliser price.

According to rating agency ICRA, whatever benefit they got on account of implementing the Dr MS Swaminathan Commission recommendation by the Modi Government (it allows them 50 per cent profit over the production cost), has been nullified by higher fertiliser price.

Under the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS), the Centre fixes uniform subsidy on per nutrient basis for all manufacturers/importers of complex fertilisers/MoP. The latter in turn arrives at the MRP of these fertilisers after deducting the subsidy amount from the cost of production/import and distribution. The Government determines

the subsidy keeping in mind its overall budgetary position and notifies the rates well before commencement of the year. Given the overarching need to maintain fiscal deficit within the target, it either keeps the subsidy unchanged or even reduce it. Rarely in the past, it has sanctioned any hike.

For the current fiscal (April 2018-March 2019), the Government kept the subsidy rates unchanged even as there was increase in the cost of raw materials viz phosphoric acid, ammonia and MoP used in the production of complex fertilisers. This left the manufacturers/importers with no other option but to increase the MRP.

Meanwhile, the MRP of urea — a major source of nitrogen or 'N' — has remained unchanged despite significant increase in the price of gas, the fuel used in its production as well as increase in cost of imported urea (this contributes over 20 per cent of its consumption). The Government controls its MRP at a low level and excess of the cost over

it is reimbursed as subsidy to manufacturer/importer.

Given its enormous appeal to vote bank politics, the urea MRP is almost cast in stone. The current price is more or less the same as it was one-and-a-half decades ago. It won't be hiked till March 31, 2019 as per the decision taken by the Narendra Modi dispensation in 2015 to freeze it at the prevailing level. This implies ever increasing subsidy but gives no jolts to the mandarins tasked with reining in fiscal deficit.

While handing out step-motherly treatment to P and K, policymakers often forget that these nutrients are as much important as N to increasing yield and crop quality. Yet, for close to three decades, successive Governments pursued discriminatory policies resulting in excessive use of 'N' vis-à-vis 'P' and 'K'. Diminishing returns to fertiliser use, deteriorating soil health and adverse impact on the environment and human health — seen in most parts of the country — are the inevitable consequence of

the increasing imbalance in fertiliser use.

It is not as if they are unaware of these problems (read the Economic Survey presented on the eve of Union Budget). Yet, any credible action to alter the course is stymied by sheer populism. But this cannot be postponed indefinitely.

There is an urgent need for increasing urea MRP and reducing the price of DAP/complex fertilisers/MoP. One way is to reduce subsidy on the former and increase on the latter even as the Government continues with extant controls and subsidy regime. But this stereotyped approach is not sustainable.

A preferred course would be to decontrol urea (non-urea fertilisers are already decontrolled) and stop routing subsidy through fertiliser manufacturers/importers. The subsidy — computed as per kg nutrient rate multiplied by quantity of nutrient N, P, K used per hectare — should be directly transferred to farmers' account. Sans subsidy, the manufactur-

ers/importers will set prices under a market-driven environment. The competition will force them to keep price low. The farmer will be able to put subsidy to better use by buying more of P&K fertilisers and less urea. There can't be a better way of combating the problem of imbalance in fertiliser use. This will also entail huge saving in subsidy by curbing inefficient use and inflated payments to manufacturers/importers germane to existing cost-based dispensation.

India is overwhelmingly dependent on import for meeting its fertiliser requirements viz 100 per cent in 'K', 90 per cent in 'P' and nearly two-third in 'N'. That makes us vulnerable to changing global demand-supply scenario. The industry will, therefore, need to explore innovative ways to increase self-reliance. A market-driven environment will give a big push to these efforts as well. Is the government listening?

(The writer is a freelance journalist)



SURVIVAL AMID AIDS CRISIS

The world has come a long way since the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. In those early years, infection with HIV appeared to be a death sentence. Today, however, thanks to remarkable medical advances, HIV can be suppressed to the extent that patients don't get sick and don't go on to infect others. The way the world has developed the means to combat HIV is one of the great medical achievements of our time. (The Independent editorial)



LET THE GAMES BEGIN

A degree in sports management will not only make you stand out in the crowd, it offers plenty of opportunities as well, says DR NAYANA NIMKAR

Sports in India is one of the fastest growing sectors thanks to the commercial growth of sports sector in our country. The commercial part of it has opened floodgates for various skilled professionals including the growth of professional sports management companies, event organisers, sports and physical education curriculum providers, and nonprofessional sports teams and leagues in India.

According to reports, India contributes a mere 0.35% of the \$700 billion global sports industry. However, with the increase of professional courses in India, the numbers are seen to improve. India is now investing in million dollar deals and is organising events worth crores.

Considering the fact that most sports enterprises are driving towards the data driven model where they study the game and players on the basis of the data analytics available, shows the huge opportunity that professionals have today.

While many people dream of representing their country at national and international tournaments, playing a sport is not the only part of it. People who have the exquisite knowledge and understanding of the game are much needed in the market. This can be done by gaining the knowledge of the same at the educational level.

A proper course in sports management helps a student analyse the intricacies of every aspect of a sport,

starting from the rules of the game to the rules of the business.

WHY SPORTS MANAGEMENT?

Apart from the packages and excitement that sports management offers, there is a whole array of opportunities that it opens up for an individual.

■ **Widens career opportunities for a person:** The profession offers handsome packages as and when you become expert in this domain. India is a country which is crazy about its sports and teams, and hence this is one field which can never go into depression.

■ **Converts your sports passion into a career choice:** Someone who is passionate about sports but could not manage to be part of any team or leagues, still gets an option to work closely with the game.

■ **Gain skills relevant to the business world:** Ones love for sports can never go in vain. No matter which area of sports management one works in, they have great opportunities to build their network, improve their communication skills, build a portfolio of their professional work and be of huge demand in the industry.

In order to choose this field, one needs to do a bachelors degree in sports management and/or pursue an MBA degree/ Masters in Sports Management. Post this, there are various job opportunities to choose



ACCORDING TO REPORTS, INDIA CONTRIBUTES A MERE 0.35% OF THE \$700 BILLION GLOBAL SPORTS INDUSTRY. HOWEVER, WITH THE INCREASE OF PROFESSIONAL COURSES IN INDIA, THE NUMBERS ARE ON THE RISE

from. Some of the interesting jobs to choose from are listed below:

MARKETING SPECIALIST

A sports marketing specialist is responsible for handling the marketing/ public relations for a particular event/ game/ brand. They are responsible for deciding on the tactics of the game, coordinating activities for the event, planning the promotions for the event and everything from media partners to sponsorship partners.

SPORTS AGENTS

Sports agents are responsible for negotiating the contracts and product endorsement deals. Successful sports agents are best negotiators and are best at networking to find the best deals for their clients. Apart from being on their toes, they have the perfect knowledge and expertise in marketing, finance and legal sectors. An MBA degree comes a lot handy because it prepares the students for this.

INFORMATION DIRECTOR

A sports information director is responsible for being the channel between the teams and the media. They are responsible for creating the press releases and maintaining relations with the media on behalf of the company. They also organize press conferences for the players and the coaches. They are also responsible for ensuring that the company has a

positive light in the minds of people. The entire content that goes out in the media is handled by the sports information director.

TALENT MANAGER

A degree in Sports Management gives you a podium to become a talent manager. Let's tell you the fun part: You will be able to get your fair share of tickets for sporting events. A lot of the job will involve the person making sure that the players are selected and trained and hence one needs to keep his ears and eyes always open on the ground. Talent manager generally spends a lot of time at sporting events, not only keeping an eye on their current client, but scouting for others.

LECTURER

A person with a degree in Sports Management, can become a lecturer. Apart from imparting the knowledge about every sport and its practices, they can teach about the legal and ethical part of sports management. It is really an interesting profession for a person who is interested in being a lecturer and also is passionate about sports.

Thus, by getting a degree in sports management, an individual can not only turn his passion of sports into a career option, but can also earn a lot of respect and revenue in this domain.

The writer is director, Symbiosis School of Sports Sciences, Pune, Maharashtra.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A good teacher is like a candle - it consumes itself to light the way for others

— Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

FINTECH

The Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, is inviting applications for MSc Financial Technology course starting in September 2019. The course is 12 months full-time, with two semesters of classes followed by projects during the summer.

Financial Technology (FinTech) is the future. It combines the theory and knowledge behind capital markets with the technology that makes financial transactions more efficient. The course teaches the big data techniques, computer programming and analytics that banks and insurance companies prize.

The MSc FinTech is jointly provided by the top ranked departments of Accounting, Finance and Management Science.

Students will gain a comprehensive skill set using a blended learning approach that combines theory, intensive practice and engagement with FinTech start-ups.

Eligibility: An honours degree, or equivalent, in accounting, economics, business studies or a subject area with a strong quantitative bias. The programme requires no prior knowledge of finance. IELTS (Academic): 6.5 overall (no individual band less than 5.5)

Fee: The fee for overseas students is £21150 for 2019/20. For more information email at sbs.admissions@strath.ac.uk and log on to <https://www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/taught/financialtechnology/>

BTECH

The NIIT University (NU), a not-for-profit, announces early admissions for its BTech programmes in Computer Science Engineering; Electronics and Communication Engineering and Biotechnology along with four-year Integrated MBA and five-year Integrated MTech programmes.



Integrated MBA programme offers specialisation in Marketing & Marketing Analytics, Family Business and Entrepreneurship, Finance, Banking & Fintech, Business Analytics, Communication & Media Studies, and Digital & Social Media Marketing.

Students applying for early admissions will get a provisional admission to the programme of their choice, even before their Class XII exam. They will also get an opportunity to experience campus life at NU before joining the university through Camp Future – a unique two-day programme at NIIT University for Class XII Students to experience the university life.

Selection process: Admissions are processed through a unique Admission Interaction Process (AIP). AIP consists of three parts—questionnaire, a test based on Class XII subjects and Personal Counselling Interaction (PCI). The PCI between the applicants and their parents/ guardians with designated officials from NU is an important prerequisite. AIP can be scheduled as per the student's preferred time, online or at any nearest AIP location.

Scholarship: To encourage and support meritorious candidates, NU has implemented very distinctive merit scholarship programme – NU Scholar Search Programme. Merit scholarships are available on first-come-first-served basis.

Deadline: The last date to apply for round one of early admissions is December 22, 2018. Students can apply online at www.niituniversity.in.

ENTRIES OPEN

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following the success of Hindi Word of the Year in 2017 which declared Aadhaar the word of the Year, Oxford Dictionaries is now calling on Hindi speakers from across the country to help choose a Hindi Word of the Year for 2018. The 2018 Word of the Year will be announced in January 2019 at the Jaipur Literary Festival.

It will be a word or expression that has attracted a great deal of interest over the last 12 months. The chosen word should reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the year. It is not necessarily a new word, but should be one that is strongly linked somehow to 2018. Following the public suggestions, the Word of the Year will be chosen by the Hindi Dictionaries team at Oxford University Press along with an advisory panel of language experts who each bring a unique perspective.

The panel includes Ashok Kumar Sharma, Hindi Language Champion, advisor, Public Relation Society of India; Kritika Agrawal, Hindi Language Champion, lawyer (Oxford), polyglot, and Indian language expert; Namita Gokhale, writer, publisher and festival director; Randhir Thakur, associate commissioning editor, Hindi, Oxford University Press India and many others.

How to apply: People are invited to submit suggestions on the Hindi Living Dictionaries website at <https://hi.oxforddictionaries.com/hindi-word-of-the-year>.

Deadline: The last date to apply is December 9, 2018.

Exchange programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) has signed an MoU with Lovely Professional University (LPU), Jalandhar, for mutual cooperation—recognition to Company Secretary qualification as equivalent to PG degree for admission to PhD in Management or Commerce or Law on November 28, 2018 at Jalandhar.

Under this partnership, the ICSI

will conduct specialised training programmes at the university for the faculty, research scholars and students in areas of mutual interest. The university will nominate ICSI members for academic Board/syllabus review Board of colleges/university. Exchange of faculty members will allow sharing of expertise for training programmes or workshops organised by ICSI.

Joint organise workshops, seminars, continuing education and training programmes like training of

trainers (ToT) for professionals, corporate executives and faculty members, research scholars and students of LPU will be organised as well. The ICSI and university will work jointly for teacher congruence by organising specialised programmes together.

Moreover, regularly an exchange journals published by the parties will also get featured in each other's publications. There will be exchange of course materials, case studies, research publications and other aca-

demical and research inputs. With the Joint Meeting of Curriculum Development Committees, both will also extend help and co-operation in developing each other's academic curriculum and education programmes.

The ICSI and the university will also undertake joint research projects and will reciprocate participation in their National and International conferences.

The university will be providing an exemption in university subjects for the students of ICSI in topics such as Corporate Governance. The ICSI may also assist LPU in devising up a Governance Code for the university.

EuroSchool West Campus launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The EuroSchool, a network of K-12 schools, has announced the launch of its new campus in Pune — EuroSchool West Campus in Wakad. This will be the third school in Pune and the 11th across the country.

EuroSchool's unique engagement programmes focus on building lateral and critical thinking, creativity, logical reasoning and essential life skills that help in holistic development and building 21st-century citizens.

The campus will follow the curriculum in accordance with the

ICSE Board, providing the best in class learning for students from Junior KG to Class X. The new campus has been envisioned in a 2.25 acre plot with state-of-the-art educational and co-curricular facilities.

The well-equipped campus will consist of a football field, swimming pool, skating rink, squash court, 300-seater auditorium, indoor sports arena and fully functional labs as well as activity rooms for dance, music and art, to provide a holistic learning experience for students.

The campus aims to provide an environment that stimulates, inspires and promotes learning with class-

rooms that feature the latest audio-visual systems for tech enabled curriculum delivery.

The seating arrangements are ergonomically planned to promote good posture and comfort for students. EuroSchool has been recognised as India's first certified safe school network and thus safety and wellness of the students is of top priority.

The campus will also look into the wellness of its students by employing the Student Bag Weight loss programme, which mandates that children carry school bags weighing only 10 per cent of their

Students felicitated

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commissioner Certified Educational Consultant (CEC) designate Sunil Arora recently gave away diplomas to 24 scholars from 16 developing countries at the valedictory session of the 70th diploma course in development journalism at IIMC, Delhi.

While appreciating the effort of the IIMC in designing and implementing such courses, Arora, said: "Imparting knowledge of positive and negative side of social media among the journalism students is very crucial."

Farhod Arziev, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to India and an alumnus of

IIMC was the guest of honour. Speaking on the occasion, Arziev emphasised on the close relation with India in the field of educational diplomacy. He also mentioned about the proposed MoU between IIMC and the Uzbekistan National University of Journalism countries for student exchange programme.

DG KG Suresh of IIMC, ADG Manish Desai, course director Prof Mukul Sharma, faculty members, members of the diplomatic corps and students participated in the event. In his address Suresh, said: "IIMC has trained 1600 journalists from 128 countries since 1969." He described them as India's unofficial ambassadors.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The IIT Delhi, in partnership with IBM, will join the AI Horizons Network as part of a multi-year research collaboration on artificial intelligence (AI). The aim is to discover novel AI techniques which can help organisations take informed decisions by being able to logically reason with their AI systems.

The solutions will be trained to comprehend complex questions using natural language techniques and derive new insights using domain knowledge.

Today, an AI system is not trained to explain its decision making process. The IBM researchers will partner with stu-

Research collaboration

dents and professors from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at IIT Delhi to address this issue and conduct joint research to inculcate in AI systems some key traits like reasoning, comprehension and inferring. The research will benefit sectors like healthcare and medicine, finance, and customer support which deal with complex set of questions and require reasoning.

"While working with AI systems, organisations require explicit reasoning and comprehension to reach a particular conclusion. We believe advancement in AI can

tackle such problems. We are excited to collaborate with IIT Delhi to focus on this area of research and empower organizations to make informed decisions by infusing key characteristics like reasoning, comprehension and transparency in their AI systems," said Michael Karasick, VP, Global Labs, IBM Research.

The teams plan to publish their research in peer-reviewed academic journals and release datasets and open challenges to the research community to identify new areas in making AI decisions better.

New appointee

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) announces the appointment of Dr Venkataraman Balaji as the next vice president



of COL. He will take up the appointment on January 1, 2019. Since joining COL, Dr Balaji has contributed to its reputation as an innovative organisation through various initiatives, including Aptus, MOOC for Development, as well as a num-

ber of publications and cutting-edge knowledge management and technology services.

Prior to joining COL in 2010 as director, technology and knowledge management, he worked at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) as the global leader for knowledge management and sharing. Before then, he was director of Informatics at MS Swaminathan Research Foundation.

Sports tournament



Dignitaries present at inter-university badminton tournament at VIT Vellore

The annual South Zone Inter University Women's Badminton began at Vellore Institute of Technology have begun. Kondi Mani, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Togo, inaugurated the tournament that will be held over five days. CA Bhavani Devi, winner of the Gold Medal for fencing at the Commonwealth Games, was the guest of honour.

More than 400 players from 82 universities from all over South India are taking part in the tournament.

Speaking on the occasion, Mani said that the two countries had great ties with each other and wished students to perform to the best of their abilities and earn laurels for their excellent performance.

S Narayanan, Pro Vice-Chancellor, hoisted the tournament flag and formally declared open the tournament. He also handed over mementoes to the guests who took part in the inaugural function. The first four teams in the South Zone Inter University Tournament will be taking part in the All India Women's Badminton Tournament, to be held at VIT from December 10, 2018.

Sixteen teams from North, East, West and South will be competing in the four-day tournament.

support of the family and society. She said that it was important for women athletes to possess a burning desire to excel and win in whichever sports they take up. Bhavani Devi said that athletes could win only if they practice very hard every day and added that she was an example. "The Government had made arrangements for funds and has also created the necessary sports infrastructure and young athletes should make proper use of these facilities, practice well and win in tournaments," she said.

Bhavani Devi, who won the Gold in Fencing at the Commonwealth Games held in Sydney, hoisted the tournament flag and said that women athletes were being laurels to the country, when once upon a time, they were only looked at as being decorative objects. For women to take part in sports and games and to excel, it required the

Analysing IIFT 2018

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade 2018 exam was conducted recently. RAMNATH KANAKADANDI breaks downs the paper for the aspirants



The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) 2018 exam was on December 2 for admission to the institutes located in Delhi, Kolkata, and Kakinada (AP). The test was conducted across various centres in the country. The two hour exam had no sectional time limit. However, there were six sections this time — Verbal Ability (VA) and Reading Comprehension (RC) as separate sections along with Logical Reasoning (LR) and Data Interpretation (DI). Students needed to manage their time across sections deftly to ensure that they go past the sectional cut-offs.

There were six sections this year as against four last year. Each of the sections had sectional cut-offs applicable. Below is the snapshot of various sections (Set — A).

Section 1: The RC passages, though fairly lengthy, were definitely readable. A person with moderate to good reading skills should not have faced much of a problem in reading the passages. However, most of the questions that followed the passages were difficult in nature owing to the ambiguity of the options. The big change is that there were five passages, with four having three questions each and one having four questions. The passages were from similar areas. While one was on Culture, another one was on Sociology. There was one on economics. The remaining two were on Information (Science)

and Liberal Arts. The cut-off in this section could be around three-four marks. Around seven-nine attempts can be considered very good in this section. The cut-off in this section is expected to be in the range 2.33 to 3.

Section 2: The questions in the VA were predominantly on vocabulary — jumbled words, origin, Fill in the blanks, and word-analogies. English Grammar did have a presence but in the form of two different models of sentence-correction questions — both reasonably simple. The vocabulary part was reasonably challenging, with quite a few unfamiliar words making an appearance.

The questions based on origin were challenging. The two paragraphs could be worked out more by elimination than by actually solving. Overall the section was challenging barring a couple of grammar questions, and only someone who understands words well would have been able to get a good score. 10-12 would be a good number of attempts in this section. The cut-off is expected to be around 3-3.5.

Section 3: The difficulty level of QA this section was higher as compared to that from last year on account of lengthier and tougher questions. There were only about five questions which could be classified as relatively easier ones — two from Logarithms, one from Simple Equations, one from Time

THE TWO HOUR EXAM HAD NO SECTIONAL TIME LIMIT. HOWEVER, THERE WERE SIX SECTIONS THIS TIME — VA & RC AS SEPARATE SECTIONS ALONG LR & DI. STUDENTS NEEDED TO MANAGE THEIR TIME ACROSS SECTIONS TO ENSURE THAT THEY GO PAST THE SECTIONAL CUT-OFFS

& Work, one from Time & Distance. The remaining questions were either moderate or difficult to handle during the test. A good candidate would've been able to attempt around seven-nine questions in QA. The cut-off in this section is expected to be three-four marks.

Section 4: Another of the never-ending difficult sections in the test, DI was a definite tough nut to crack. With large quantum of data/graphs to work with, there was no relief to the students.

There were a total of five sets of four questions each. All the sets were based on Tables and or Line Graph/Bar Graph. Almost all the questions were calculation intensive and were very lengthy. However, there was one set (related to LPI indicators) where the calculations were easier.

Section 5: The LR questions on Input-output were time-consuming and would have needed a good amount of concentration. The questions based on 'distribution' — job fair, though a little time-consuming were relatively easier to solve. The missing number question might have seemed slightly trickier in the first glance; however, it was actually pretty simple.

The case-let on Venn Diagrams, which had a minor error was on the tougher side (if the mistake is not identified). The selections based question needed a good grasp of basic concepts. Compared to last year, this year's LR

section was relatively much more difficult. The overall difficulty level of this section can be classified as moderate-difficult. A good number of attempts in this section can be considered to be 6-8 questions while the cut-off is expected to be around 4 to 4.67 marks.

Section 6: (General Awareness): This section, though easier than last year, still was on the tougher side. The questions were from diverse topics like Personalities, sports, corporate logos, corporate entities, International trade organisations and currencies. This implies that the students needed to be extremely well prepared to clear the cut-off in this section.

Unlike last year, the questions were not lengthy in nature. This would have enabled students to attempt the section in five-10 minutes. Some very difficult questions like the one on 'South Indian sea ports' must have baffled the students. Historically, the sectional cutoff for this section has been very low, though this year there may be a tiny movement northward.

The cut-off in this section last year was 0.82 marks and is expected to be little higher this year — to around one-two marks. Six-eight questions could be considered to be a good number of attempts in this section.

The writer is Ramnath Kanakadandi, National CAT course director, TIME

'Better options in India today'

Constant monitoring from higher education governing bodies enforcing higher pedagogy standards has raised the level of Indian education, says PROF SG PATIL

The biggest challenge of education system today is to maintain high quality standards and to develop institutional capacity to meet the demand of current industry. To this end the quality of education and compliances are supervised by the Ministry of Human Resources Development through its regulatory body-UGC. Apart from this All India Council for Technical Education and National Assessment and Accreditation Council has played a major role in enriching the quality of education. Under privatisation of higher education a number of institutes have grown rapidly in last three decades. Some of them have shown excellence in providing quality education and developing relevant skills, however many of them have become centre for selling degrees. Such institutions are more in professional courses like Engineering, Pharmacy, Education and Management. This has reflected in employment statistics, according to McKinsey almost 75% of Indian engineering graduates are not employable and the reason is substandard education which is outdated and irrelevant, not meeting the current demand of the industry. This has led higher education governing bodies to bring in radical reforms.

Students look for better options rather than taking admission in substandard institutes. For last two decades many students have preferred western universities. The various reasons are ease of admission, high quality education and immigration. However, for last five years, the west is going through a number of issues. Their economic and political scenarios are in trouble. Their own citizens are unemployed due to lack of job opportunities. Industries in the UK and the US are not creating enough jobs for their locals. This has made their Governments to enforce stringent visa rules for foreigners to work in their own countries. Such initiatives by their Government have put Indian students in trouble as most of them choose to study abroad expecting jobs there after completion of the studies. Non-availability of jobs and difficulty in obtaining work visa compel Indian students with foreign degrees to return home. However,



Professor Sanjay Govind Patil
Associate Dean & Director, School of Construction, RICS SBE

although they spend huge amount on their study many of them feel that there are better opportunities in their home country due to economic growth and improved job prospects.

Looking at the pace with which India is moving forward in creating world class infrastructure and urban development to boost the national economy is exceptional. I am of an opinion that the young generation must capture this opportunity to make career in this sector which will become world's third largest construction market by 2025. The Government has realised the requirement of human resources to meet the demand supply gap and skills required.

Huge spending by the Indian Government in construction sector, demand supply and skill gap. Skill India has attracted local and well-known foreign institutes in built environment to collaborate with Indian universities. Such collaborations have brought in good pedagogy practices, thus developing students with required skill sets and standards to serve the construction industry which is at par with well-known foreign institutions. Constant monitoring from higher education governing bodies enforcing higher pedagogy standards has raised the level of Indian education.

We have often talked about discovering our strongest trait to be successful in life. Now today we are going to talk about the direction in which the strongest trait has to be worked upon. It is simple theory but still we forget, if we row our boat in the direction of winds, our sail will be smoother and quicker, isn't it? Whereas if we try to direct our energy in opposite direction of winds, a lot of resistance has to be faced and the sail will be tough with unwanted delays. If you have that wisdom to discover the smartest path, you are already in the right direction.

In Today's highly competitive world, it is the need of the hour to be 'smart workers' and to be 'smart workers',

you need to put your energy in the right direction. Here are few benchmarks:

Consider your personality in your career-planning: Remember that you are a human being long before you are a professional. Your comfort and happiness matters. Consider your personality type carefully before you commit to a career path.

Introspect, do you like to sit for long hours and work or you want to be on move? Do you like to talk to people and socialise or sit at your desk and write something? Your personality type plays a vital role in choosing the right career.

Make careful choices about where to study: The choices that you make even at the stage of deciding what to study, will greatly

MINDIT

influence your career. It is important to pick an option that will speak to your long term goals and equip you with core skills. Be sure to choose a reputable college or institution of learning that has a solid reputation that will hold up in industry.

Find your strengths and follow your intrinsic interest: Take a little time to introspect, but also ask others for feedback on what you think your strengths and abilities are. Your strengths and the things that you are passionate about will be the power that you bring to the professional world.

Take criticism positively: While it is important to interface with family members and peers about your career choices, you must also protect your dreams. Too often there are ill-informed people out there who will feed you doubt and stomp on your dreams. Have the presence of mind to take a step back and separate your intentions from the influence of others. Take criticism positively to be well prepared. Drive your own career path.

Go for internships before deciding: If

you would like to formalise your work-experience why not take up an internship? Sometimes internships get a bad rap for being nothing more than a way for senior staff members to get the coffee served to them.

But if you choose the organisation that you are working for carefully, you should come away with very valuable work experience. While you are an intern be sure to get assigned to a mentor so that your entry into the professional world is a guided experience.

Create your own opportunities: Some of the world's most successful entrepreneurs found success because they had no other option but to create their own sunshine.

There is nothing wrong with being entrepreneurially-minded, even earlier on in your career. Use your skills to start-up your own consultancy or small business and network with industry professionals.

Consider remuneration value: Having a dream and something to strive towards is admirable. But you do have to take a balanced approach. With bills to pay and money that is sorely needed to live your life, you may need to reconsider your route to your dream. Examine the core values of your dream job and find something similar which balances your needs and dreams.

The writer is Pallavi Prakash, Founder-CEO Knowledge Seed Learning Center & Motivational/Corporate Trainer



The University of Warwick is offering WMG Excellence Scholarships for UK and international students. Scholarships will be awarded to students commencing full-time MSc programme beginning in September 2019.

Eligibility: Applicants must hold an offer to study on a WMG full-time MSc course starting September 2019. Should have an excellent academic track-record and/or strong professional profile in order to qualify. Scholarships are for self-funded students only. Scholarships are paid towards tuition fees only and can't be paid in cash or towards accommodation or maintenance costs. **English language requirement:** Applicants must have IELTS 6.5 (or IELTS 6.0 + pre-sessional).

How to apply: A completed application form & application fee. A personal statement, which can be included in the online application. A scan of your transcript of marks awarded so far (if you are currently studying) or an original copy of final transcript/degree certificate. English test result (if applicable). One reference. If you completed studies less than two years back, this should be academic references. If you

graduated more than two years back, we will accept professional references. The reference must be submitted directly to us by the referee.

Application deadline: The last date to apply is April 1, 2019.

Imperial College Business School is pleased to offer Riley Family Scholarship for the full-time MBA commencing in September 2019. International students are eligible to apply.

Eligibility: A very strong academic background and an excellent track record of professional achievement. A high and well-balanced GMAT score, which must also be submitted by 25 January 2019. Your performance during the admissions process, where academic and professional merit will be judged. Your professional references. **English language requirement:** IELTS (academic): A score of 7.0 with minimum scores of 6.5 in all elements, TOEFL iBT: A score of 100 overall with minimum scores of 22 in all elements. Degree studied in and awarded by an English-speaking country.

How to apply: As essay on: What life experiences have shaped who you are today and how have you overcome adversity to excel in education? How do you think these experiences will help you in today's rapidly changing world? (700 words max). **Application deadline:** January 25, 2019.

STUDY CENTRES

Ayurveda believes in the adage: Prevention is better than cure. Of late, there has been a lot of talk on the importance of Ayurveda in treating a number of ailments. Patients too are looking for good Ayurveda doctors because it combines the best knowledge and developments taking place globally. As patients from all over the world are coming to India for Ayurveda treatment, the demand for Ayurvedic doctors is on the rise. To be a successful Ayurveda practitioner, one must have strong concentration, self-confidence, responsibility, caring nature and good communication skills. A few more colleges to study are:

- Karavali Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Mangalore. Course: Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery
- Uttaranchal Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Dehra Dun. Course: Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery
- Maharashtra Arogya Mandal's Sumatibhai Shah Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Pune. Course: Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery
- Karnataka Ayurveda Medical College, Mangalore. Course: Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery
- Jupiter Ayurved Medical College, Nagpur. Course: Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery
- Chaudhary Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, New Delhi. Course: Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT CIPLA HEALTH

Location: Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Indore, Kolkata, Lucknow, Surat, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹5,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16451
Application deadline: December 10, 2018

OPERATIONS AT QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA

Location - Delhi
Stipend ₹19,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16452
Application deadline: December 9, 2018

DIGITAL MARKETING AT LEARNING GROW

Location: Work from Home
Stipend: ₹1,000 per month
Link - internshala.com/i/16453
Application deadline: December 14, 2018

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT DR APJ ABDUL KALAM CENTRE

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹2,000-₹6,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16454
Application deadline: December 7, 2018

SYSTEM SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT AT NVIDIA

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹35,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16455
Application deadline: December 19, 2018

CONTENT WRITING AT MILAAP

Location: Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchirappalli
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16456
Application deadline: December 13, 2018

IN BRIEF

JOINT R&D IN BIG DATA ANALYTICS, AI & IOT

The NEC Corporation announced that its subsidiary NEC Technologies India (NECTI) has entered into an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) to explore joint research and development in the field of big data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT) and AI with an aim to solve a range of social challenges in India. Under this MoU, the IIT-B and NECTI will jointly work on

value creation for major Government initiatives across smart cities, as well as for the Logistics and Transportation domain, by leveraging advanced technologies. One of the areas this joint R&D aims to explore is the use of big data analytics to optimise the movement of logistics containers across the country, which can result in shorter times for the delivery of goods and lower logistics cost. More than 30 graduates have joined NEC's Central Research laboratories in Japan since 2012.

AI BASED TALENT EXCHANGE MARKET PLACE

Tech Mahindra Ltd launched the first AI based, talent exchange market place — TalEx — to address issues related to upskilling, reskilling and talent management within the organisation. The solution has been

developed by an in-house team of young disruptors. TalEx is a unique offering that will democratise the talent management domain and enable the workforce to discover opportunities within the organisation, and

also helps in retaining and nurturing promising talent. This talent exchange marketplace platform will be a true gamechanger in making the entire process effortless by adding the element of gamification.

STUDY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

Association of Skill Training Providers (ASTP), formed as a national skill alliance of training service provider companies, conducted a study on Cooperative Vocational Education and Training (VET), on behalf of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), GmbH. The study was conducted in two industrial clusters: The automotive component cluster in Aurangabad, Maharashtra and, the electronics and manufacturing cluster in Bangalore, Karnataka to

analyse the current practices of cooperation between Chambers/Associations/Companies interested in imparting cooperative VET, and state and national government bodies mandated to approve the industrial initiatives. The study conducted focused on the actual situation pertaining to the implementing agencies and the partners at different stakeholder levels of Dual System of Training & National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, their roles and responsibilities.

MOU SIGNED

The CL Educate Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with EvueMe Selection Bot. As per the MoU a new mock interview product — iGuru — will be launched aimed at helping students and professionals prepare for various kinds of interviews for getting jobs or admission to study higher education courses.

The organisations will work in collaboration to use cutting-edge technology to simplify the entire interview preparation process, enabling students and professionals to take mock interviews from the comfort of their premises using their own devices, at their own convenient time, with an interviewer on demand. Speaking about the partnership, Rupak Agarwal, Founder & CEO — EvueMe Selection Bot said: There is a huge industry-academia divide and our cutting-edge Digital Interviewing and Assessment Solutions help reduce this divide significantly.

RANK OF B-SCHOOLS

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B) has been ranked among the Top 10 in the list of Financial Times Asia-Pacific Business schools 2018. It takes the 8th position in the overall ranking, alongside schools like Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China); CEIBS (China), National University of Singapore Business School (Singapore), among others. IIMB is one among the only two Indian B-schools to be featured in the Top 10. The top-25 ranking is based on the quality diverse course offerings at business schools.

'DEV BHOOMI' TO UNDERGO A REVAMP

Under the leadership of the Chief Minister JAI RAM THAKUR, Himachal Pradesh has been infused with a new vision and a focused plan of development. In an interview with JETENDER RAWAT, the state leader shares details of his comprehensive approach towards growth

Himachal Pradesh is undergoing a wave of transformation under the new government and has set its course towards development. The Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, JAI RAM THAKUR, informs that his government has identified some priority sectors, under which 30 projects have been marked with proper budget provisions, and is working with a focused approach to achieve the goals in a time-bound manner. Excerpts from the interview:

● **How is the government working towards the socio-economic upliftment of the senior citizens of the state?**
After coming to power, in one of our first meetings, we reduced the age limit of social security pension for the old age persons from 80 years to 70 years that too without any income criteria. This decision has benefited about 1.3 lakh elderly people of the state. We are trying to not only provide social security but also give the senior citizens an opportunity to live a respectable life. The social security pension is being provided to about 4.47 lakh people in the state. A budget provision of ₹443 crore has been made in this current financial year. Various social security pensions are being provided to the eligible people in the state including the Old-Age Pension, the National Old Age Pension, the National Widow Pension, the National Disability Pension, and the Disability Relief Allowance and so on. The old age pension of ₹750 is being provided for those above 60 years old where the annual income does not exceed ₹35,000 and for those who are above 70 years or more will be given a monthly pension of ₹1300 barring any income criteria.

● **Please elaborate on the 'Gramin Jan Manch' programme of the government**
It has been observed that citizens often face difficulties in accessing benefits provided by the government in vital sectors like pensions, health, and education and so on. For registering such grievances with the local authorities they have to spend both time and money. We believe in the 'government at the door step of the people' and thus we announced the concept of 'Jan Manch' which was envisaged as a high level grievance redressal mechanism. Under this programme, all the

ministers of the state government regularly organise 'Jan Manch' in the remote areas of every district to solve the problems of the people at the spot. The officers of each department are to be present to facilitate decision making. The objectives are to identify and resolve the grievances effectively, especially of the underprivileged. It is seen as an equitable, accessible, friendly and approachable programme to debunk the perception that only the work of the influential gets done. Apart from grievance redressal, the 'Jan Manch' also targets delivery of citizen centric services like delivery of various kinds of certificates and completion of documentation under various schemes; saturation of select government schemes such as 100 per cent immunisation, 100 per cent LPGfication, 100 per cent piped drinking water supply to all households; physical inspection of operational schemes and ongoing work amongst others. However, it does not deal with issue like transfers, court cases, demand for government jobs and new schemes. It is organised assembly constituency-wise on the first Sunday of every month and the Ministers-in-charge rotate every month to cover all the constituencies, systematically. Publicity campaign is conducted 15-20 days before the designated date, informing the citizens about the proposed 'Jan Manch' which is to be held at the designated venue. This model has been so successful that many other state governments are now looking at it as a case study to implement in their respective states.

● **Himachal Pradesh launched its own scheme to provide LPG connections to various households of the state. What is the purpose of this?**
The Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had launched the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana to provide LPG connections to the women in the households in order to reduce the usage of coal and other non-renewable sources as fuel. Though the scheme has been quite successful, we observed that many households in our state could not get the benefit of the scheme. Thus, on the sidelines of the same, we introduced the Grahini Suvidha Yojana (GSY) under which the state government is giving LPG facility to all the families for two years. Besides, the

government will also provide security amount to get LPG connection and a gas stove to those families who were not covered in Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. A budget of ₹12 crores has been approved for this. Within four months of this scheme, almost 35,000 families have been given gas stoves in their homes, thus fulfilling the larger objective of a sustainable environment.

● **What are the measures being introduced to stem the tide of migration of youngsters from the hills in search of livelihood?**
The youth are the strength of the country and the future. However, there is rampant unemployment among them and it is not possible to provide government jobs to all. Thus, to offer incentives to the youth to become entrepreneurs, we introduced the Mukhyamantri Yuva Swavalamban Yojana (MYSY) for the unemployed youth in the state. All the unemployed youth between the age group of 18 to 35 years are eligible for this scheme. The jobless young citizens are being given a subsidy of 25 per cent on machinery on making an investment of ₹40 lakh in the industry of their livelihood, whereas the women have are being given a subsidy of 30 per cent under the same. On loans up to ₹40 lakhs, the government will provide an interest subsidy of five percent for three years and has also offered to provide government land to the youth on rent at just one per cent. We have also announced to reduce stamp duty from six per cent to three per cent on the purchase of land. This scheme will ensure that adequate self-employment opportunities are created in the state to reduce the unemployment problem. Moreover, each youth will be self-sufficient and will also hopefully become a job creator. We

have made a provision of ₹80 crore for the successful implementation of this scheme.

● **Tourism has been identified as a crucial project in Himachal. What are the plans in place to develop the state for this sector?**

Himachal Pradesh is known as 'Dev Bhoomi' and is renowned world-over for its natural resources and scenic beauty. The law and order in the state is also quite good, which attracts a lot of tourists, both domestic and foreign. We are working on this sector with a focused approach and plan to develop some virgin, unknown destinations, beyond the popular ones. For this, we have introduced a project named—'Nayi Rahein, Nayi Manjhile'. We have got an approval for a ₹1,900 crore tourism infrastructure development project to be funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This project will focus on diversification of tourism and spreading it to new areas by developing relevant infrastructure. It will have both hard and soft components and will include beautification of towns, development of unexplored areas, conservation and restoration of heritage buildings, infrastructure development in adventure, eco and rural tourism with emphasis on community participation. It will also help us to generate employment for the local youth and showcase Himachal Pradesh as the best nature tourism destination. This project has been designed based on the detailed baseline data, a study conducted of 324 sites in 12 districts of the state, suggestions obtained from over 90,000 tourists and is designed in line with the sustainable tourism guidelines for the Himalayan states. Some of the new destinations that have been identified are the Chanchal area, Janjehli, Kangra and the Pong Dam. The Chanchal area has brilliant slopes that are apt for skiing and this would be further developed for active, hard adventure activities. Janjehli will be developed from the perspective of eco-tourism. Bir Biling in the Kangra

district will be developed as an international destination for paragliding while the lakes and the Pong dam in the state will be developed for water sports activities as a new tourism product to the tourists to the state.

● **How is the state addressing issues of connectivity?**

Connectivity, to and from various locations in Himachal Pradesh, has been a challenge for us over the years. We are trying to address the same with projects in place to improve road, rail and air connectivity. Under the Udaan-II scheme of the government, various destinations in the state will be connected by air as flights will be made operational from January 2019 onwards. The Chief Minister of the states is provided with a helicopter for quick visits. However, times when the helicopter is sitting idle, we have offered to deploy it between Shimla and Chandigarh three times a week for the purpose of heli-taxis. Soon, we will also begin joy rides to Rohtang.

● **The state is also working on increasing its power capacity. What are the new projects?**

Himachal Pradesh was known as the powerhouse of the country but over the years we have not been able to make much progress in the power sector. Our Power Policy has had some stringent rules which discouraged many investors to come to the state. We have identified these issues and tried to create out the hiccups after meeting with the investors. Also, we have recently allocated the 780-MW Jangi-Thopan - Powari hydro electric project in the Kinnaur district to the public sector, Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN) on a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) basis for a period of 70 years. The company is in the process of implementing various projects, which are at different stages of development. Upon completion, they will add 4,018 MW capacity. We plan on conducting an Investor's Meet next year where we will bring together all types of industries including agriculture, horticulture, pharmaceuticals, power, and tourism and so on to bring more funds to the state for the fast-track development of Himachal.



Tata Motors plans large-scale overhaul of sales network

Auto major to bring in new products

PTI ■ JODHPUR

Auto major Tata Motors is planning a large-scale overhaul of its sales network across the country over the next one year as it prepares to bring in new products, including premium SUV Harrier, a top company official on Tuesday said.

The company, which plans to have all its future products on just two platforms -- Omega and Alpha, currently has around 790 dealerships across the country. "We acknowledge that our showrooms and workshops need complete overhauling and accordingly we have hired a global consulting agency to look into upgrading all our showrooms," Tata Motors President Passenger Vehicles Business Unit Mayank Pareek told PTI in an interview.

The work on upgrading the showrooms starts from next month and would go on for at least one year, he added.

It would include bringing in new technologies, enhancing ambience and workforce across the dealerships, he added.

"We have decided to have wi-fi in all the showrooms. There should be lounge where you can come and sit and not just necessarily buy a car," Pareek said. Similarly, the company is upgrading its workshops and is in the process of

hiring over 800 sales executives just for Harrier, which is set for launch in January.

Tata Motors is also looking to more than double the number of its dealerships by the end of financial year 2021-22, with half of the number expected to be based on virtual experience.

"We plan to have 2,000 dealerships by 2021-22 and these will not be all brick and mortar (showrooms). We are going to use digital technology specially with 4G and 5G, which is expected to come," Pareek said. It is possible to utilise augmented reality and virtual reality platforms to create showrooms experience, he added. When asked if the company would phase out older models like Safari, going ahead with the company deciding to have all its products on just two platforms, Pareek said: "Slowly some of them will go. Honestly it is a natural thing to do. How long can you sustain a product?" "And also, it would be very difficult to upgrade some of these products with new norms coming in... We have decided all our new product would be on two new platforms," he added.

Tata Motors has already phased out models like Indica, Indigo, Manza and Vista.

"The Indian market is maturing so we need new products. So we will come with new products," Pareek said adding that the process is a trade-off whether "you invest in existing products" or you do new products.

"We want to have a new showroom with all new-looking cars," he noted.

On electric cars, Pareek said that all future Tata Motors products would be electric ready. Currently, four of its products -- Tiago, Tigor, Bolt and Zest have design capability allowing them to be converted into electric vehicles.

Speaking about having just two platforms going ahead, Pareek said: "Harrier is first product based on Omega and our next product will be on Alpha. We will just have these two platforms... a product based on Alpha platform can come around second quarter of next year (July-September)."

When asked if the company plans go for a price hike, Pareek said the company is in the process of working out the quantum. "We are in a double jeopardy. On one hand, input costs have gone up, and secondly sales have been declining. We want to grow on a sustainable basis. Because of this we will have to take a call on this in the second half of this month," he added.

Panel to redraft I-T Act to focus on removing ambiguities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The task force set up to redraft Income Tax law will focus on removing the ambiguities, rather than suggesting dramatic policy changes and tweaking of tax rates, the panel's convener Akhilesh Ranjan said Tuesday.

Ranjan said the 6-member task force formed to redraft the over 50-year old I-T law will meet shortly to draft a new law which will be more comprehensive.

"Tax rate is prima-facie not the main focus area of this task force... (task force will focus on) simplification which can remove the ambiguities," Ranjan told reporters here. He said there are clauses, provisos and explanations which have been added to the I-T Act, 1961 over time which need to be streamlined in simple language.

"We have been adding provisions after provisions, explanations after explanations, they have become inconsistent, ambiguous. So let us clarify the real intent of the law. In that process there may be some new policy initiatives while trying to make things clear."

"The focus is not on coming out with a new tax policy but focus is on making the law more comprehensible," said Ranjan, who is member legislation in the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). The task force was set up by the finance ministry in November last. Arbind Modi was made the convener of the panel and he retired on September 30. On November 26, Ranjan was appointed as the new convener, who has been mandated to submit the report by February 28, 2019.

Asked if the panel would submit any

report before the interim budget on February 1, Ranjan said it is unlikely.

The NDA government would be presenting its interim Budget for 2018-19 on February 1. The full 2018-19 Budget would be presented after the general elections due sometime in the mid of 2019.

In September last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had said in an event that the Income-tax Act, 1961 needs to be redrafted.

Other members of the task force include Girish Ahuja (chartered accountant), Rajiv Memani (Chairman and Regional Managing Partner of EY), Mukesh Patel (practicing tax advocate), Mansi Kedia (Consultant, ICRIER) and G.C. Srivastava (retired IRS and advocate). "I am having a meeting (of task force) very shortly. I'm sure that they have done a lot of work and I would like to know what is the work that has been done till now and we will take it forward," Ranjan said.

The panel was tasked to draft direct tax laws in line with the laws prevalent in other countries, incorporating international best practices, and keeping in mind the economic needs of the country. Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram had in 2009 proposed a direct taxes code (DTC) to replace the cumbersome IT law to embody the principle of keeping taxes low and removing exemptions. The NDA government, since coming to power in 2014, has already implemented general anti-avoidance rules GAAR. In 2016, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley also promised to lower corporate tax rate to 25 per cent in 5 years.

BUSINESS CORNER

TIER 2, 3 CITIES CONTRIBUTING OVER 40% TO BUSINESS IN INDIA: FOODPANDA

New Delhi: Online food ordering and delivery platform Foodpanda India Tuesday said smaller cities and towns are now contributing over 40 per cent to the company's business in the country. The company is also looking to double the number of on-board restaurant partners from the present 60,000 by January 2019, Foodpanda said in a statement. "We are thrilled about bringing the first online food experience for millions of customers in many of these tier 2 and 3 cities," Foodpanda India CEO Pranay Jivrajka said. These markets are already contributing to over 40 per cent of the company's national business and we are confident that they will fuel a majority share of business in the near future, he added. "Cities like Jaipur, Lucknow, Bhavnagar, Rajahmundry, Bikaner, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Ujjain are some of our fastest growing markets today and we are thrilled to build superior food experiences for our customers in India's 100 cities and beyond," Jivrajka said.

SIMPLIFIED GST RETURN FORMS TO BE ROLLED OUT FROM APRIL 1: REVENUE SECY

New Delhi: The new simplified GST return forms will be rolled out from April 1, 2019, Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey said on Tuesday. He exuded confidence that the government will achieve the budgeted target for Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection and said the revenue department is getting inputs about entities which are evading taxes. In the first eight months (April-November) of the current fiscal, the government has mopped up over ₹7.76 lakh crore from GST. The 2018-19 budget had estimated annual GST collection at ₹13.48 lakh crore, which means a monthly target of ₹1.12 lakh crore. "We are short by ₹4,000 crore this month (November). To arrive at any conclusion we have to have some more months' data. But we are confident that we will be able to achieve our target. Our monthly target is around Rs 1 lakh crore. This we want to increase to ₹1.10 lakh crore," Pandey said. GST collection in November was ₹97,637 crore.

ONE NEW MODEL EVERY 6 MONTHS: KIA

New Delhi: South Korean auto major Kia Motors will launch one model every six months once it starts selling vehicles in India from mid-2019 but is not considering the high-volume compact cars segment, a top company official said on Tuesday. The company, which has set a target to be among top five players in three years in India, is looking to position itself as a premium brand in the mass segment. "Yes, we are considering six models in three years, which is one model every six months," Kia Motors India CEO and managing director Kookhyun Shim told PTI here. The company, however, is not considering the compact cars segment which accounts for about 70 per cent of the total Indian passenger vehicles (PV) segment that stood at around 3.3 million units in 2017-18.

Residential real estate demand may pick up in medium-term: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As of FY19, affordability in most cities is estimated to be in the range of 6-8 times compared with 11-13 times five years back

Ratings said in a report.

In the short term, demand is likely to remain muted and prices will remain under pressure on account of slowdown in volumes due to on-going liquidity concerns.

As of FY19, affordability in

most cities is estimated to be in the range of 6-8 times compared with 11-13 times five years back, it said.

Ticket sizes, it said, have been coming down as developers launch units with reduced average area per house, led by

both market needs and the impetus to affordable housing, it said.

The capital values in the residential segment have been under pressure of late, with a decline of 5-20 per cent across micro-markets in the last 2-3 years, and are likely to remain range-bound because of unsold inventory, it added. Implementation of Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, (RERA), is also expected to give a fillip to demand, which has

been lacklustre so far.

With most RERA websites operational and a grievance-handling mechanism in place in key states, end-user participation is expected to improve gradually for under-construction properties as well, the report said.

"Between fiscals 2019 and 2021, residential demand is estimated to log a compound annual growth rate of 4 per cent led by key micro-markets of Bengaluru, Hyderabad and

MMR. Though marginal, the growth will be driven by first time buyers eyeing units in mid-income tickets typically priced between ₹25 lakh to ₹1 crore," Crisil research director Rahul Prithiani said.

Meanwhile, the report said the commercial portfolio is seeing steady lease rentals and healthy demand, with a good number of assets changing hands. With large private equity firms and property managers on the prowl, just 15 of the larg-

er marquee deals over the last five fiscals have totalled around ₹30,000 crore.

This has helped cushion the blow for developers, who have been refinancing and taking on more debt for construction as residential demand remains tepid.

With limited incremental funding to the sector from banks, which grew at just 2 per cent in fiscal 2018, NBFCs and HFCs came to the developers' rescue.

However, given the current pressure on liquidity for NBFCs, a potential cascading effect on select projects and developers, could make access to funding more difficult.

For the top 20 developers alone, support extended to the residential segment from their commercial portfolio has totalled around ₹33,000 crore in the last three years, both through sale of assets and additional top-up debt in operational properties.

'India, US agree to accelerate defence and security ties'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India and the US have agreed to accelerate their defence and security ties as Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her American counterpart James Mattis reviewed ongoing initiatives to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation as a "key pillar" of the strategic partnership. US Defence Secretary Mattis, who welcomed Sitharaman to the Pentagon on Monday for the fourth set of talks between them this year, described India as a "stabilising force" across the Indo-Pacific and the globe.

"The United States and India, in Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi's words, have overcome hesitations of history, carrying forward the legacy of friendship and making clear there is no contradiction between strategic autonomy and strategic partnership," Mattis said. The two leaders discussed the growing partnership between India and US in the defence sphere and also exchanged views on a broad range of bilateral and international issues of mutual interest, said an official statement in New Delhi. "They reviewed ongoing initiatives to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation as a key pillar of the strategic partnership between India and the US," it said.

"Both sides agreed to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation, building on the discussions and outcomes of the '2+2 Dialogue' held in September 2018," the statement added. She also highlighted the steps taken by India to promote defence sector manufacturing under the government's 'Make in India' flagship programme, it said. Mattis said the US-India relationship is a natural partnership between the world's oldest and the world's largest democracy. "We have made meaningful progress in advancing US-India defence cooperation, most notably with your nation hosting September's inaugural '2+2' ministerial dialogue in New Delhi," he said. The ministerial talks served as a tangi-



Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her American counterpart, James Mattis

ble demonstration of "our shared vision for a safe, secure, prosperous and free Indo-Pacific, underpinned by respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of all nations," Mattis said.

"Today, I reiterate US appreciation for India's leadership as a stabilising force in pursuit of that vision, promoting peace and security across the region and the globe," he said. The defence secretary said the '2+2 Dialogue' also made clear the commitment of India and the US to further bolster their defence partnership.

"Today, we build on that momentum as we work to implement our agreement from September, Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)," he added. During the dialogue, the two nations signed the COMCASA that allows India to receive advanced US military hardware. Describing the '2+2' meeting as a landmark event, Sitharaman said it set the stage for strategic consultations between the two countries. In her remarks at the start of the meeting with Mattis, Sitharaman said the mutual trust and confidence in defence partnership between the two countries was growing.

She added that she was encouraged by the importance attached to the India-US defence relationship in the new

US National Security Strategy. "A strong foundation has been laid for the India-US defence relationship over the years. India sees the US as an important partner in defence," Sitharaman said, adding that the two countries have good military-to-military cooperation, defence consultations, scientific collaborations and co-production and co-development and industry collaboration.

Exuding confidence that the bilateral talks would accord greater momentum to the dialogue and partnership between the two countries, she said the relationship continued to be very strong. The recent high-level exchanges are an indication of the depth and the quality of bilateral ties as well as the two sides' mutual desire to work closely on a range of regional and global issues, she added. Sitharaman appreciated the responsiveness of the Trump Administration to India's sensitivities.

At the same time, it is also indicative of the desire and the effort to have an even more robust relationship than before, she said. "Especially over the past three to four years, we have made considerable progress. Our relations, based on common democratic values, enjoy strong political and popular support in both countries. There's a growing mutual trust

and also the confidence in defence partnership, which augurs very well for the future," She said.

Sitharaman started her official visit here by visiting the State Department, where she signed condolence book for former US president George H W Bush. From there, she drove to the Arlington National Cemetery where she laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a gesture which did not go unnoticed at the Pentagon. "On behalf of our service members, thank you for paying your nation's respect at Arlington National Cemetery this morning. We're grateful," Mattis said. Mattis said Sitharaman's presence at the wreath-laying made clear that the US-India military relations were not "defined by brittle or empty words" but by the human aspect of partnership steeped in recognition of the two nations' respective sacrifices and the cause of peace, friendship and freedom.

Sitharaman, the first woman defence minister of India, is currently on a five-day trip to the US. From here, she will travel to California to visit the Defense Innovation Unit of the Department of Defense and the Indo-Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii.

'It's time for Pak to get on board with peace process in S Asia'

Washington (PTI): In a strong message to Pakistan, US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis has said it is time for "every responsible nation" to support the efforts of the UN, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all those who are trying to maintain peace in South Asia. Pakistan must take on a substantive role in peace talks with the Taliban if the war in neighbouring Afghanistan is to be ended, he said. Mattis was responding to a question from reporters about a letter written by President Donald Trump to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, seeking his support in the peace process in Afghanistan. In his letter, Trump made it clear that Pakistan's full support over the issue "is fundamental" to building an enduring US-Pakistan partnership.

"We're looking for every responsible nation to support peace in the sub-continent and across this war in Afghanistan

that's gone on now for 40 years," he told reporters at the Pentagon on Monday as he welcomed Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for talks. "It's time for everyone to get on board, support the United Nations; support Prime Minister Modi's, (Afghan) President (Ashraf) Ghani and all those who are trying to maintain peace and make for a better world here," Mattis said. "We are on that track. It is diplomatically led as it should be, and we'll do our best to protect the Afghan people," he added.

Since taking office, Trump has been very critical of Pakistan's lax attitude towards combatting terrorism. Last month Trump said Pakistan does not do "a damn thing" for the US, alleging that Islamabad had helped al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden hide near its garrison city of Abbottabad.

Ties between the US and Pakistan strained after Trump,

while announcing his Afghanistan and South Asia policy in August last year, hit out at Pakistan for providing safe havens to "agents of chaos" that kill Americans in Afghanistan and warned Islamabad that it has "much to lose" by harbouring terrorists. In September, the Trump administration cancelled USD 300 million in military aid to Islamabad for not doing enough against terror groups like the Haqqani Network and the Taliban active on its soil. The Trump administration, in the recent months, has intensified its efforts to seek a negotiated settlement of America's longest war in Afghanistan where the US has lost over 2,400 soldiers since late 2001, when it invaded the country after the 9/11 terror attacks.

The Taliban are fighting to flush out US-led international forces and re-establish their regime in Afghanistan after their ouster in 2001.

US Prez compelled into reality check after PM Khan's response to offensive tweets

Islamabad (PTI): A senior Pakistani minister and top aide of Prime Minister Imran Khan Tuesday claimed that US President Donald Trump was "compelled" to do a "reality check," days after his offensive tweets against Islamabad for failing to help America in combating terrorism.

Taking to Twitter a day after Khan said the US president has written a letter to him, the Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari said Trump was compelled to seek help from Pakistan in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table to end the brutal war in Afghanistan which has been going on for 17 years.

Last month Trump also said Pakistan does not do "a damn thing" for the US, saying Islamabad helped al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden hide near its garrison city of Abbottabad. Mazari, known to be a hawk, in a series of tweets, said, "PM Imran Khan's response to Trump's offensive tweets against Pakistan compelled Trump to do a reality check and write to PM



Khan asking for help in bringing peace to Afghanistan!"

"So much for those in Pakistan who were quivering after Imran Khan's tweets went out!" she added. In response to Trump's anti-Pakistan comments, Khan had hit back, advising Washington to assess its efficiency in the war on terror instead of making Pakistan a scapegoat for its failure. Meanwhile, Mazari also criticised US State Department's Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad for his approach towards Pakistan.

She advised tough-talking Khalilzad to bring a "less arrogant and hostile mindset" during his ongoing visit to Islamabad.

Khalilzad, the veteran US diplomat tasked with making efforts to end the bloody war in Afghanistan, is known as a blunt negotiator.

Although both the US and Pakistan now have a commonality of views on seeking a political solution to the Afghan problem, the trust deficit between the two is the real stumbling block. Relations between the two countries are tense despite recent efforts to reset the troubled ties, the Express Tribune reported.

At the heart of their stalemate is the US insistence on Pakistan to do more to bring the Afghan Taliban on to the negotiating table. Washington still believes that Islamabad holds a considerable weight over the insurgent group. Pakistan, however, insists that bringing the Taliban on the negotiating table is a shared responsibility of all the players.

S Africa exits recession as govt eyes 2019 polls

Johannesburg (AFP): South Africa broke free of recession on Tuesday when it reported GDP growth of 2.2 per cent for the third quarter, the statistics authority said, marking a positive economic trajectory ahead of elections. President Cyril Ramaphosa, who took power in February, has pledged to revive the listless economy ahead of polls due in May by attracting USD 100 billion in foreign investment and by fighting corruption.

The growth, which contrasted sharply with the second quarter's 0.4 per cent contraction, was driven by a surge in the manufacturing, agriculture and transport sectors, Stats SA said in a statement.

The announcement follows a strong week for the local Rand currency which has benefited from a detente in the United States' trade war with China. The Rand currency was the second strongest performing of all developing countries against the dollar since Friday, gaining 1.81 per cent according to Bloomberg.

Lukman Otunuga, an analyst at FXTM foreign exchange, said in a note to investors that the country's exit from recession would boost "confidence over the South African economy and investor appetite towards the rand". The purchasing managers' index published by Absa's Bureau for Economic Research on Monday showed that factory orders had bounced back from a 15-month lull.

Manufacturing was up 7.5 per cent in the third quarter compared to the second, Stats SA said. But Finance Minister Tito Mboweni's mid-term budget statement delivered in October slashed South Africa's 2018 growth forecast from 1.5 per cent to 0.7 per cent. Mboweni is the country's fifth finance minister in three years after his respected predecessor Nhlamhla Nene resigned in October. The country's economic performance is seen as crucial to bolstering the ruling African National Congress' standing ahead of national polls due in May 2019.

'Strong commitment to climate action rooted in the Vedas'

United Nations (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi has told UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres the motivation for his "strong commitment" to climate action is rooted in the ancient Hindu scriptures, the Vedas. Modi and Guterres met last week on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where the two held discussions about climate change and India's support for the Paris Climate Agreement.

The UN chief thanked Modi for his commitment to increase India's nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement. Guterres had also held discussions with Modi during his three-day visit to India this year coinciding with Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary on October 2. During that visit, Guterres had presented the Indian leader with the United Nations Champions of the Earth Award for policy leadership for 2018.

"[...] It's not only Christianity, I was speaking to Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi of India recently and asking him what was his motivation for his very strong commitment to climate action and he said it's in the Vedas, the founding books of Hinduism. I think this is felt in all religions..." Guterres said at a press conference in Poland Monday.

He was responding to a question on whether he thinks religions have a role to play in the field of climate change. The transcript of the Secretary General's joint press conference with Polish President Andrzej Duda was issued by the UN spokesperson's office here. Guterres is in the Polish city Katowice for the high-level UN COP24 Climate Change Conference. The two-week 24th conference of the parties to the UN Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) marks the deadline for the 197 parties that signed the Convention, to adopt guidelines for the implementation of the-



toric 2015 Paris Agreement. In Paris, three years ago, countries collectively agreed to keep global temperature rises to no more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and if possible, to limit the rise to 1.5°C. Now, in Poland, they have to agree on how they will achieve this collectively.

Guterres was asked the question in a reference to Pope Francis' views on climate change. "I do believe that if one is a believer and one believes that the world is created by God, it must be terrible to see human beings destroying God's creation. So I think it's perfectly normal that a religion that believes in the work of the Creator is totally against the destruction of the work of the Creator that human beings are [carrying out at present]. So I think it is perfectly normal that his Holiness the Pope, not only this Pope, it comes from the past, have a very positive position in relation to climate action," he said.

Pope Francis has in the past called for a "revolution" to combat climate change, saying the consensus was clear and "doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain".

Kicking off the high-level event in Poland, along with several other high-level representatives, Guterres highlighted key messages for the thousands of representatives of the world's nations, non-profit organisations, UN agencies, and private sector companies gathered in Katowice.

Lanka crisis: Rajapaksa files appeal in SC against interim court's order

PTI ■ COLOMBO

An appeal was filed Tuesday in Sri Lanka's Supreme Court against a court order that barred Mahinda Rajapaksa from acting as Prime Minister. The Court of Appeal in an interim order Monday temporarily halted Rajapaksa and his Cabinet from functioning in their positions in response to a case filed by 122 legislators against his disputed government. The court set the hearing of the case for December 12 and 13.

MP Gamini Lokuge said the appeal was filed in the Supreme Court against the interim order issued by the Court of Appeal, Daily Mirror reported. Rajapaksa had said on Monday that he would appeal against the Court of Appeal's interim order.

"We will not agree with the interim order issued by the Court of Appeal today suspending the Cabinet.

We will appeal to the Supreme Court first thing tomorrow against it," Rajapaksa said in a statement. He said that it was the Supreme Court which has the power to interpret the



Ousted Sri Lankan prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe speaks during a media briefing in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

Constitution. As many as 122 parliamentarians of Wickeremesinghe's United National Party (UNP), Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and Tamil National Alliance last month filed a petition in the Court of Appeal challenging Rajapaksa's authority as the prime minister.

The interim ruling was a major blow to both President Maithripala Sirisena and Rajapaksa after the former had appointed his ex-rival as the

prime minister on October 26, plunging the country into a major constitutional crisis. Sirisena later dissolved Parliament, almost 20 months before its term was to end, and ordered snap election.

The Supreme Court overturned Sirisena's decision to dissolve Parliament and halted the preparations for snap polls.

The political crisis has crippled the government for more than a month. Ousted prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

and Rajapaksa both claim to be the prime ministers. Wickremesinghe says his dismissal is invalid because he still holds a majority in the 225-member Parliament. Prior to the crisis, Wickremesinghe's UNP had the backing of 106 parliamentarians while Rajapaksa and Sirisena combine had 95 seats.

Rajapaksa has, so far, failed to prove his majority in Parliament. Wickremesinghe, with the support from the main Tamil party, claims to have the support of more than 113 legislators, required for simple majority. The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has 16 seats in the house and JVP has six legislators. The UNF has moved three no trust motions against Rajapaksa, who has refused to step down.

The Sri Lankan president has said that due to sharp personal differences with Wickremesinghe he would not reappoint him as the Prime Minister.

However, Wickremesinghe's UNP claims that Sirisena will be left with no choice as he would be the man who will command the confidence in the House.

Israel launches operation to thwart Hezbollah border tunnels

Jerusalem (AP): The Israeli military launched an operation on Tuesday to "expose and thwart" tunnels built by the Hezbollah militant group it says stretch from Lebanon into northern Israel. The tunnels are not operational, the military said, adding that its work to find and neutralise them was taking place inside Israeli territory. But the operation could send tensions soaring between Israel and its Iranian-backed foe, who have both been preoccupied with other conflicts since their last conflagration more than a decade ago. "We see Hezbollah's activities as a flagrant and blatant violation of Israeli sovereignty" and of UN resolutions, said Lt. Col Jonathan Conriscus, a military spokesman. "This activity is another example of the negative effects of Iranian entrenchment in the region." The military did not disclose how many tunnels snake into Israeli territory from Lebanon or what tools it was using to deal with the threat, although it said the operation could last for weeks. Israel has spent years attempting to tackle a network of tunnels from the Gaza Strip into Israel and has used a variety of methods to destroy tunnels and prevent them from being rebuilt.

A Lebanese military official told The Associated Press that Lebanese troops and military intelligence agents, along with UN peacekeepers deployed in southern Lebanon, were observing the border on Tuesday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, had no further details. Israel has been using earth-movers and other large machinery to build a massive wall along its northern border, saying the barrier is needed to

protect civilians from Hezbollah attacks. While the construction has prompted complaints from the Lebanese army, Hezbollah has not responded, an indication it could remain restrained amid the new operation. Israel, meanwhile, gave no special orders to residents of northern Israel, signaling that it too was not expecting an immediate response from Hezbollah. The existence of the tunnels did not appear to have surprised Israel. Conriscus said Hezbollah has been developing an offensive plan against Israel that would "shift the battleground into Israel."

The group would use fire-power and ground units and "the surprise component of that plan was supposed to be tunnels that would allow infiltrators into Israel." He added that Israel has investigated the possibility of underground Hezbollah tunnels since 2013 and launched a task force which has been working for the last two years searching for them. He did not explain why the operation was launched now. Bulldozers and military vehicles were seen operating near the pastoral Israeli border town of Metula on Tuesday. Residents of the area told Israeli media they had been hearing digging noises for years and had reported their suspicions to the military.

There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah and its Al-Manar TV did not make any mention of the Israeli operation. Malene Jensen, spokeswoman for the UN force in Lebanon known as UNIFIL, said the situation in the peacekeepers' "area of operation remains calm" and that they are in touch with all relevant parties to make sure calm and stability is maintained.



Israeli block a road on the border with Lebanon in the northern Israeli town of Metula on Tuesday.

French PM announces delay in fuel tax hikes



Ambulance workers hold flares outside the National Assembly in Paris on Monday.

AFP ■ PARIS

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced a suspension of fuel tax hikes Tuesday, a major U-turn in an effort to appease a protest movement that has radicalized and plunged Paris into chaos last weekend, French media reported. Both Le Monde newspaper and France Info radio said the planned increase, which has provoked violent riots, will be suspended for several months. Philippe is also expected to announce other measures aimed at easing tensions, just three weeks after insisting that the government would not change course and remained determined to help wean French consumers off polluting fossil fuels.

Philippe told lawmakers from President Emmanuel Macron's party first and was expected to make an official declaration later Tuesday. There was no immediate comment from his office.

"We have to give the French people a reason to come to their senses. We will have a debate tomorrow at the national assembly, which will be followed by a vote, and then we will have a big debate on how we can devise measures to accompany the ecological transition," Philippe was quoted as

saying by Le Monde. "We must appease the situation for the French people." It's unlikely Philippe's announcement will put an end to the road blockades and demonstrations, with more possible protests this weekend in Paris. On Tuesday, protesters kept blocking several fuel depots and many insisted their fight was not over.

"It's a first step, but we will not settle for a crumb," said Benjamin Cauchy, one of the leaders of the protests. Prominent Socialist figure Segolene Royal, a former candidate for president, lauded Philippe's decision but said it came too late.

"This decision should have been taken from the start, as soon as the conflict emerged," she said. "We felt it was going to be very, very hard because we saw the rage, the exasperation, especially from pensioners. They should have withdrawn (the tax hikes) right away. The more you let a conflict fester, the more you eventually have to concede."

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen lashed out at the decision as too little, tweeting that it was "obviously not up to the expectations of the French people struggling with precarity."

After a third consecutive weekend of clashes in Paris led

by protesters wearing distinctive yellow traffic vests, Philippe held crisis talks with representatives of major political parties on Monday. He also met with Macron and other ministers in order to find a quick solution to the crisis. Facing the most serious street protests since his election in May 2017, Macron has canceled a two-day trip to Serbia to stay in France this week.

More than 100 people were injured in the French capital and 412 arrested over the weekend during France's worst urban riot in years, with dozens of cars torched.

The protests began last month with motorists upset over the fuel tax hike and have grown to encompass a range of complaints, with protesters claiming that Macron's government doesn't care about the problems of ordinary people.

The planned new tax was to increase gasoline price by 4 euro cents per liter from January next year. Gasoline currently costs about 1.42 euros a liter in Paris, slightly more than diesel.

Since the movement kicked off on Nov. 17, three people have been killed and hundreds injured in clashes or accidents stemming from the protests.

Trump pays respects as Prez Bush lies in state in US Capitol

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania paid their respects Monday to late president George H W Bush, whose remains lay in state in the US Capitol. The Trumps made a brief visit to the Capitol rotunda, where Bush's flag-draped coffin was resting as part of tributes to honour the 41st US president and commemorate his extraordinary life.

Bush died peacefully Friday at age 94, at his home in Houston, a passing that led Americans to reflect on his life of duty and service to country as a leader of the so-called "Greatest Generation." Only the second president to see his son follow him to the Oval Office, the Republican stalwart is being honoured with four days of commemorations and services in Washington and in Texas, where he will be buried Thursday. Trump is scheduled to attend a state funeral service Wednesday at Washington National Cathedral — the first presidential funeral since Gerald Ford died in 2006. But late Monday, after Bush relatives and dignitaries had gone, the president was driven from the White House up to Capitol Hill. With the first lady at his side, Trump saluted, and they stood at Bush's casket for about a minute. They exited the rotunda with little fanfare. Bush never



President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump pay their respects to former President George H. W. Bush, as he lies in state in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol on Monday.

warmed to Trump, and he had let it be known that he did not vote for him in 2016. Trump himself has criticized the elder Bush on the campaign trail. But on Monday, Trump wrote members of Congress to hail Bush as a man who "led a life that exemplified what is truly great about America." "President Bush worked selflessly throughout his long life to bring about a world of justice and lasting peace," he wrote.

Bush was a decorated World War II

fighter pilot, onetime ambassador to China, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and vice president to Ronald Reagan before winning the White House. Military pallbearers carried the flag-draped casket into the rotunda as a fiery sunset bathed Washington in a glow.

The somber ceremony was attended by his son George W. Bush — the nation's 43rd president — and other relatives, dignitaries and more than 100

members of the House and Senate. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell lauded Bush — who occupied the White House from 1989 to 1993 — as a patriot who steered the country as straight as he had piloted his World War II airplane.

"He kept us flying high and challenged us to fly higher still. And he did it with modesty and kindness that would have been surprising in someone one tenth as tough and accomplished as he was," he said. Bush was transported aboard the presidential Boeing 747 — made available at Trump's direction — from Houston to Joint Base Andrews, in Maryland.

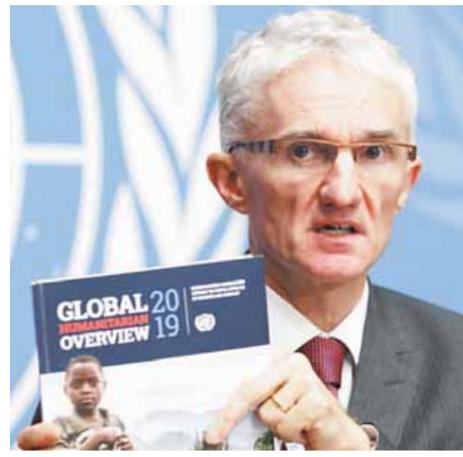
In Houston, relatives including his presidential son stood with hands on their hearts as the casket was carried to the aircraft. Bush is the 12th US president to lie in state in the rotunda. Just three months earlier, the honor was accorded to senator John McCain, a former Republican presidential nominee who died of brain cancer. Hundreds of members of the public began quietly filing in to the Capitol late Monday to pay their final respects. Among them was Kim Frinzell, a government employee who did not vote for Bush but grew to respect his accomplishments, including signing the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

Yemen humanitarian crisis to worsen next year

Geneva (AFP): The humanitarian crisis in Yemen, already the world's worst, will deteriorate in 2019, the UN said Tuesday, warning that the number of people needing food aid is set to jump by four million. The grim forecast for the embattled country came as the United Nations humanitarian office OCHA released its projected needs assessments for next year.

"The country with the biggest problem in 2019 is going to be Yemen," OCHA chief Mark Lowcock told reporters in Geneva. He said that in 2017, the UN was providing food assistance to three million people a month. That figure rose to eight million per month this year and is expected to hit 12 million in 2019, Lowcock added.

The crisis in Yemen spiralled after a Saudi-led coalition launched an offensive to support the government against Iran-backed Huthi rebels in March of 2015.



Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, holds a report during a press conference about the launch of the "Global Humanitarian Overview 2019" and "World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2018" flagship reports, at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland on Tuesday.

The situation has worsened in recent months due to a broad economic collapse and rising violence in the rebel-held port of Hodeida, a crucial import hub for food and other basic supplies. Lowcock said the UN is asking for USD 4 billion (3.5 billion euros) to help suffering Yemenis next year. Overall, 24 million people in Yemen — roughly 75 per cent of the population — will need humanitarian assistance in 2019. Lowcock noted that the government will also need additional budget support from other countries to pay salaries and pensions in order to contain wider suffering.

He indicated that some of Yemen's allies in the Gulf, notably Saudi Arabia have committed to continue helping finance the government. The OCHA chief stressed however that the outlook for Yemen could improve if progress is made at UN-brokered peace talks, set to begin in Sweden this month.

'Pak govt and military on same page'

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has dismissed reports of any civil-military friction unlike previous regimes, saying his government enjoyed unwavering support of the armed forces, a key player in the country's politics. The government of the cricketeer-turned-politician, which completed the first 100 days last Friday, said all ministers have reported their achievements to him and that he will review their performance.

"We might change some ministers," he said on Monday while answering questions by a panel of journalists representing various Pakistani media organisations. "There is not a single decision that I haven't taken on my own, and there's not a single decision that doesn't have the support of the army," Khan said while responding to a question on cooperation among state institutions.

"Chief of Army Staff] General Qamar Javed Bajwa stands right beside my decisions," he added. Khan said the Pakistan Army "is currently totally standing by his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party's manifesto". Pakistan's Opposition parties have alleged that the military tacitly backed Khan in the general elections in July. "We have no problems at the present," he said, adding that his government also hasn't faced issues of "civil-military discord" as seen during past governments. He was apparently referring to the tension between the previous government of Nawaz Sharif and the military over a number of issues.

Coup-prone Pakistan has been under military rule for almost half of its existence, with many governments deposed before completing its term, mostly at the behest of the country's powerful armed forces. Khan defended his close relations with the military, saying leaders around the world seek the opinion of their military establishment "since they are equipped with the means to brief us on security issues".

EU court adviser: Britain could change its mind on Brexit

AP ■ LONDON

Top official at the European Union's highest court advised Tuesday that Britain can unilaterally change its mind about leaving the European Union, boosting hopes among pro-EU campaigners in the UK that Brexit can be stopped. Prime Minister Theresa May's government insists it will never reverse the decision to leave, but May faces a tough battle to win backing in Parliament before lawmakers vote next week on whether to accept or reject the divorce agreement negotiated with the bloc. Defeat would leave the U.K. facing a chaotic "no-deal" Brexit and could topple the prime minister, her government, or both.

Advocate General Manuel Campos Sanchez-Bordona told the European Court of Justice that a decision by the British government to change its mind about invoking the countdown to departure would be legally valid. The advice of the advocate general is often, but not always, followed by the full court. The court is assessing the issue under an accelerated procedure, since



Britain is due to leave the bloc on March 29. The final verdict is expected within weeks.

Britain voted in 2016 to leave the 28-nation bloc, and invoked Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty in March 2017, triggering a two-year exit process. Article 50 is scant on details — largely because the idea of any country leaving the bloc was considered unlikely — so a group of Scottish legislators asked the courts to rule on whether the UK can pull out of the withdrawal procedure on its own.

The EU's governing Commission and Council oppose unilateral revocation,

arguing it requires unanimous agreement of the 27 remaining members of the bloc. The court's advocate general said that Article 50 "allows the unilateral revocation of the notification of the intention to withdraw from the EU". The advice bolstered anti-Brexit campaigners, who hope the decision to leave can be reversed. "That puts the decision about our future back into the hands of our own elected representatives — where it belongs," said Jo Maughan, a British lawyer who helped bring the case. May has repeatedly said the government will not seek to delay or reverse Brexit.

But the court's opinion is

another headache for the Conservative prime minister as she battles to win Parliament's backing for the divorce deal she has agreed with the EU. May was due to open five days of debate in the House of Commons on Tuesday, arguing that members of Parliament must back the agreement to deliver on the voters' decision to leave the EU and "create a new role for our country in the world." But her chances of winning majority backing for the deal when Parliament votes on December 11 look slim.

Politicians on both sides of Britain's EU membership debate oppose the agreement that May struck with the bloc — pro-Brexit ones because it keeps Britain bound closely to the EU, and pro-EU politicians because it erects barriers between the U.K. and its biggest trading partner.

"The numbers in the Houses of Parliament look pretty formidable for Theresa May," said Alan Wager, a research associate at the U.K. at the Changing Europe think tank. "Over 100 Conservative MPs have said they are not going to back the

deal, the Labour Party have said they are not going to back the deal.

So it looks like the deal won't pass next week." Leaving the EU without a deal would end more than 40 years of free trade and disrupt the flow of goods and services between Britain and the EU. The Bank of England warned last week that a no-deal Brexit could plunge Britain into a severe recession, with the economy shrinking by 8 percent in the months after March 29.

Bank of England Governor Mark Carney said Tuesday that British consumers could see their weekly supermarket bills up by 10 percent in a worst-case Brexit scenario that involves a 25 percent fall in the value of the pound. Before the debate, May's government faced another showdown with lawmakers over the legal advice about the Brexit deal.

Lawmakers were set to vote on a motion finding the government in contempt of Parliament for refusing to publish the full guidance from Attorney General Geoffrey Cox. Cox could be suspended from Parliament if he is found in contempt.

Rouhani threatens to cut off Gulf oil

Tehran (AFP): Iran's President Hassan Rouhani struck a defiant stance against US sanctions on Tuesday, renewing his threat to cut off international oil sales from the Gulf. "America should know... it is not capable of preventing the export of Iran's oil," Rouhani said at a televised rally in Semnan province.

"If it ever tries to do so... no oil will be exported from the Persian Gulf," he added. Since the 1980s, Iran has said repeatedly it would block the Gulf in response to international pressure but has never carried out the threat. Washington has reimposed sanctions, including an oil embargo, since withdrawing from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers in May.

It has vowed to reduce Iran's oil sales to zero, but has granted temporary waivers to eight countries. Rouhani last threatened to close the Gulf in July when he warned the US "should not play with the lion's tail." The president downplayed the economic impact of sanc-



tions, accusing the media of exaggerating the country's problems. "No hyperinflation, no massive unemployment will threaten us. People should stop saying such things in the papers," he told the crowd.

The latest inflation report from Iran's central bank says food prices rose 56 percent year-on-year in October. Rouhani acknowledged there were "some problems," but said these would be addressed in the new budget plan to be presented on December 16.

He said the government would maintain subsidies on essential goods and increase public sector wages and pensions by 20 percent.

Humour replaces bickering as married couples age

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

Prickly disagreements that can mark the early and middle years of a marriage mellow with age as conflicts give way to humour and acceptance, according to a study. Researchers from the University of California (UC), Berkeley in the US analysed videotaped conversations between 87 middle-aged and older husbands and wives who had been married for 15 to 35 years.

They tracked their emotional interactions over the course of 13 years. The team found that as couples aged, they showed more humour and tenderness towards another.

The findings, published in the journal Emotion, showed an increase in such positive behaviours as humour and affection and a decrease in negative behaviours such as

defensiveness and criticism. The results challenge long-held theories that emotions flatten or deteriorate in old age and point instead to an emotionally positive trajectory for long-term married couples.

"Our findings shed light on one of the great paradoxes of late life," said Robert Levenson, a UC Berkeley psychology professor. "Despite experiencing the loss of friends and family, older people in stable marriages are relatively happy and experience low rates of

depression and anxiety. Marriage has been good for their mental health," Levenson said. Consistent with previous findings, the study found that wives were more emotionally expressive than their husbands, and as they grew older they tended toward more domineering behaviour and less affection.

However, generally, across all the study's age and gender cohorts, negative behaviours decreased with age,



INCREASE IN POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS AS HUMOUR AND AFFECTION AND A DECREASE IN NEGATIVE BEHAVIOURS SUCH AS DEFENSIVENESS AND CRITICISM, THE RESULTS CHALLENGE LONG-HELD THEORIES THAT EMOTIONS FLATTEN OR DETERIORATE IN OLD AGE AND POINT INSTEAD TO AN EMOTIONALLY POSITIVE TRAJECTORY FOR LONG-TERM MARRIED COUPLES

researchers said. "Given the links between positive emotion and health, these findings underscore the importance

of intimate relationships as people age, and the potential health benefits associated with marriage," said Alice Verstaen, who conducted the study as a PhD student at UC Berkeley and is now a postdoctoral fellow at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System in the US. The participants, now mostly in their 70s, 80s and 90s, were heterosexual couples from the San Francisco Bay Area whose relationships researchers began tracking in 1989.

Researchers viewed 15-minute interactions between spouses in a laboratory setting as they discussed shared experiences and areas of conflict.

They tracked the emotional changes every few years. The spouses' listening and speaking behaviours were coded and rated according to their facial expressions, body language, verbal content and tone of voice.



The Soyuz-FG rocket booster with Soyuz MS-11 space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, blasts off at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan on Monday. The Russian rocket carries US astronaut Anne McClain, Russian cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko and CSA astronaut David Saint-Jacques.

GAMBHIR SAYS IT'S OVER

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran Indian opener Gautam Gambhir, who played a pivotal role in India's two World Cup triumphs, on Tuesday announced retirement from cricket, saying the "irritable noise of 'It's over Gauri'" has triumphed over his will to continue.

The 37-year-old, in a video message on his social media pages, said the Ranji Trophy game against Andhra Pradesh starting Thursday will be his last competitive match.

The aggressive opener was India's top-scorer in the finals of the 2007 World T20 in South Africa and the 2011 ODI World Cup, both of which the country won.

"The next Ranji Trophy game against Andhra will be my last day in the sun. It is coming to an end where it all started at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground," Gambhir said in the more than 11-minute long video post.

Gambhir, one of the most successful batsmen for India, has been out of favour with the national team for a while now after a dip in form and last played a Test back in 2016 against England.

"The thought has been with me day and night. It has travelled with me on flights like an irritable excess baggage; it has accompanied me to practice sessions, mocking at me like a menacing bowler. On certain other days, it has made my dinner taste horrible."



CAREER STATISTICS				
Competition	Test	ODI	T20I	LA
Matches	58	147	37	283
Runs	4,154	5,238	932	9,385
Average	41.95	39.68	27.41	36.51
100s/50s	9/22	11/34	-/7	19/57
Best	206	150*	75	150*
Catches/stumpings	38/-	36/-	11/-	68/-

Gambhir said, elaborating on his thought process leading up to Tuesday's decision.

Gambhir made 58 Test appearances for India, accumulating 4154 runs at an average of 41.95. His 147 ODI games fetched 5238 runs, while in 37 T20 Internationals, he scored 932 runs.

The capricious left-hander, who courted controversy of late for his outspoken views on political issues as well, had a prolific first-class career, which spanned 197 matches and produced 15,041 runs. His List A run count stands at 10,077.

Gambhir, who recently drew criticism for cherrypicking his Delhi Ranji appearances, said he tried hard to make a comeback in this year's IPL but could not make it count.

"After a decent 2017 domestic season, I entered this year's IPL with confidence as my best buddy. I thought all those negative noises were dead. But I was wrong. Six games of IPL for Delhi Daredevils it was back. And this time it was louder than before. Perhaps, my time was up. Yes, my time was up," he said.

"So, here I am, after more than 15 years of cricket for my country I want to retire from playing this beautiful game," he added.

He refused to call his international career, which began in 2003 with an ODI against Bangladesh, completely satisfactory but certainly the kind he would look back at fondly.

"I feel I was good enough for a lot more," he said.

In the video, Gambhir thanked his coaches, teammates and family members for standing by him.



Daredevils is now Delhi Capitals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Daredevils was renamed as Delhi Capitals on Tuesday with a hope that it would bring a change in fortunes of the franchise after a poor track record over the past 11 IPL seasons.

Co-owners Parth Jindal, representing JSW Sport, and Kiran Kumar Grandhi of GMR, unveiled the new name of the team.

Jindal, whose JSW sport acquired a 50 per cent stake in the Delhi franchise last year, also announced that Shreyas Iyer will continue to lead the team despite the presence of Shikhar Dhawan.

Dhawan returns to Delhi for the 2019 season after being traded by Sunrisers Hyderabad. Australian great Ricky Ponting will continue to coach the team.

Jindal explained why his team zeroed in on the new name of the team. "Delhi is the power centre of the country, it is the capital, therefore the name Delhi Capitals," he said.

The team has retained the old red and blue colour in the new team logo. "Our logo has been inspired by the

design of Parliament House. Tiger is our national animal and the three tigers idea is derived from the Ashok Chakra," said Jindal.

Delhi have ₹ 25 crore to spend at the IPL auction on December 18 and Jindal said the team has its plans in place.

"We obviously can't share them with you. The core of the team has remained the same for the last couple of years. We need to invest more in the youth and going forward, that is something we will continue to focus on," said Jindal.

"With Dhawan, we have got more solidity at the top. And the young guys who have been with us (Prithvi Shaw and Rishabh Pant) are doing well for India. The captain and coach are the same, there is continuity there," said the JSW Director, when asked about the team's dismal run season after season.

Pravin Amre remains a part of the support staff and joining him next season will be Mohammad Kaif.

The team had finished at the bottom of the standings last year when Gautam Gambhir stepped down as captain midway into the IPL. Iyer was then given the leadership role.



We have plans for all Indian batsmen, not just Kohli: Marsh

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

The talk is all about Virat Kohli right now but the Australian bowlers' preparation for other Indian batsmen is as detailed and anyone who thinks otherwise is plain "silly", all-rounder Mitchell Marsh said on Tuesday.

Gearing up for the four-match Test series that starts Thursday here, Marsh said his team's bowlers have strategies in place and would be aiming for perfect execution when the action begins.

"We all know Virat is a great player. We'll have our plans for him and hopefully we can execute them. But if people think we're not prepared for the other batsmen in the Indian team, who are all very good players, then they'd be pretty silly," said Marsh.

Marsh said the new faces and inexperience in the Australian batting line-up should be seen as an opportunity, rather than a sign of weakness for the hosts.

"There's obviously been a lot of talk about that and it's been a big build up to this Test match but there's a great feeling around this group...Now it's about going out there and hopefully putting it together as a batting unit. But we all feel really good at the moment," he said.

The Australian vice-captain was also asked about the spin challenge that India poses and the fact that the visiting tweakers have never had a particularly good run in this country.

"We know R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav are all world-class spinners. History shows that Indian spinners haven't had as much impact over here as they have in India. But they're world-class bowlers and we're very prepared for them. It will be a great contest," he replied.

Marsh is expected to return to the Australian middle-order despite a poor outing in the UAE against Pakistan.

He and brother Shaun Marsh will form the backbone of the home team's middle-order and look to replicate their form from the Ashes last summer.

"He's my brother and my best mate. I look up to him in every single way... Hopefully people respect him for the fact he's never given up. He keeps coming back, keeps working hard. Hopefully he can keep proving a few people wrong. I just want him to have a great summer," he said.

The all-rounder said he is also fully fit to bowl and hopes to be a vital fifth cog in the Australian attack, comprising of three pacers and Nathan Lyon.

"I have got some good overs under my belt the last couple of weeks for Western Australia. My goal for this summer is to start chipping in with the ball and get a few more wickets for the team.

"I love coming on in the graveyard shift, 70 to 80 overs when the ball's doing nothing and trying to sneak in a wicket. I really want to take my bowling to the next level in this team," he said.

"I think number six is a great position to bat especially if you've bowled a few overs. I'm doing my best to make the number six position my own in this team, so that's all I can do," he added.



'We need to produce long partnerships'

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Indian vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane on Tuesday tagged Australia as the favourites ahead of the first Test and said the visitors will have to come up with long partnerships to win their maiden series Down Under.

Rahane cited the example of his 262-run partnership with Virat Kohli at Melbourne in 2014-15 and said that the Australian focus on the India's star batsman helps other batsmen do their job silently at the other end.

"Each and every batsman's role will be to contribute for the team and I think for us it is important to get those long partnerships together (like last time). That will be really helpful in (winning the series) in Australia," said Rahane.

"Last time both of us really enjoyed that partnership at the MCG. Mitchell Johnson was going after Virat Kohli and I was enjoying from the end as well as playing my own game. Virat at the other end was really aggressive and going after the bowlers, verbally as well.

"That really helped me focus on my game and I played my natural attacking game at the other end. But I was still batting completely opposite to Virat. As an individual you have to understand that everyone's role is completely different. This is a team sport and Virat also understands that."

The Indian batting line-up has come under immense criticism for their twin failures in South Africa and England, wherein Kohli was the only



Ajinkya Rahane, right, bats during their tour match against Cricket Australia XI in Sydney AP

one to defy the opposition.

"People will criticise or appreciate, but for us it matters to stay together in difficult times. In England conditions were really challenging and even English batsmen struggled a lot. Apart from Alastair Cook's last Test innings, no one scored (big runs) for them. So it is important not to focus on criticism or even on people who appreciate," said Rahane.

"It is important to start fresh in each and every series. In England and South Africa, we learnt a lot and there are definitely areas to improve. When you tour

abroad, in countries like England, South Africa and Australia, it is important to start well." When asked about his personal growth as a batsman since he first came here as part of the 2014-15 touring party, Rahane said, "As a batsman in 2014, personally I thought I did really well but what the team's performance matters more. When you do well as a team, you feel really good."

His focus is on playing long. "Personally I learnt a lot from last tour (in Australia). In South Africa, Johannesburg match was really crucial for me. I thought I did well."



Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Shami in nets

"In England I got a couple good starts - 80-odd in Nottingham and another half-century in Southampton. For me as a number five batsman, it is important to convert those starts into big hundreds rather than thinking about targets."

There is also intense spotlight on the Australian batting line-up and how they will cope in the absence of Steve Smith and David Warner. Rahane said that playing at home, Australia start as favourites.

"I feel any team that plays at home is really good and Australia are still favourites to win the series. Yes they will miss Smith and Warner but I don't think they are vulnerable. Look at their bowling attack - they have really good bowlers. When you have to win Test matches and Test series you have to have a good bowling attack."

"Definitely Smith and Warner are

quality players, and I will not take anything away from them. But on a given day anyone can score runs. Usman Khawaja and Aaron Finch are equally dangerous in their conditions. They know how the wicket behaves and it is all about intent as batsmen."

After enjoying a day off on Monday, India got down to business in a bid to prepare for the first Test. All top-order batsmen had an intense work out in the nets, with the team management likely to go in with six full-time batsmen.

The new-ball bowlers — Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah and Ishant Sharma — worked up intense pace in the nets and troubled the likes of KL Rahul and Murali Vijay.

Rahane said that irrespective of whether there is another specialist batsman after him or not, his role in the side is to bat as long as possible and convert his starts/half-centuries into tall scores.

"When you bat at number four or five, it is important to give yourself some time, first 15-20 minutes, and you should visualise the situation from dressing room."

"Then, when you bat with lower-order batsmen, you perhaps know whether to attack or play a defensive game and have a partnership with those guys.

"Kookaburra ball, after 30-35 overs, is relatively easy to bat against. When you bat in England against Duke's ball, you know you are never set in those conditions. You have to go with a positive mindset," he said.

Azhar leads Pak fightback

AFP ■ ABU DHABI

Azhar Ali struck a fighting half century to help Pakistan recover to 139-3 at close on the second day of the third and final Test against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

It marked a good recovery from 17-2 after Kiwi pace bowler Trent Boult ripped out openers Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammed Hafeez.

Azhar was unbeaten on 62 at the close having shared a dogged, unbroken fourth wicket partnership of 54 with Asad Shafiq who will resume on 26.

Pakistan are still 135 runs adrift of New Zealand's first innings total of 274 in which BJ Watling made a gutsy and vital 77 not out.

Azhar remains key for Pakistan if they are to build any kind of first innings lead.

The 33-year-old dropped anchor and found the boundary just four times as he crawled through to his 32nd Test half



Azhar Ali plays a sweep shot during his innings AP

century. His 62 not out was carved painstakingly from 169 deliveries as the Pakistan scoring rate struggled to rise above two an over.

The equally-experienced Shafiq hit the same number of fours in his 26 which has so far occupied 85 balls.

However, Pakistan's top order was jolted by Boult's double strike either side of lunch.

Hafeez has been struggling for form

for a while, having made just 66 runs in seven innings since scoring a hundred against Australia in Dubai in October, following his recall to the Test side after a two-year absence.

It was no surprise when Boult had him caught low down at second slip by Tim Southee for a fourth-ball duck in his first over, right before the lunch interval.

In the fourth full over after the break, Imam-ul-Haq took his eye off a Trent bouncer and was hit on the back of the helmet. Next ball, he edged to Southee at third slip and was on his way for just nine.

It was Watling, with an unbeaten 77, who carried New Zealand's overnight total from 229-7 and added an invaluable 45 runs over the last three wickets to frustrate Pakistan.

During his five-and-a-half-hour knock in his 56th Test Watling became the 14th New Zealander to pass 3,000 runs.

Hafeez calls time on Test

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's seasoned batsman Muhammad Hafeez on Tuesday announced his retirement from Test cricket after failing again in the first innings of the third and final match against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi.

Hafeez, who was playing in his 55th Test, fell for a duck on the second day and announced his retirement, insisting that he had been pondering over the decision for the last two weeks. He, however, said that he will continue to play limited-over cricket.

"It is a personal decision and I have not taken it under any pressure. I have no regrets taking this decision," he told reporters after the day's play in Abu Dhabi.

TEST STATISTICS	
MATCHES	52
RUNS	3,605
AVERAGE	39.18
100S/50S	10/12
BEST	224
WICKETS	53
BEST BOWLING	4/16
CATCHES/STUMPINGS	43/-

The 38-year-old Hafeez made his Test debut in 2003 against Bangladesh and since then has appeared in 54 matches, besides playing in 203 ODIs and 89 T20 Internationals.

Before this Test, Hafeez has scored 3644 runs at an average of 38.35, with 10 hundreds to his kitty. He has also taken 53 wickets.

KOOKABURRAS SEAL QUARTERFINALS BERTH

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Two-time champions Australia firmly remained on course for a hat-trick of titles by becoming the first team to qualify for the quarterfinals of the men's hockey World Cup with a comfortable 3-0 win over England in a Pool B match here on Tuesday.

World number 1 Australia scored three goals in the final quarter to register their second consecutive win in Pool B at the Kalinga Stadium.

The win took Australia to the top of Pool B with six points from two games and secured their place in the quarterfinals of the 16-team event.

The Kookaburras became the first to seal a direct quarterfinal berth after China sprang yet another surprise by holding higher-ranked Ireland to a hard-fought 1-1 draw in the other Pool B match.

Jin Guo scored from a penalty corner for China in the 43rd minute before



Flynn Ogilvie vies for the ball during match against England; (right) Irish, Chinese player battle for ball PTI

Ireland's Alan Sothern drew parity in the very next minute.

The Kookaburras had earlier defeated Ireland 2-1 in their tournament opener, while China drew 2-2 with England.

While Australia will finish at the top of the pool, world number 17 China are placed second ahead of Ireland (1

point) and England (1).

Australia play China in their last pool match on December 7, while England will be up against neighbours Ireland.

The battle between world's number one side Australia and number 7 England witnessed a dull first quarter



with both the teams struggling to make inroads into the rival citadel.

It took Australia 21 minutes to create a real scoring chance in the form of back-to-back penalty corners but an alert George Pinner in front of England goal averted danger on both occasions.

England got their first penalty corner a minute away from half-time but wasted the chance as both the teams failed to break the deadlock in the open-

ing two quarters.

The game continued in the same vein after the change of ends as the third quarter witnessed just a penalty corner awarded to Australia, which went abegging.

After the barren three quarters, the Kookaburras looked a completely different side in the final 15 minutes of the game as they pumped in two goals in a span of four minutes to race to a 2-0 lead.

Whetton finally broke the deadlock in the 47th minute when he scored after receiving a pass from Tom Craig. Three minutes later, Govers doubled Australia's lead by slamming from the top of the circle past England goalkeeper George Pinner.

Four minutes from the final hooter, Australia pumped in another goal through Corey Weyer whose reverse hit crashed into the England goal past Pinner.

Injuries enforce Belgium, Canada to make changes

BHUBANESWAR: Olympic Silver medalist Belgium and Canada were on Tuesday forced to make a change each in their squads due to injuries at the ongoing men's hockey World Cup here.

Belgium's Emmanuel Stockbroek has been withdrawn from the squad due to a hamstring injury sustained in his side's 2-2 draw against India on Sunday. He will be replaced by Antoine Kina, a 22-year-old with 29 caps to his name.

Canada too were forced to make a change after Brandon Pereira was withdrawn because of an injury. Forward Floris van Son will replace Pereira in the 18-member squad.

The replacements were made after both Belgium and Canada sought approval from the International Hockey Federation (FIH).

Both the players will be involved in their team's final Pool C matches on Saturday. While Belgium will take on South Africa, Canada will play hosts India.



injury. Forward Floris van Son will replace Pereira in the 18-member squad.

AFP ■ PARIS

Luka Modric saw off competition from a host of French World Cup stars as the Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder won the 2018 Ballon d'Or on Monday, ending the 10-year stranglehold on the award by Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

Modric, 33, was announced as the winner of the prestigious prize in a glitzy ceremony held in Paris. Ronaldo was second, with France and Atletico Madrid striker Antoine Griezmann completing the podium.

Paris Saint-Germain's teenage forward Kylian Mbappe came fourth, leaving Messi to settle for fifth position. Another Frenchman, Modric's Madrid teammate Raphael Varane, was seventh, just behind Liverpool's Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah.

"As a kid we all have dreams. My dream was to play for a big club and win important trophies," Modric said.

"The Ballon d'Or was more than just a dream for me and it is really an honour and a privilege to hold this trophy," Mbappe, who does not turn 20 until later this month, picked up the consolation prize of the Kopa Trophy for the best young player.

The gala ceremony also saw a women's Ballon d'Or named for the first time, with Lyon's prolific Norwegian striker Ada Hegerberg taking that award. Modric — the oldest winner since Italy's Fabio Cannavaro, also 33, in 2006 — was crowned after an outstanding year in which he starred in the Real side that retained the Champions League before heroically helping drag his country to the final of the World Cup for the first time in their history.

The prize comes after Modric claimed the Golden Ball for the best player at the World Cup before picking up UEFA's prize for player of the season and FIFA's best player award in September.

Ronaldo and Messi were among 30 nominees for the Ballon d'Or, organised by France Football magazine and which takes votes from 180 journalists from around the world.

The Portuguese star played with Modric in the Madrid side that won the Champions League before moving to Juventus in a typically prolific year, while Messi has again been outstanding with Barcelona.

The pair had won the prize five times each in the last decade but both are now in their 30s and neither stamped their authority on the World Cup. Messi



Luka Modric celebrates with the Ballon d'Or award during the Golden Ball award ceremony; (below) Luka Modric center poses with Ada Hegerberg with the Women's Ballon d'Or, left, and Kylian Mbappe with Kopa Trophy AP

Modric sees off French stars, wins Ballon d'Or

TOP 10 PLAYERS			
Rank	Player	Club(s)	Points
1	Luka Modric	Real Madrid	753
2	Cristiano Ronaldo	Real Madrid, Juventus	478
3	Antoine Griezmann	Atletico Madrid	414
4	Kylian Mbappé	Paris Saint-Germain	347
5	Lionel Messi	Barcelona	280
6	Mohamed Salah	Liverpool	188
7	Raphaël Varane	Real Madrid	121
8	Eden Hazard	Chelsea	119
9	Kevin De Bruyne	Manchester City	29
10	Harry Kane	Tottenham Hotspur	25

Icardi wins Serie A footballer of year award



Mario Icardi receives Serie A Footballer of the year award AFP

AFP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan's Argentina striker Mauro Icardi won the Serie A Footballer of the Year award at the Gran Gala del Calcio ceremony in Milan on Monday night.

The 25-year-old becomes the first player outside Juventus to win the Italian Players' Association award, voted for by his peers, since Zlatan Ibrahimovic with AC Milan in 2011.

Icardi was joint top scorer with Lazio's Ciro Immobile in Serie A last season with 29 goals.

The Argentine also won the best goal award for his spectacular backheel during a four-goal haul against Sampdoria last March.

Icardi disagreed with the choice, insisting his "one (goal) at AC Milan was more beautiful".

Juventus were voted top team with Massimiliano Allegri winning coach of the year after the Turin side won a league and Cup double for the fourth consecutive year.

"It's a group of great men, with a great club behind us," said Allegri, who has won the award four times.

"I'm fortunate to have worked with so many marvellous players and tonight I see the maestro Andrea Pirlo too." Allegri's side are on track for an eighth straight Serie A title, with Allegri hailing the impact of five-time Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo who arrived last summer.

"Ronaldo has brought professionalism, competitiveness and is a humble guy," said Allegri.

Fiorentina's Italian international defender Alia Guagni won the Serie A women's Player of the Year award.

Roma legend Francesco Totti and former AC Milan and Juventus great Pirlo both received Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Meanwhile, Gianluca Rocchi won the award for the best referee 24 hours after being whistled off the pitch at the Stadio Olimpico over his decision not to award Roma a penalty in a 2-2 draw against Inter Milan.



finishes outside the top three in the voting for the first time since 2006.

The World Cup was always likely to play a key role, and France had hoped to see one of their stars take the award on home soil.

'HUGE STEP'

The last time a Frenchman won the Ballon d'Or came in 1998, when Zinedine Zidane was rewarded for starring as Les Bleus won that year's World Cup. But perhaps the lack of a single standout French candidate cleared the path for Modric — Hugo Lloris, Paul

HOST APOLOGISES AS 'TWERK' REQUEST CAUSES STORM

PARIS: French DJ Martin Solveig apologised and said he was taken aback by the stormy reaction online after he asked the inaugural women's Ballon d'Or winner Ada Hegerberg whether she could "twerk" live on stage.

The awards co-host in Paris provoked a torrent of complaints about sexism with his question about the sexually suggestive dance, which received a blunt "No" from the unamused Norwegian striker. The incident was a major talking point despite Hegerberg's achievement in becoming the first winner of the women's Ballon d'Or, an award which has been handed to male footballers since 1956.

Solveig, a musician and radio host, apologised in person to Hegerberg and said he was "astounded" at the reaction.

"Guys I'm a little bit amazed, astonished by what I'm reading on the internet," he said in a video posted on Twitter. "Of course I didn't want to offend anyone... This was a joke, probably a bad one and I want to apologise for the one I may have offended."



Hegerberg, 23, whose goals propelled Lyon to a record fifth Champions League title and their 12th consecutive domestic crown, played down the controversy and said it hadn't marred her evening. "I didn't feel it was like that at all to be honest and I am sad if people thought about the situation like that," Hegerberg said after the show. She added: "He came to see me after and apologised. The Ballon d'Or is the most important thing."

Pogba and N'Golo Kante had also been in the running, as had Tottenham Hotspur and England striker Harry Kane, the World Cup's top scorer.

"I won the Europa League and the World Cup, so it's been a great year, but it is true that it was a little bit disappointing after I was told what the podium was," said Griezmann.

Modric has won 14 trophies since joining Real in 2012, including four Champions Leagues. He could add to that as Real take part in the Club World Cup later this month.

Hegerberg, 23, won the women's prize after starring for French side Lyon as they successfully defended the Champions League title and won a 12th consecutive French title.

"I want to say thanks to my teammates because this would not have been possible without them, my coach or our president Jean-Michel Aulas," Ada said. "I also want to thank France Football. This is a huge step for women's football."

SINGLES

BUDAPEST TO HOST ATHLETICS WORLD

MONACO: The Hungarian capital of Budapest will host the 2023 World Athletics Championships, the IAAF announced on Tuesday. The next worlds will take place in Doha in 2019 before going to Eugene, United States, in 2021. It will be the first time Budapest has hosted the worlds, having previously hosted the 1998 European championships. The city was the sole candidate under a new IAAF system that saw away with traditional bidding campaigns in favour of a consultation process. Budapest expressed its interest in hosting the 2023 worlds after its candidacy for the 2024 Summer Olympics collapsed early last year.

MINERVA BEAT EAST BENGAL 1-0

KOLKATA: Defending champions Minerva Punjab FC defeated East Bengal 1-0 to get back to title reckoning with their third win of the I-League season here on Tuesday. William Opoku scored the all-important goal for Minerva in the 77th minute. The win took Minerva to the second place with 11 points from seven matches, behind table-toppers Chennai City FC (17 points from 7 matches). For East Bengal (6 points from 5 matches), it was their third loss in five games and they now move further down to eighth out of 11 teams. Opoku got the goal he wanted when Minerva caught East Bengal on the break and Moinuddin floated in a cross from the left flank which pierced an onrushing Ubaid and a retreating Manoj Mohammad to land perfectly at the feet of Ghanaian whose first time connection went into the empty net.

GORAKHPUR THRASH FAIZABAD

LUCKNOW: Gorakhpur thrashed Faizabad 9-0 in a league match of State-Level Senior Hockey Championship at Mohd Shahid Stadium on Tuesday. Tanzim, Kajal, Priya and Ranjana struck twice each while Muskan netted one. Earlier, Pragayran edged past Basti 4-2 in a tie-breaker. In other matches, Bareilly blanked Chitrakoot Dham 8-0 in a one-sided affair while Varanasi blanked Aligarh 9-0.

VIJAY WINS BRONZE

LUCKNOW: Vijay Kumar Yadav of Lucknow bagged the 60-kg category bronze in the Senior Asian Open Judo Championships in Hong Kong on Tuesday. The medal has strengthened his Japan Olympics participation chances.

INTER-SCHOOL CRICKET

LUCKNOW: City School beat SAJS Alambagh Campus by seven wickets to enter the semifinals of AICC 2nd SAJS Alambagh Campus Inter-School Cricket Tournament at Seth Anandram Jaipuria School on Tuesday. Principal Anandram Jaipuria School Krishna Kumari inaugurated the tournament. In another quarter-final, La Martinere College beat CMS Aliganj by 57 runs.

BRIEF SCORES:
SAJS Alambagh: 95 (Kunal Singh 17, Mohd Mehdi 16; Gaurav Rawat 25/4, Vaibhav Rai 11/2)
City School: 96 (Ajay Yadav 34, Gaurav Rawat 21; Adeel Rasool 2/1, Aryan Sharma 19/1)

La Martinere: 147 (Parth Asthana 47, Bhav Seth 29, Anant Mohan 15, Devansh Shahi 12; Honey Yadav 25/3, Shubham Pandey 23/2)
CMS Aliganj: 90 (Arunav Dutta 32, Shivansh Tripathi 25, Devashish Mishra 16; Rishi Aryan 5/2, Apriyam Tiwari 13/2).

NEUFC FACE BENGALURU IN ISL CLASH

GUWAHATI: NorthEast United FC will face their toughest test of this Indian Super League season when they take on Bengaluru FC in the top-of-table clash here on Wednesday. Bengaluru FC have been the best side in the league so far. They have remained unbeaten in eight matches, winning seven of them, including six on the trot to occupy the top spot in the points table.

Azpilicueta signs new Chelsea contract



AFP ■ LONDON

Spanish international Cesar Azpilicueta, one of the longest-serving players at Chelsea, signed a new four-year contract on Tuesday which if he sees it out will take him to 10 years with the Premier League club.

The 29-year-old defender — who joined the Blues in 2012 from French outfit Marseille and has won the Premier League title twice as well as captained them this season in the

league — says his desire to fight for the club is stronger than ever.

Azpilicueta, who is two appearances short of 300 for the club, has been a pivotal player in the bright start to the Maurizio Sarri reign which sees them lying in third spot. "Delighted to be a blue until 2022," the 25-times capped Spaniard said on his Twitter account.

"Since I arrived in 2012, my desire has been always to give my best and fight for this club, and now more than ever, I feel the responsibility to bring more success to this family."

Azpilicueta's previous deal was due to expire in 2020 after he signed a three-and-a-half-year contract extension in 2016.

Club director Maria Granovskaia said Azpilicueta's new contract was reward not only for his loyalty but also his consistently high-level displays.



Milik celebrates after scoring goal AP

Milik's strike lifts Napoli

AFP ■ NEPALES

Arkadiusz Milik came off the bench to snatch a late 2-1 win for Napoli over Atalanta on Monday that consolidated second place in Serie A and reduced the gap on leaders Juventus to eight points.

Polish forward Milik scored the winner five minutes from time shortly after coming on after Fabian Ruiz had put the visitors ahead just two minutes into the clash in Bergamo and former Napoli man Duvan Zapata had pulled Atalanta level 11 minutes after the break.

Napoli close the gap on Juventus, who pulled 11 points clear with a 3-0 win at Fiorentina on Saturday.

"It's a very, very important goal for all of us," said Napoli coach Ancelotti.

"Milik went through a difficult period because he didn't play consistently, but he remained motivated and focused, so deserves this."

Ancelotti's side came out firing on all cylinders after their title hopes took a serious hit with a goalless draw against bottom club Chievo last weekend.

The coach stuck with the same starting line-up that beat Red Star Belgrade 3-1 in the Champions League midweek.

Captain Marek Hamsik started the move that led to the opener with just a minute on the clock, passing to Lorenzo Insigne who crossed for Spaniard Ruiz to tap in his third goal since joining Napoli from Real Betis.

Insigne was ruled offside early as his volley rattled the bar with a lob shortly after the Italian international forward shot wide as he

slipped. Zapata tested Napoli goalkeeper David Ospina in the first half with defender Raul Albiol also clearing off the Colombian after the break.

But the former Napoli forward broke through on 56 minutes when Hans Hateboer headed the ball down and he blasted in from close range.

Milik came on for Dries Mertens after 81 minutes and four minutes later picked up a Mario Rui cross to fire in the winner for his fifth goal this season.

And the Polish striker said the win gives his side confidence ahead of next week's decisive Champions League clash against Liverpool at Anfield.

"Before the Champions League, we have another tough Serie A game against Frosinone. Of course we want to beat Liverpool, we know it won't be easy, but we believe in ourselves," said Milik.

Utd host Gunners at Old Trafford

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Jose Mourinho needs to lift Manchester United's morale quickly as a deflating run of performances threatens to throw their season off track completely but he faces a daunting task against a revitalised Arsenal.

Mourinho's team have not looked themselves at Old Trafford for much of the season, with their past two matches producing an insipid goalless draw against Crystal Palace and an unconvincing late Champions League victory over Swiss side Young Boys.

On their travels, they had looked as if they were getting back to form as October turned to November, with the side producing fine displays in drawing at Chelsea and beating Juventus.

Yet perhaps those performances were just papering over the cracks. United recovered from a two-goal deficit to draw at Southampton on Saturday and Romelu Lukaku scored his first club goal since September 15 but there was much to be alarmed about.

Mourinho claimed his players, with the exception of Marcus Rashford, were meek, lacking the spirit of what he called "mad dogs".

According to Duncan Castles, a British journalist with close



Marouane Fellaini celebrates with Marcus Rashford after netting against Juventus AP

links to Mourinho's agent Jorge Mendes, the United manager compared midfielder

Paul Pogba to "a virus" after another poor performance at Southampton, saying the France international lacked respect for both his teammates and fans.

The manager's frustration at not being able to sign a top-class centre-back has been raked over repeatedly by his defensive team selection at Southampton baffled even his most loyal supporters.

With Chris Smalling and Eric Bailly unfit, Mourinho elected to play two midfielders — Scott McTominay and Nemanja Matic — in a three-man central defence against a team that had not won at home all season. It did not work.

Failure to win on the south coast further damaged United's chances of finishing in the top four — the ticket to Champions League qualification — and Mourinho



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang celebrates after scoring from spot against Tottenham AP

HEAD TO HEAD						
Competition	Played	Arsenal	Draw	Utd	AG	UG
Football / Premier League	198	69	46	83	274	302
FA Cup	15	6	2	7	19	19
League Cup	6	2	0	4	8	15
League Centenary Trophy	1	1	0	0	2	1
FA Community Shield	6	4	2	0	14	7
UEFA Champions League	2	0	0	2	1	4
Total	228	82	50	96	318	348



himself appears to believe that is now a long shot with his team lagging eight points behind fourth-placed Arsenal.

Asked by Brazilian television what his aims were for the remainder of the season, he said: "Try to win as many points as possible and try (to achieve) almost the miracle of finishing fourth."

Arsenal, like United, spent relatively little in the close-season, bringing in Bernd Leno, Sokratis Papastathopoulos, Lucas Torreira and Matteo Guendouzi for relatively modest sums, yet look revitalised under Unai Emery's man-

agement. They have gone 19 games unbeaten in all competitions since losing their first two matches of the season, and are playing a thrilling brand of aggressive, high-pressing football.

According to Uruguay midfielder Torreira, the manager's words are making as much of an impact as his actions — as evidenced by his half-time team talk on Sunday before the Gunners recovered to beat Tottenham 4-2. "He told us to be calm," Torreira said. "We listened to the manager and we improved many things. That worked for us to get the victory."

Pep confident Sane will sign new deal

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Pep Guardiola is confident that winger Leroy Sane will sign a new long-term deal with Manchester City despite delays in ongoing contract negotiations between the two parties.

The 22-year-old has recovered well from the disappointment of a summer in which he was not selected in Germany's World Cup squad and then returned to England to discover he had lost his starting place under Guardiola.

Sane has still only started seven of City's 14 league games this season but four goals in his past five Premier League games suggests he is rediscovering his impressive form of the past two seasons.

And even though Sane is yet to join a list of senior stars such as Sergio Aguero, David Silva, Kevin De Bruyne, Raheem Sterling, Ederson, Gabriel Jesus and Nicolas Otamendi in signing new long-term contracts with the club, Guardiola is convinced that will happen.

"I don't have any info about the club, about being in trouble with Leroy," said the City manager, whose side travel to Watford on Tuesday.

"The last info I had was that it's going well but the process is not one day — Raheem Sterling it was not one day. Except Kevin De Bruyne, it was in one or two days done, the other ones sometimes take longer but hopefully he can stay here for many, many years." Sane's task at City this season has been further



Leroy Sane celebrates with City teammates after scoring during Premier League game PL

LEROY SANE AT MAN CITY

	Years	Apps	Goals
In PL	2016-	70	20
Overall	2016-	103	28
Career Total	2013-	160	41

complicated by the summer club-record signing of \$76 million Leicester winger Riyad Mahrez.

The pair have been effectively engaged in a straight fight for the wide left position in Guardiola's attack, with Mahrez having made one less start than Sane but having been involved in one more league game when substitute appearances are factored in.

Pep has not ruled De Bruyne, who has played just 81 minutes of league football this season due to two knee injuries, out of the weekend knee to Chelsea. "He's started training. It's day by day," he said.

"This kind of situation, if the player himself decides it feels good, he will train with the team. We will see."