

NATION 5
PM USED SURGICAL STRIKE
FOR POLITICAL GAINS: RAHUL

WORLD 6
ROUHANI: US SANCTIONS
ARE 'ECONOMIC TERRORISM'

SPORT 10
GAMBHIR SMASHES
TON IN LAST INNINGS

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USUAL SUSPECTS

SWAPAN DASGUPTA

If success, it is Rahul's; failure is for lesser beings

There will always be sharp differences of opinion over the veracity of exit polls and, for that matter, exit polls. In view of the erratic track record of such polls there will always be those who are inclined to dismiss their projected outcome as erroneous. This temptation will be even more marked if the polls go against what politicians want the results to be, rather than what will be. TV channels don't make matters easier by often pretending that their exit poll constitutes the last word on the subject and equating it — at least for a few days — with the eventual outcome. The media, in fact, feeds on an impression that exit polls are a huge Tamasha.

As things stand over this weekend, the outcome of the exit polls don't seem to augur too well for the BJP. No doubt there are mixed outcomes forecast from Chhattisgarh, always a very difficult state to predict, and Madhya Pradesh. Many of the polls forecast either a hung Assembly or an outright Congress victory. They balance those exit polls that see the BJP returning to power in both Raipur and Bhopal.

In the case of Rajasthan, the exit polls seem unanimous that the see-saw pattern of politics will see the exit of Vasundhara Raje and her replacement by a Congress Chief Minister. In short, it would appear that the recurrent whisper of a late swing back to the BJP may well turn out to be illusory.

It is best to leave the state-wise post-mortem to the afternoon of December 11 when the actual results will be known. However, there is no mistaking the fact that the stalwarts of the ruling party and, indeed, the Narendra Modi government will be spending this weekend in a state of utmost anxiety.

It is still too early to enter into the realms of speculation but what seems certain is that in the event the outcome is unfavourable to the BJP — this, in effect, means that the party loses another state apart from Rajasthan, where a defeat was always factored in — here will be some explanations in order. For a start, there will be a temptation to attribute the setbacks to local anti-incumbency. The sub-text will imply that the outcome of the Assembly polls will not necessarily be replicated in the general election of April-May 2019.

In the event the results show a marked revival of the Congress, a party which had grown accustomed to adversity since 2014, there will be an equal temptation to see the results as indicative of a national trend. For the Congress, the most important issue is the successful projection of Rahul Gandhi as the next Prime Minister of India. To this end, any Congress revival will be attributed to the inspirational leadership provided by Rahul. The contribution of local stalwarts be it Kamal Nath in Madhya Pradesh and Sachin Pilot will be discounted. If, on the other hand, these local leaders fail to push the Congress beyond the majority mark, they will be tarred with the brush of failure.

Success will always belong to Rahul Gandhi and failure to the lesser leaders. There is no point trying to argue with the Congress ecosystem that such a version of events doesn't always correspond to reality. There are some conclusions that are carved in stone and the infallibility of the First Family is on top of the list. That apart, however, a good performance by the Congress will introduce additional dimensions to Opposition politics. First, and most important, it will persuade the Opposition that the BJP's election machine, formidable as it undeniably is, can be stopped. This will be an important input in terms of morale of workers and the future funding of elections are concerned. Secondly, if the Congress does well in the five State Assembly elections, it will clearly establish the party as the natural leader of any anti-Modi Grand Alliance. This naturally means that schemes such as the Federal Front of regional parties will have to reassess their general election strategies. Whether this will be a natural process or will be marked by horrible complications will be worth observing.

How will adversity affect the BJP? The answers are likely to be a little less unsettling. Modi believes, as does the rest of the party, that the next general election will be fought on the performance of the Government since 2014 and the leadership qualities of the Prime Minister. That approach will not change regardless of the results on Monday. What could witness some fine-tuning is the quantum of Hindu issues which are injected only to galvanise the committed voters. In short, there is likely to be less volatility in the BJP after the present round of Assembly elections. No one is likely to demand Amit Shah's head for failing and they won't elevate him further if he pulls it off again. At best, in the event she fails horribly, the position of Vasundhara Raje in state politics may warrant a review.

What could cause complications, however, is if alliance partners decide to review their positions. That will be a big imponderable. However, all political reactions can't always be anticipated. There is a likely scenario resulting from a reading of exit polls and a real scenario post-results. Both don't necessarily follow the same script. Like cricket, politics is also riddled with glorious uncertainties.

Narcotics seizures show deep poll rot

Liquor, drugs' use during elections worrying factor

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Besides the failure of demonetisation to check the rampant use of black money in the just-concluded Assembly elections in the five States, the alarming haul of drugs and narcotics has been the most worrying factor. From heroin to brown sugar to anti-depressants, the ₹17-crore haul indicated how deep the problem is. As for the cash recoveries by the Election Commission (EC), barring Chhattisgarh, the seizures — besides gold and silver — almost doubled since the last Assembly polls in the other four States this time.

Of the seizures of over ₹300 crore, ₹170 crore was cash, with Telangana leading the way accounting for ₹115 crore. The Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram was thus one heady mix of cash, jewellery, liquor and drugs/narcotics.

Interestingly, Chhattisgarh is the only State where overall seizure of cash, jewellery, drugs and liquor is lower this year as compared to the last Assembly polls in 2013.

As per the EC's data, apart from the recovery of unaccounted ₹300 crore cash from the five States during the election campaign, jewellery, gold, silver and platinum accounted



for ₹25.39 crore.

Booze flowed freely in the States as the recoveries were whopping 17.29 lakh litres worth ₹53.51 crore. The value of other items, including vehicles and illegal arms, stood at ₹31.35 crore.

But then, besides liquor, the new and the most disturbing trend that was observed this Assembly election was the use of drugs and narcotics in the five States during polls. The haul included brown sugar, smack, opium, ganja, cocaine, denatonium benzoate,

methamphetamine, heroin, tablets of antidepressants Alprazolam and Tramadol. All this worth ₹16.85 crore.

In Telangana, the EC's seizure stood at ₹137 crore which included ₹115.16 crore in cash and 689 gram diamond, 147 gram platinum, 18 kg gold, 106 kg silver worth ₹6.70 crore. As much as 3,754 kg drugs (ganja, denatonium benzoate, cocaine, brown sugar, opium, afem doodh) were seized since the announcement of election schedule in the first week of October.

Former Chief Election Commissioner OP Rawat has pointed out that demonetisation didn't reduce the use of misuse of black money in elections. Apart from cash, over 10 lakh litres of liquor worth ₹15 crore was seized across Telangana over the last one month.

The amount of money seized this year is nearly ₹50 crore more than the amount seized during the 2014 Assembly elections held for the combined Andhra Pradesh.

Turn to Page 4

Bulandshahr SSP among 3 shifted, Jitu Fauji arrested

PNS/AGENCY ■ LUCKNOW/JAMMU

The Uttar Pradesh Government on Saturday transferred Bulandshahr Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Krishna Bahadur Singh to the DGP office in Lucknow, five days after two people, including police inspector, were killed in violence in Syana police station area in Bulandshahr over the alleged cow slaughter.

On Friday night, the UP Government had transferred the Circle Officer of Syana, Satya Prakash Sharma, and Chingravati police outpost in-charge Suresh Kumar. Meanwhile, Armyman Jitendra Malik, known as Jitu Fauji, who is alleged to be behind the killing of inspector Subodh Kumar Singh, was arrested by the Army's 22 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) from north Kashmir's Sopore, where he is posted, on Saturday. Malik has been shifted to Srinagar.

"The accused soldier will be handed over to UP Police's

Special Task Force for further investigation," said police.

UP Principal Secretary (Home) Arvind Kumar on Saturday said that the Bulandshahr SSP will be replaced by Sitapur SP Prabhakar Chaudhary.

Additional Director General (ADG) Intelligence SB Shiradkar had on Friday submitted a report on the Bulandshahr violence. The transfers are understood to be in line with the findings of the report on police handling of the situation.

On December 3, Inspector Subodh Kumar Singh and a local youth, Sumit, were killed in violence over the alleged cow slaughter incident in Bulandshahr. The inspector and his team had gone to the village to tackle the violence when they came under attack.

The UP Police has arrested nine accused in the Bulandshahr case but the main conspirator, Yogesh Raj, the district convener of the Bajrang Dal, is on the run.

Bengal BJP files caveat in SC, HC for rath yatras

Kolkata: Stepping up efforts to make sure that the Bengal Government does not pose any more hurdles for its 'rath yatras' on December 12, the West Bengal unit of the BJP filed caveat in the Supreme Court and the Calcutta High Court on Saturday.

The Bengal Government will now have to give notice to the BJP if they move an application to the apex court against the HC Bench order of Friday.

Coming down heavily on the State Government for failing to respond to letters of the BJP seeking permission for its 'rath yatras', a Division Bench of the Calcutta HC had on Friday directed Bengal Chief Secretary, Home Secretary and Director General of Police to sort out the yatra imbroglio by December 12 and inform the appellant (the BJP) about their decisions. The decision should be reasonable and not arbitrary, the Judges said.

The court's direction was described as a "big win for democracy" by BJP president Amit Shah.

Agencies

Congress protests raid on Vadra aides, says scared Modi targeting Opp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday jumped into the defence of its leader Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra whose associates were raided by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) saying that people in power, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is scared "thinking that the exit polls are right" and worried about defeat in Assembly elections.

A battery of top Congress leaders, including Kapil Sibal, Ahmed Patel and Abhishek Manu Singhvi, attacked the Government for the searches by the ED against three persons

linked to Robert Vadra on Friday.

"The people in power especially PM is thinking that the exit polls are right and are scared. People in Opposition are being targeted by sending IT, ED. I want to ask Modi rather blame him why such things are happening in his rule," Sibal questioned at a Press conference in the evening after Singhvi had already lashed out at the Modi Government earlier in the day claiming that the raids were a reflection of "the highest degree of panic" of the ruling dispensation, "awaiting" poll defeats in the Assembly polls.

Detailed report on P5



Congress leaders during the special Press briefing in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

Mass arrests in Paris; 'yellow vest' protests spill to Belgian

AFP ■ PARIS/BRUSSELS

Armoured vehicles rolled through central Paris on Saturday as riot police clashed with and arrested "yellow vest" protesters, who set fire to barricades and hurled rocks in the latest demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron.

Shouts of "Macron, resign" mingled with tear gas on the Champs-Elysees avenue, which was the scene of the worst rioting in Paris in decades last week. Thick plumes of black smoke from fires could be seen rising high into the sky over the city.

Meanwhile, around 70 people were arrested on Saturday in the Belgian capital Brussels during copycat "yellow vest" demonstrations rocking neighbouring France, Belgian police said.

The area housing European institutions including the offices of the European Commission and the European Parliament was sealed off as a precautionary measure.

Related reports on P6

CAPSULE

BANGLADESH TO HONOUR INDIAN FORCE MARTYRS

Kolkata: Bangladesh will honour Indian Armed Forces personnel who were martyred in that country's Liberation War on December 16, the day Pakistan surrendered and the country was born, its top diplomat posted in the city said on Saturday.

'SURGICAL STRIKES WERE SUCCESSFUL TACTICAL OP'

Kaputhala: The 2016 surgical strikes were a successful tactical operation which conveyed a clear message to Pakistan to stop any misadventure along the Line of Control, Army's Northern Command Chief Lt Gen Ranbir Singh said on Saturday.

OVER 230 TERRORISTS KILLED IN J&K IN 2018

New Delhi: Security forces have eliminated over 230 terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir this year so far, while there has been a dip in injuries caused due to stone pelting, officials said on Saturday.

Asian Palm Civet rescued from dog's life

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

An injured Asian Palm Civet was rescued from near Sanjay Van adjoining a residential area in Mehrauli on Friday evening. According to Wildlife SOS and rescue team officials, the civet was attacked by a pack of feral dogs and sustained bite wounds on its torso and neck.

"An injured Asian Palm Civet was rescued by Wildlife SOS on a temple premises near Qutub Minar. The animal was in need of immediate medical attention and is currently being treated by the Wildlife SOS veterinarians," said Wildlife SOS' rescue team.

"The civet was spotted on the fringes of Sanjay Van adjoining a residential area in Mehrauli. Owing to the repetitive sightings, the residents consider such occurrences natural and common," a Wildlife SOS official said, adding, the civet sustained wounds.

Wildlife SOS CEO Kartick Satyanarayan said, "The civet is under immense stress and will take time to recover from the ordeal. Our dedicated team of veterinarians is carrying out the necessary treatment for the injuries. Upon complete recovery, it will be released back into its natural habitat. It is heartening to see people taking timely action to help this civet and for reaching out to Wildlife SOS."

Explaining about the nature of Asian Palm Civet, Wasim Akram, Manager on Special Projects, said the civet can be seen in urban environments rarely as they tend to be shy and wary of humans.

"Rapid encroachment on civet's habitat and deforestation is beginning to redefine the boundaries between forest and urban areas. Consequently, incidents of wild animals straying into urban area are increasing," said the Manager on Special Projects.

- ❖ The Asian Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) is also called toddy cat
- ❖ The creature is a small member of the family Viverridae native to South and Southeast Asia
- ❖ Civet cats play an important role in the ecosystem by controlling the rodent population and are prime contributors to the dispersal of seeds as they often feed on fruits, berries, coffee beans, insects and small mammals



CM reviews preparations for Kumbh Mela

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed the preparations for Kumbh-2019 with the official concerned at the Circuit House here on Saturday night.

The Chief Minister is likely to make physical inspection of Kumbh related preparations on Sunday morning.

It may be pointed out here that the Chief Minister was in the city to attend the wedding reception of the son of Cabinet Minister Sidharth Nath Singh at KP College. Besides the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dinesh Sharma, and Cabinet minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' were also present.

The Chief Minister's visit sent the officials concerned in a tizzy as the preparations for the Kumbh are lagging behind. The works for widening of roads, beautification of crossings among others are incomplete. The officials have now



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath holding a review meeting related to Kumbh with officials concerned at Circuit House

been given December 15 as the deadline for completion of all works. The deadline was earlier increased several times.

The High Court, Rambagh and MNNIT overbridges were opened in haste amidst incom-

plete preparations. The work of putting plastic benches on both sides of the overbridge has not yet been completed.

Besides, on both sides of the overbridge, the road towards Allahabad Bank and the road to

Cariappa Gate have not yet been built. The road could not be built even under the overbridge. The same is the case with Rambagh and MNNIT overbridges, as both roads of overbridge have not been built.

Mulayam not invited to PSPL rally

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) (PSPL) president Shivalp Singh Yadav deciding not to invite his elder brother and mentor Mulayam Singh Yadav to his party's debut rally here on Sunday, the divide in the Yadav clan of Etawah is complete.

The PSPL said no formal invitation had been sent to Mulayam Singh Yadav but he was welcome to attend the rally if he desired.

None from the first family of Samajwadi Party except Aparna Yadav, the younger daughter-in-law of Mulayam, is expected to attend the rally.

"Whether Netaji (Mulayam Singh Yadav) attends the rally or not is no longer an issue for the PSPL," Shivalp Yadav said here on Saturday.

Ever since his feud with nephew Akhilesh Yadav and removal of Mulayam Singh Yadav from the post of national president of Samajwadi Party in January this year, Shivalp Yadav's refrain has been that "he is fighting for the restoration of the honour of Netaji". The chemistry between the two brothers seems to have radically changed after Shivalp launched his political party. Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia), which is organising its debut 'Janakrosh Rally' at Ramabai Ambedkar grounds in the state capital on Sunday.

The PSPL claimed that three lakh people were expected to the rally. Presence of Mulayam Singh Yadav at a big rally of the SP at Firozabad on Friday and his appeal to the local people to ensure success of the Samajwadi Party in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections proved to be the last straw and Shivalp decided against inviting the patriarch to the PSPL rally on



Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) leader Shadab Fatima inspecting the preparations for party's 'Janakrosh Rally' at Ramabai Ambedkar grounds in Lucknow, on Saturday

Sunday.

Mulayam Singh Yadav had also appealed to the party cadre to sink all differences and work unitedly for the success of the Samajwadi Party candidate in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Shivalp Yadav is also expected to contest the next Lok Sabha election from Firozabad, presently represented in the Lok Sabha by his nephew Akshay Yadav who is the son of SP general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav.

To woo Mulayam Singh Yadav, Shivalp had celebrated his elder brother's birthday at Saifai in Etawah district on a grand scale on November 22. However, Mulayam had skipped the programme. Sources in the PSPL said this incident sowed the seeds of discord between the two brothers.

Mulayam Singh Yadav, soon after the inauguration of

PSPL office at a government bungalow on Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg in October, had once paid a surprise visit to the office of his younger brother's party.

The PSPL is fast emerging as a haven for the Samajwadi Party dissidents and all those discarded by Akhilesh Yadav after he took over as national president of the SP in January this year. The PSPL will also make an issue of the alleged humiliation of Shivalp Yadav by his nephew Akhilesh.

Shivalp is himself supervising the preparations for the rally and party leaders in all districts have been given specific targets to mobilise people for the rally.

Shivalp Yadav said the rally had been organised to focus the attention of the masses on the anti-people policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party govern-

ment at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh. The PSPL chief said besides inflation, demonetisation of high currency notes and Goods and Services Tax had aggravated the woes of small traders, artisans and the common man. He said the national convention of the PSPL would soon be convened in Lucknow.

Though the PSPL has been claiming that it is a mainstream secular political party, the BJP-led Yogi Adityanath government, as a goodwill gesture, has exempted all buses and other vehicles coming to Lucknow from different parts of the state for the PSPL rally, from toll tax.

All the streets of Lucknow are dotted with unauthorised hoardings put up by the PSPL supporters and Lucknow Nagar Nigam has decided to ignore them.

UP to seek ₹5,500-cr pvt investment for Bundelkhand green energy corridor

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government will seek private investments worth ₹5,500 crore for the proposed Bundelkhand green energy corridor that is expected to generate 4,000 megawatt (MW) solar power.

Non-conventional Energy Resources Minister Brajesh Pathak said the state would foot the bill for evacuating power from solar energy projects of 5 MW and above on to the grid in Bundelkhand and Purvanchal regions.

The state would promote solar power parks, both in private and public-private partnership sector, to reduce its dependence on coal fired ther-

mal power plant and achieve its target of 10,700 MW solar energy generation by 2022, he added.

Pathak said the state would provide 100 per cent exemption in electricity duty to the private companies for 10 years.

The companies will be free to sell power to third party as well and they will get 50 per cent and 100 per cent exemption in transmission charges.

On account of rising power demand due to incremental growth, coupled with the government's target to provide metered electricity to all households by next year, the state has projected total power supply to touch 22,500 megawatt by peak summer season in 2019.

However, there is yawning gap between generation and pro-

jected demand.

While the government is trying to ramp up solar power generation through on-grid and off-grid solar power plants, including rooftop solar power installations, the grid transmission capacity is also being fortified to handle higher load to prevent tripping.

Meanwhile, what can be seen as a validation of UP government's optimism regarding setting a competitive upper tariff of ₹3.10/kWh for its 550 MW solar tender, its entire tender bucket has been oversubscribed well within the benchmark set by it.

The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has emerged as the lowest bidder in the reverse auction con-

ducted by the UP New and Renewable Energy Development Agency for 550 MW of grid-connected solar projects by quoting a tariff of ₹3.02/kWh to develop 85 MW. The firm also quoted a tariff of ₹3.07/kWh to develop another 70 MW.

A private solar energy firm also quoted ₹3.07/kWh to develop 100 MW, as did Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited for developing 50 MW, along with another private sector company for developing 50 MW and Mahoba Solar for another 50 MW.

An official of UPNEDA said that Tata Power also quoted ₹3.08/kWh to develop another 50 MW as did Mahoba Solar for 50 MW.

DyCM asks contractors to maintain quality

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Saturday asked contractors of Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirman Nigam (UPRNN) to maintain quality of work and meet the deadlines of each project and warned them that stern action would be taken against the defaulters.

Reviewing the ongoing projects with the Board of Directors and senior officers of UPRNN here on Saturday, Maurya asked them to ensure close supervision of each project so that contractors not only meet the deadlines but also maintained high standard of work.

Maurya said the government was committed to com-



pleting all the projects on time while maintaining quality and so all those delaying the process or compromising with standard should be punished.

He also asked the officials to ensure that the payments of UPRNN outstanding with

other departments were cleared at the earliest so that the Nirman Nigam did not face any financial crunch in completing projects on time.

Maurya said the UPRNN should also upgrade its technology and spread its operations in other states also.

The Deputy Chief Minister also directed the officers to prepare a list of contractors who were defaulting the deadline so that they could be blacklisted.

Besides Maurya, the meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary and former Principal Secretary of Public Works Department, Sadakant, Principal Secretary (PWD) Nitin Gokhran, UPRNN MD Rajan Mittal and UP Bridge Corporation MD Uttam Singh Gahlot.

STF busts gang of paper solvers, kingpin among 10 arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Special Task Force

claimed to have busted a gang of 'paper solvers' with the arrest of 10 persons for allegedly facilitating copying in the Group D exam conducted by the Railways Recruitment Board (RRB).

The arrests, including that of gang leader Rahul Kumar, were made from Kalyanpur area of Kanpur on Friday night, the STF officials confirmed.

Giving details of the breakthrough made by the Special Task Force sleuths, IG (STF) Amitabh Yash said that they were getting information that proxy candidates were being used for the recruitment examination conducted by RRB.

The STF team worked on the inputs and learnt that the gang provided proxy candidates who solved the papers for the original candidates. It was

also confirmed that the gang used to take huge sum for providing the 'solvers'.

The gang was also making huge money by leaking examination papers to candidates.

Yash said that on Friday night, the STF team conducted raids on some hideouts of the gang in Kalyanpur area of Kanpur and managed to arrest 10 members of the gang.

He said the team recovered eleven mobile phones, 21 admit cards, five blank cheques of SBI and HDFC banks and some other things from the possession of the arrested gang members.

Those arrested revealed their identities as Rahul Kumar (gang leader) hailing from Prayagraj district, Mahesh Kumar Yadav, Pravesh Yadav, Sunil Kumar, Lalit Kumar Yadav, all residents of Sopoul in Bihar, Ajay Kumar Tati, Vijay Kumar Malakar, both hailing from Nalanda district

of Bihar.

Three candidates who were arrested are identified as Ajay Kumar Yadav, Ram Babu Pal, both hailing from Prayagraj, and Mukesh Kumar Singh of Gopalganj in Bihar.

Yash said that during interrogation, the gang members disclosed that Rs 5-6 lakh was charged from each candidate for taking the help of the gang.

Meanwhile, Muzaffarnagar, police initiated attachment proceedings against a rape accused who escaped from their custody in September.

The proceedings were launched under Section 82 of the Criminal Procedure Code on Friday, according to Circle Officer Harish Bhadoria.

The rape accused, carrying a reward of ₹25,000, had escaped from police custody on September 15 when he was being taken to a hospital from the jail for DNA test.

BJP fanning communal passions: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav blamed the "dangerous policies" of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party for the mob violence in Bulandshahr earlier this week, saying that panicked by its shrinking base, the saffron party was fanning communal passions.

"The Bulandshahr incident is the result of the 'thoko niti' (hit policy) of the state government," the former Chief Minister said.

Akhilesh warned the people to beware of the activities of the BJP and its leaders as they had mastered the art of confusing people and fanning communal passions and hatred.

The SP chief said that the BJP was pumping in money everywhere to win the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, but the hard work of the SP cadre would ultimately see the samajwadi candidates win in large numbers.

Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Party on Saturday attacked the UP government for Bulandshahr violence, calling Yogi Adityanath the "most incompetent Chief Minister" and accusing him of trying to fan communal passions in the state.

SP spokesman Abdul Hafiz Gandhi targeted Yogi Adityanath for his statement on the Bulandshahr violence in which he termed the flare-up as an "accident". "This shows the insensitive attitude of the Chief Minister towards such a grave situation," he added.

Abdul Hafiz Gandhi said it also showed how callous the UP Chief Minister was in treating an incident in which two persons, including a police inspector, were killed.

"The Chief Minister is blatantly polarising the polity in the state ahead of the Lok Sabha 2019 elections," the SP leader said.

He also pointed out how nei-

ther the government nor the police were interested in arresting prime accused Yogesh Raj, who was named in the First Information Report (FIR).

"The message is clear from the top that no harm would come to the BJP cadre, its affiliates and its ideological mentor, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, even if they take law into their hands," he added.

The SP spokesman also said that the talk of development and slogans like 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' were hollow and the agenda of the BJP government was to divide society on religious lines.

The state government is under attack from various quarters for its failure to arrest Bajrang Dal district convenor Yogesh Raj. He is said to be responsible for creating chaos in the name of alleged cow slaughter and for inciting violence. Out of 25 accused listed in the FIR, nine have been arrested so far

QUICK TAKES

SECURITY UPPED AT 'HANUMAN DHAM'

Muzaffarnagar: Security has been reinforced at the 'Hanuman dham' in Shukratul here as Bhim Army activists may attempt to take it over, police said on Saturday. The move comes days after Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar said on Sunday that members of the Dalit community should take over all Hanuman temples in the country and appoint Dalits as priests there. He had said so while reacting to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claim that Lord Hanuman was a Dalit. Provincial Armed Constabulary and police teams have been deployed at the Hanuman Dham apprehending attempts by Bhim Army activists to assume control of the temple, officials said.

GOODS TRAIN DERAILS

Farrukhabad: One person was injured as two coaches of a goods train derailed between Kamalganj and Khudaganj stations in Farrukhabad district on Saturday. The incident took

place early morning on the Farrukhabad-Kanpur-Anwarganj rail section, causing minor injuries to the train guard, North Eastern Railway Public Relations Cell said. The incident led to disruption of rail traffic on the Farrukhabad-Kanpur route, it said. Senior railway officials rushed to the spot and repair work was underway in full swing.

TEENAGER DIES AFTER GETTING TRAPPED INSIDE OVEN

Gonda: A 15-year-old boy died when he accidentally got trapped inside an oven where he was sitting to escape the cold weather, police said on Saturday. Deepak, a class 9 student, had entered into the oven at his father's biscuit factory in the basement of their home when its door got shut, Superintendent of Police RP Singh said. It was the bad odour emanating from the oven which alerted his family members. They rushed him to a local community health centre where the doctors pronounced him dead. The body was sent for post-mortem.

कर्मचारी भविष्य निधि संगठन
(एन एच सी ई आर) का एक स्वायत्त संगठन
निधि भवन, सर्वोदय नगर, कानपुर - 208005
दूरभा. : 052-271464, 271465, 271466, 271467, 271468, 271469, 271470, 271471, 271472, 271473, 271474, 271475, 271476, 271477, 271478, 271479, 271480, 271481, 271482, 271483, 271484, 271485, 271486, 271487, 271488, 271489, 271490, 271491, 271492, 271493, 271494, 271495, 271496, 271497, 271498, 271499, 271500, 271501, 271502, 271503, 271504, 271505, 271506, 271507, 271508, 271509, 271510, 271511, 271512, 271513, 271514, 271515, 271516, 271517, 271518, 271519, 271520, 271521, 271522, 271523, 271524, 271525, 271526, 271527, 271528, 271529, 271530, 271531, 271532, 271533, 271534, 271535, 271536, 271537, 271538, 271539, 271540, 271541, 271542, 271543, 271544, 271545, 271546, 271547, 271548, 271549, 271550, 271551, 271552, 271553, 271554, 271555, 271556, 271557, 271558, 271559, 271560, 271561, 271562, 271563, 271564, 271565, 271566, 271567, 271568, 271569, 271570, 271571, 271572, 271573, 271574, 271575, 271576, 271577, 271578, 271579, 271580, 271581, 271582, 271583, 271584, 271585, 271586, 271587, 271588, 271589, 271590, 271591, 271592, 271593, 271594, 271595, 271596, 271597, 271598, 271599, 271600, 271601, 271602, 271603, 271604, 271605, 271606, 271607, 271608, 271609, 271610, 271611, 271612, 271613, 271614, 271615, 271616, 271617, 271618, 271619, 271620, 271621, 271622, 271623, 271624, 271625, 271626, 271627, 271628, 271629, 271630, 271631, 271632, 271633, 271634, 271635, 271636, 271637, 271638, 271639, 271640, 271641, 271642, 271643, 271644, 271645, 271646, 271647, 271648, 271649, 271650, 271651, 271652, 271653, 271654, 271655, 271656, 271657, 271658, 271659, 271660, 271661, 271662, 271663, 271664, 271665, 271666, 271667, 271668, 271669, 271670, 271671, 271672, 271673, 271674, 271675, 271676, 271677, 271678, 271679, 271680, 271681, 271682, 271683, 271684, 271685, 271686, 271687, 271688, 271689, 271690, 271691, 271692, 271693, 271694, 271695, 271696, 271697, 271698, 271699, 271700, 271701, 271702, 271703, 271704, 271705, 271706, 271707, 271708, 271709, 271710, 271711, 271712, 271713, 271714, 271715, 271716, 271717, 271718, 271719, 271720, 271721, 271722, 271723, 271724, 271725, 271726, 271727, 271728, 271729, 271730, 271731, 271732, 271733, 271734, 271735, 271736, 271737, 271738, 271739, 271740, 271741, 271742, 271743, 271744, 271745, 271746, 271747, 271748, 271749, 271750, 271751, 271752, 271753, 271754, 271755, 271756, 271757, 271758, 271759, 271760, 271761, 271762, 271763, 271764, 271765, 271766, 271767, 271768, 271769, 271770, 271771, 271772, 271773, 271774, 271775, 271776, 271777, 271778, 271779, 271780, 271781, 271782, 271783, 271784, 271785, 271786, 271787, 271788, 271789, 271790, 271791, 271792, 271793, 271794, 271795, 271796, 271797, 271798, 271799, 271800, 271801, 271802, 271803, 271804, 271805, 271806, 271807, 271808, 271809, 271810, 271811, 271812, 271813, 271814, 271815, 271816, 271817, 271818, 271819, 271820, 271821, 271822, 271823, 271824, 271825, 271826, 271827, 271828, 271829, 271830, 271831, 271832, 271833, 271834, 271835, 271836, 271837, 271838, 271839, 271840, 271841, 271842, 271843, 271844, 271845, 271846, 271847, 271848, 271849, 271850, 271851, 271852, 271853, 271854, 271855, 271856, 271857, 271858, 271859, 271860, 271861, 271862, 271863, 271864, 271865, 271866, 271867, 271868, 271869, 271870, 271871, 271872, 271873, 271874, 271875, 271876, 271877, 271878, 271879, 271880, 271881, 271882, 271883, 271884, 271885, 271886, 271887, 271888, 271889, 271890, 271891, 271892, 271893, 271894, 271895, 271896, 271897, 271898, 271899, 271900, 271901, 271902, 271903, 271904, 271905, 271906, 271907, 271908, 271909, 271910, 271911, 271912, 271913, 271914, 271915, 271916, 271917, 271918, 271919, 271920, 271921, 271922, 271923, 271924, 271925, 271926, 271927, 271928, 271929, 271930, 271931, 271932, 271933, 271934, 271935, 271936, 271937, 271938, 271939, 271940, 271941, 271942, 271943, 271944, 271945, 271946, 271947, 271948, 271949, 271950, 271951, 271952, 271953, 271954, 271955, 271956, 271957, 271958, 271959, 271960, 271961, 271962, 271963, 271964, 271965, 271966, 271967, 271968, 271969, 271970, 271971, 271972, 271973, 271974, 271975, 271976, 271977, 271978, 271979, 271980, 271981, 271982, 271983, 271984, 271985, 271986, 271987, 271988, 271989, 271990, 271991, 271992, 271993, 271994, 271995, 271996, 271997, 271998, 271999, 272000, 272001, 272002, 272003, 272004, 272005, 272006, 272007, 272008, 272009, 272010, 272011, 272012, 272013, 272014, 272015, 272016, 272017, 272018, 272019, 272020, 272021, 272022, 272023, 272024, 272025, 272026, 272027, 272028, 272029, 272030, 272031, 272032, 272033, 272034, 272035, 272036, 272037, 272038, 272039, 272040, 272041, 272042, 272043, 27

Hotel receptionist shot dead by two

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two shooters shot dead a hotel receptionist for denying permission to their 'boss' to meet his online girlfriend who had checked into the hotel during the odd hours on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday.

The police have arrested two girls and a youth, who sent the shooters, and they were being interrogated. The incident exposed gross anomalies in getting a hotel booked via a popular app these days. The police arrested the shooters after a brief encounter in Chinhath late at night. A case of murder and criminal conspiracy was registered in this connection.

As per reports, around 10 pm on Friday, Dheeraj Narang of Uttarakhand reached the hotel Oyo Sara Grand located in Vibhuti Khand and wished to meet Gurmeet Kaur of Harsh Vihar in old Delhi. She was staying in one of the rooms of the hotel-cum-guesthouse. Narang is a businessman dealing in surgical equipment and also had a large tract of agriculture farm in Uttarakhand.

The victim, identified as Krishna Pratap Singh of Pratapgarh, refused to oblige him as Kaur had instructed him not to send anybody in her room. Narang lost his cool. Singh refused to oblige Narang even after he insisted for the same. Around 1.30 am on Saturday, Narang again approached the receptionist and insisted him to allow him to meet Kaur. It being odd hours, Singh refused again at which Narang left the hotel in a huff. A little later, two men, one who had masked his face with a towel, reached there and



PRABHA SHANKER ■ LUCKNOW

Hell hath no fury like a woman 'scorned'. The adage explains well the Friday night shooting at Hotel Sara Grand in which a receptionist was shot dead by shooters after their boss Dheeraj Narang was egged on by his online female friend Gurmeet Kaur. Both Narang and Gurmeet, along with Narang's friend Ruby Ansari, were arrested by the police for criminal conspiracy in the murder of receptionist Krishna Pratap Singh. After her arrest in the case on Saturday, Ruby told police that she was staying with her friend Dheeraj Narang in room number 203 while shooters (Abhay Pratap Singh of Amethi and Hari Om of Gonda) were staying in room number 202 of the same hotel.

wanted to know the reason for not permitting their boss (Narang) to meet Kaur. This snowballed into a verbal spat and later one of the miscreants

Crime of provocation

As per Ruby's confession, Narang went to meet Gurmeet Kaur, who is acquainted with Narang through online chatting, at Hotel Sara Grand. Narang returned empty-handed after the receptionist refused to 'oblige' him and Narang felt offended. He shared the 'hindrances' in meeting Kaur through WhatsApp chatting on the intervening night on Friday and Saturday. Kaur also took an affront to the 'hindrances' offered by the receptionist and she incited Narang to avenge the 'insult' by a minion receptionist of Hotel Sara Grand.

Narang consoled Kaur and wrote to her in the WhatsApp chat that he was sending his Lucknow-based men to teach the reception-

POLICE ARRESTED TWO GIRLS AND A YOUTH, WHO SENT THE SHOOTERS, AND THEY WERE BEING INTERROGATED. THE INCIDENT EXPOSED GROSS ANOMALIES IN GETTING A HOTEL BOOKED VIA A POPULAR MOBILE APP THESE DAYS

ist a lesson about the etiquettes and also let him know what a big mistake he had committed in stopping him (Narang) from meeting her. Ruby admitted that she added fuel to the fire by asking Narang if he could not teach a lesson to a receptionist. Around 1.30 am, Narang called Abhay and Hari Om and sent them to the Hotel Sara Grand where they killed the receptionist Singh. SSP Kalanidhi Naithani said a case of murder was registered against shooters and a case of criminal conspiracy was against those who arrested on the complaint of Singh's mother Kusum Singh. "We have got concrete clue about the shooters and teams had been sent to nab them," he said.

the miscreants succeeded in fleeing the scene. Their act, however, was captured in the CCTV camera installed in the waiting lounge.

Singh was rushed to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital where he was declared "brought dead". The doctors said the bullet had punctured his heart and it later got embedded inside his ribcage. After the news broke, a huge police force, led by SSP Kalanidhi Naithani, reached the scene. The crime branch and surveillance cell sleuths were also roped in to crack the case. During inspection of the crime scene and route of escape of the miscreants, the police recovered a towel lying in the ground and bearing the name of hotel Shubh Stay Inn near the Sara Grand Hotel.

To expedite the probe into the case, the police scanned the CCTV footage and one of the miscreants was seen having covered his face with a towel similar to what was recovered by the police.

The police surrounded hotel Shubh Stay Inn and checked the logbook of those staying at the hotel. The police checked the CCTV footage of hotel Shubh Stay Inn and it surfaced that a man covering his face with a towel of the Shubh Stay Inn hotel was leaving the hotel around 1.20 am. A little later he was seen putting off his jacket. Five minutes after, another man was seen leaving hotel Shubh Stay Inn. The photos were shown to hotel manager of Shubh Stay Inn and then it surfaced that the suspects were staying in room No. 202 while their friends were staying in 203.

While room number 202 was found empty, in room number 203 Ruby Ansari of New Delhi was found present and she was quizzed. Here the police got the clue and the boss (Narang) and his female friends were nabbed.

A colourful kaleidoscope



A little girl is all smiles as she poses for a selfie with her mother on NBRI lawns on Saturday

Pioneer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

It was a riot of colours at NBRI lawns where a two-day 'Chrysanthemum and Coleus Show' kicked off on Saturday. The flower show was inaugurated by senior economic advisor, Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Anandi Subramanian. The display of India's map made with chrysanthemums was an added attraction. NBRI scientists said the show provided an opportunity to public to enjoy and develop knowledge on chrysanthemum and coleus.

"This is a rare occasion where people can see the entire diversity of flower colors, types, shapes and also their cultiva-

tion practices. The various R&D activities on chrysanthemum and coleus undertaken by CSIR-NBRI are displayed and explained," the scientists said. Convener SK Tewari said that 132 exhibitors participated in the show.

The 'King of the Show' Ranjit Singh Memorial Trophy for a specimen pot of large-flowered chrysanthemum with single plant bearing single bloom, was won by Manju Shanker from Vrindavan Yojana. The 'Queen of the Show' Ranjit Singh Memorial Trophy for a specimen pot of small-flowered chrysanthemum was won by La Martiniere, Lot Area.

The 'Prince of the Show' Qazi Syed Masood Hasan

Running Challenge Trophy for a specimen pot of spider bearing single bloom was won by Swati Gupta from Lucknow

The 'Flower of the Year' Sonar Bangla Ram Kishore Sharma Memorial Trophy for a specimen pot of large-flowered chrysanthemum with single plant bearing single bloom was won by Manju Shanker from Lucknow.

The 'Best Specimen Coleus' Kumud Rastogi Memorial Running Challenge Trophy for the best specimen coleus pot plant of the show was won by the Central Command HQ.

The flower show will conclude on Sunday with prize distribution to the winners by Cabinet minister Ashutosh Tandon.

LMRC's civil construction work nearing completion



LMRC managing director Kumar Keshav during an inspection of civil construction work on Saturday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation is on the verge of the completing civil construction work for the entire corridor. The work is likely to be completed by the end of this month. LMRC is now focusing on clearing the remaining installation work in this corridor. Managing director Kumar Keshav reviewed this section from Vishwavidyalaya station to Munshipulia station on Saturday.

Starting his visit from Vishwavidyalaya station, Keshav inspected the civil construction work of the rooms (CDMA, GSM, TOM, Electrical, UPS) at concourse level with the work of lifts and

escalators. The entrance and exit gates of this corridor are already completed where the finishing work is in full swing. "Vishwavidyalaya station will have a radio tower as will Badshah Nagar and Indira Nagar stations. The tower installed here helps in signaling of our Metro that will help in making the operational functioning like surveillance, tetra connectivity in a smoother manner. These towers will work on the frequency between 380-385 MHz," the LMRC MD said. He also reviewed the progress of lifts and escalators installed at different level of all stations. He also showed his satisfaction with the tiling work at the platform and concourse level.

Installation work for the glass- es at the ticket office machine has also started. The civil work of KD Singh and RS Mishra station is also advancing. LMRC has developed a commercial space on both sides of the KD Singh station along with one side at all other seven elevated stations. The artwork on the outer side of RS Mishra station has also started. Meanwhile, LMRC Employees learned English proficiency and soft skills at Amity University. Amity School of Communication Enhancement and Transformation (ASCENT) organised an 11-day corporate training programme for the employees and it ended with certificate distribution on Saturday.

Hunt on for hoodlums who fired at 'tilak' function

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

In the shooting during a tilak function at Gudamba on Friday night, prime accused Abhishek Singh aka Babu and Pawan had lost their cool soon after they spotted their rivals and opened fire. The same surfaced during the investigation into the case on Saturday. It further Came to light that Abhishek is the most feared person in the locality and he felt offended when he found his rivals Shubham Singh, Anoop Yadav, Kuldeep, and Shashi Rajpoot, all of Jankipuram, were also invited in the pre-wedding ceremony of Bajrang Rajpoot of Gudamba.

Abhishek was heard saying to his aides that he was feeling slighted at being invited at in function with his rivals who otherwise dared not face him. He then moved to his rivals while Pawan backed him. Both Abhishek and Pawan pulled the trigger and opened fire hitting Shubham Singh, Anoop Yadav, Kuldeep. Shubham and Kuldeep suffered firearm injuries on their legs while Anoop suffered the gunshot in his stomach. The firing created a panic among those attending the function. Several others suffered injuries as their ran into one another while fleeing.

Now the police teams are camping in neighbouring districts to nab the absconding miscreants, including the prime accused. It surfaced that both the groups used to work together before they

turned into sworn enemy. Abhishek and his gang is involved in jobs like getting a house vacated, grabbing lands, running illegal parking stands and influencing tender for contract works.

Meanwhile, a fraudster, who had duped several people of lakhs of rupees in the name of bogus land deals, was arrested under Ashiyana police station on Saturday. The accused, identified as Vijendra Singh Gaur (36), is a resident of Ashiyana. Ashiyana SHO Akhilesh Chandra Pandey said that Vijendra claimed to be a property dealer and used to dupe people by selling them plots registered in other people's name. As per the SHO, Vijendra duped several men of Rs 50 lakh by his tricks. "Several cases of fraud were registered against him," the SHO said. Vijendra confessed his crime and said he used to buy luxurious cars and plots from the ill-gotten money.

HOUSE BURGLED

Thieves made off with Rs 25,000 and jewellery from a house in Para police station area. Reports said Vipin Kumar Jauhari of Surya Nagar, along with his family, had gone to Bareilly for some private work on December 5 and the house was locked from outside. "I returned to the city on Friday night and found the locks at the gate lying broken. When I checked the belongings, I found the cash and ornaments missing," he said. The police are investigating the case.



NCC cadets taking part in an AIDS awareness rally on Saturday

Pioneer

DM takes stock of cleanliness drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma carried out a sudden inspection of the cleanliness campaign and encroachments from Tulsi cinema to the High Court guest house on Saturday. He was accompanied by Municipal Commissioner Indramani Tripathi.

On finding encroachments and unhygienic conditions on the restaurant street, the DM reprimanded the officials and

directed them to issue notices to zonal sanitary officer RP Gupta and supervisor Rajkumar.

It was found that restaurant owners had placed welded iron pieces over nullahs to make space for the customers. The DM said they held a meeting with the officials of various departments and discussed the strategy to carry out this exercise. The DM said that the main exercise was aimed at keeping the city clean and encroachment-free.

He said that Lucknow Municipal Corporation officials also needed to be sensitised about the same. The DM said awareness drives would be carried out so that shopkeepers indulging in encroachment mended their ways.

Indramani Tripathi said the inspection was carried out from Tulsi cinema to Abu Talha road, Nishant Hospital, National PG College and SaharaGanj. A fine Rs 30,000 was realised and three truckloads of material seized.



Putting best paw forward: Pooches taking part in a dog show at Reserve Police Lines in Lucknow on Saturday

Pioneer

Special drive to streamline traffic movement in Ganj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Traffic department carried out a special drive in Hazratganj on Saturday. SP (Traffic) Ravi Shankar Nim said they had started focusing on Hazratganj since all the Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation barriers would be removed shortly and the traffic had to be streamlined in the heart of the city. After Hazratganj, similar drives would be conducted in other parts of the city, he said.

Talking to *The Pioneer*, he said in the special drive, e-rickshaws plying between Hazratganj crossing and Samta Moolak crossing were removed from the main road. "E-rickshaws are not supposed to ply on main routes and the drivers must take tertiary routes. This is

specified in the affidavits submitted at the time of their registration. The removal of e-rickshaws helped in better traffic flow in the area," he pointed out.

He further said that they also pasted challans on 55 cars parked on the roadside. "This will help in preventing car parking on the main road. Once all the barriers of LMRC are removed, we will also spread awareness and encourage people to park their vehicles only in the multilevel parking," Nim said. The SP (Traffic) said that the special drive in Hazratganj would continue for the time being. He said after the District Magistrate's Gol Market crossing inspection during which action was taken against the encroachers causing hindrance to traffic flow, they had identified five

crossings and the same would be inspected.

"We have identified the crossings which the Additional SP and ADM will inspect to rid them of encroachments," he added.

On the traffic arrangements at Lucknow Mahotsav coming in for flak, Nim said he would be sending a letter to the Lucknow Mahotsav Samiti, asking them to inform the Traffic department about the exact number of visitors with passes. "The parking capacity at the Mahotsav venue was for 2,500-3,000 people and the passes were given to over 10,000, hence the chaos. We will be writing specifically to the Lucknow Mahotsav Samiti to issue passes event-wise so as to prevent traffic chaos," he added.



REGIONAL OFFICE, LUCKNOW

1st floor, Union Bank Bhawan, Near Mantri Awas, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti nagar, Lucknow - 226010 Ph.: 0522-2306893-94 F-2306884

Possession Notice

Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of Union Bank of India, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) and 13(12) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the following borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act 2002 read with rule 9 of the said rules.

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the of Union Bank of India for an amount of dues outstanding together with interest thereon with costs and charges.

Name of Borrower / Guarantor	Description of Mortgaged Property	Date of demand Notice/ possession /amount Due
Branch: BAHRAICH , Phone No.- 05252-231142 ,		
Borrower:- M/s Hi-Tech Agency, Prop-Sh. Amjad Khan s/o Sh. Ansar Khan, Kathehary Road, Bahraich, Distt. Bahraich	House property: Double Storey Building on Arazi No. 323/354 area 83.06 sq. mt situated at Moh-Nazipur, Distt. Bahraich owned by Sri Amjad Khans/o Sh. Ansar Khan	26.7.2011/ 5.12.2018 Rs.3,82,524.59 intt. from 01.04.2011 & others expenses
Guarantor:- Sh. Mohd Shaakeel S/o Mohd Khalil New Vishal Tailor, Near DIC PO& Distt. Bahraich		
Date -08.12.2018, Place - Lucknow		Authorised Officer Union Bank of India

PM used surgical strike for political gains: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after former Northern Command chief Lt General (retired) DS Hooda said constant hype around the surgical strikes in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) in 2016 was unwarranted, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue and charged that the Prime Minister used the military action for "political capital".

Responding to a question during the Military Literature Festival in Chandigarh on Friday, Hooda, who was the commander when the surgical strikes were carried out, had said in hindsight, it would have been better had "we done it (surgical strikes) secretly". He had also said it was natural to have initial euphoria about the success but the constant maintenance of hype around the military operation was unwarranted.

Taking to Twitter, Rahul said: "Spoken like a true soldier General. India is so proud of you. Mr 36 has absolutely no shame in using our military as a personal asset. "He used the surgical strikes for political capital and the Rafale deal to increase Anil Ambani's real capital by 30,000 Cr. #SurgicalStrike (sic)."

On the same issue,



Congress leader P Chidambaram said it was heartening that persons who were in key posts in the Government were "shedding their fear and breaking silence" on important policies and decisions.

In a series of tweets, Chidambaram said it was former Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) Arvind Subramanian, who first broke his silence by terming demonetisation a "massive monetary shock".

The former Finance Minister said that after Subramanian, the recently-retired Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat said demonetisation had no impact on the use of black money in elections.

Now, it is Hooda, who has "decried the hype over the so-called 'surgical strike' and its politicisation by Government", Chidambaram said, adding, "Glad to see important persons

ON THE SAME ISSUE, CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBARAM SAID IT WAS HEARTENING THAT PERSONS WHO WERE IN KEY POSTS IN THE GOVERNMENT WERE 'SHEDDING THEIR FEAR AND BREAKING SILENCE' ON IMPORTANT POLICIES AND DECISIONS

shedding their fear and breaking their silence".

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala thanked Hooda for "exposing the petty politicisation by PM Modi". "No one can use the valour & sacrifice of our brave soldiers to score cheap political points Modiji is squarely guilty of compromising National Security & Strategic Interests by unwarranted chest thumping!" he wrote on Twitter.

Last month, Subramanian had raised concerns related to resign. Six months after resigning as CEA, he described demonetisation as a "massive, draconian, monetary shock".

Two days after his retirement, Rawat had said the note ban didn't reduce the misuse of black money in elections but in fact in some states more seizures were reported compared to previous years. The government had banned old ₹1,000 and ₹500 notes on November 8, 2016.

Surgical strikes a successful tactical operation: Army's Northern Command chief

KAPURTHALA (PUNJAB): The 2016 surgical strikes were a successful tactical operation which conveyed a clear message to Pakistan to stop any misadventure along the Line of Control (LoC), Army's Northern Command Chief Lt Gen Ranbir Singh said on Saturday.

His comments came a day after Lt Gen (retd) D S Hooda, who was associated with the operation, said it was natural to have initial euphoria over the success but the constant hype around the surgical strikes was unwarranted.

In hindsight, it would have been better had we had kept it a secret, he had said on Friday at an event in Chandigarh.

On September 29, 2016, Indian Army commandos had carried out surgical strikes against terror launch pads across the LoC in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

"From military point of view, these were successful tactical operations, which conveyed a very strategic message and the Indian Army was able to convey a very clear message to Pakistan that should they not stop any kind of misadventure along the LoC, they shall be given befitting reply," Singh told reporters here on the sidelines of his visit to Sainik School, his alma mater.

The then Director General

of Military Operations (DGMO), who had announced the operation at a press conference, refused to comment on the politicisation of surgical strikes.

Singh said all actions carried out by the Army along the LoC were carried out in an extremely professional manner to meet the national aspirations and achieve the military objectives.

He said there are many other options to check infiltration of terrorists from across the border.

Surgical strike is only one of the options through which we stop infiltration. The armed forces have a range of options and they are being analysed at all times and the best course of action is put into effect, he said.

Responding to a question about possible attempts to revive militancy in Punjab, Singh said Pakistan was trying to extend the 'arc of terrorism' beyond Kashmir and the Army was taking all measures to arrest the spread.

The armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir are fully capable of carrying out any task, he said. This, he said, is the reason that the situation in the state is completely stable.

If any untoward incident takes place, the armed forces act quickly to restore peace and stability, he added. **PTI**

ED RAIDS VADRA'S ASSOCIATES

Congress comes out in defence of 'son-in-law'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday jumped into the defence of its leader Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra whose associates were raided by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) saying that people in power, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is scared "thinking that the exit polls are right" and worried about defeat in assembly elections.

A battery of top Congress leaders, including Kapil Sibal, Ahmed Patel and Abhishek Manu Singhvi, stepped out to attack the Government over the searches by the Enforcement Directorate against three persons linked to Robert Vadra on Friday.

"The people in power especially PM is thinking that the exit polls are right and are scared. People in opposition are being targeted by sending IT, ED. I want to ask Modi rather blame him why such things are happening in his rule," Sibal questioned at a press conference in the evening after Singhvi had already lashed out at the Modi Government earlier in the day claiming that the raids were a reflection of "the highest degree of panic" of the ruling dispensation, "awaiting" poll defeats in the assembly polls.

Sibal further scaled up the degree of attack saying the ED barged into the offices of Vadra associates without any warrant. "There was no FIR, ECIR against Vadra and people of ED reached his offices without any warrant. They don't say their names and when asked to wait by the people in the office to get keys to the office, they broke

into the office," Sibal said.

The senior Congress leader, who is also a top lawyer, wondered at what he called "hooliganism" by the law enforcement agencies and sought to know as to who would rein in them if they were to be backed by the Government itself.

"What kind of Government is it? If law enforcement agencies start hooliganism then who will question them? If they're supported by the PM, then who'll question it? Where is the law and order in the country," he sought to argue while defending Vadra.

Earlier, Singhvi, who also addressed a press conference here at the party headquarters, alleged that there was never such a "terror raj" in the "constitutional rule" of India.

"We fought the British Raj and the BJP would do well to know that the day of judgement will come for it," he said adding "They are afraid of the Congress and its values, so they are threatening people and using high-handed tactics against those who are relatives of our leaders or are associated with them".

"This is called character assassination by innuendos and insinuations. When they do not have facts, this is what they will do," he said.

The Congress spokesman claimed that the BJP was in a "state of panic of the highest degree", sensing rejection from the people in the just-concluded Assembly polls in five States.

"The word 'panic' would be an understatement and all these raids and searches against various people are

nothing but a ploy to divert the attention of the people from the real issues and the BJP's failures," he said.

The results of the Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Mizoram Assembly polls will be announced on December 11, on a day when the one-month-long winter session of the Parliament would also commence. The poll-results are expected to set the tone for not only the Parliament session, the last of the 16th Lok Sabha, but also that of the 2019-General Elections, only few months away. Barring Rajasthan where exit-polls have uniformly given Congress an edge over the BJP, opinions are divided on Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram.

The ED had carried out searches against the three persons in connection with its probe into alleged "commissions received by some suspects in defence deals" and illegal assets stashed abroad, officials had said Friday.

Singhvi claimed that the searches were carried out in violation of laws, adding, "We have nothing against any particular person, but we are talking about principles.... No Enforcement Case Information

Report (ECIR) of the FIR has been shared, no search warrant issued, no access to lawyers, and detained persons were also physically roughed up."

All of this is happening because the BJP feels the certainty of the rejection by the people and is desperate to divert people's attention from the real issues," he said.

Sushma holds talks with Iceland counterpart

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Saturday held wide-ranging talks with her counterpart from Iceland Gudlaugur Thor Thordarson on ways to deepen bilateral ties in areas of trade, investment and energy.

Thordarson arrived here Friday on board the inaugural flight between New Delhi and Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland.

At the meeting, Swaraj said Iceland is a world leader in geothermal energy and cooperation in this sector could benefit India's transition to greener energy mix and help it in achieving ambitious renewable energy targets, according to MEA spokesperson Ravesh Kumar.

"EAM @SushmaSwaraj and Iceland Foreign Minister @GudlaugurThor discussed enhancing cooperation in trade & investment, renewable energy, specially geothermal energy, blue economy with a focus on fisheries, tourism and culture at the delegation-level talks," he tweeted.

India's ties with Iceland have witnessed steady progress in the last few years.

Iceland was the first Nordic country to publicly extend support to India's candidature for permanent membership of the United Nations



External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj shakes hands with her Icelandic counterpart Gudlaugur Thor Thordarson ahead of a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday

Security Council.

It was one of the countries co-sponsoring India's resolu-

tion at the UN to declare June 21 as the "International Day of Yoga".

Rijiju asks Indian diaspora youths to be part of country's growth

New Delhi: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday asked the youths of Indian diaspora to be part of the country's growth story and become ambassadors to spread the message of development here.

Interacting with a group of 40 Indian-origin youths from eight countries, Rijiju said they should participate in India's growth and development story and share it with the diaspora in their respective countries.

"I urge you to give feedback to the Government through voluntarily sparing time by sharing your thoughts, experience, knowledge, and technology and to suggest what steps the government of India should take to improve the environment and help play a role in building a new India," he said.

The youths are touring India to feel a sense of connect with their motherland and get exposure to its art, heritage and culture, an official at the Home Ministry said.

The tour has been organised under the 'Know India Programmes (KIP)' which is a key initiative of the central government.

The initiative has been taken with an aim to engage and make students and young professionals of Indian diaspora in the age group of 18 to 30 feel a



The youths are from Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Myanmar, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago

sense of connect with their motherland and to be motivated and inspired by transformation taking place in India.

The youths are from Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Myanmar, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago.

The participants will visit places like Parliament Museum Library, President's House, Red Fort, Raj Ghat and will meet senior functionaries in the central and State Governments in order to have the first hand experience of the contemporary development in India. They will also be going to Agra. **PTI**

Finance Ministry revokes GST for homebuyers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major relief to flat buyers, the Ministry of Finance made it clear that Goods and Service Tax (GST) will not be levied on buyers of real estate properties for which completion certificate is issued at the time of sale.

However, Goods and Services Tax (GST) is applicable on sale of under-construction property or ready to move in flats where completion certificate is not issued at the time of sale.

The ministry also asked the builders to reduce the prices of properties by passing on the benefit of lower GST rate.

"It is brought to the notice of buyers of constructed property that there is no GST on sale of complex/ building and ready to move in flats where sale takes place after issue of completion certificate by the competent authority," the ministry said in a statement. It further said affordable

housing projects like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Rajiv Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana or any other housing scheme of State Governments attracts 8 per cent GST, which can be adjusted by the builders against its accumulated input tax credit (ITC).

For such (affordable housing) projects, after offsetting ITC, the builder or developer in most cases will not be required to pay GST in cash as the builder would have enough ITC in his books of account to pay the output GST," the Ministry said. It said cost of housing projects or complexes or flats, other than those in affordable segment, would not have gone up due to implementation of GST.

Presently, residential construction services, will invite GST at the rate of 12 per cent, which will apply to developers selling residential units before completion of construction to the home buyers.

Congress leader among several political activists joins BJP in J&K

Jammu: Several political activists from Kishtwar, including a Congress leader, on Saturday joined the BJP here and pledged to work for strengthening the party at grass-roots level, a party spokesperson said.

Congress leader Pardeep Singh Parihar, former trade union leader Suresh Sharma and eight NC and PDP activists, including former sarpanches Noor Hussain and Joginder Dhar, were welcomed into the party fold by senior leaders. "Today every nationalist person is joining the BJP influenced by the strong policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central Government," said Union Minister Jitendra Singh.

WELCOMING THE NEW ENTRANTS INTO THE PARTY FOLD, JAMMU & KASHMIR BJP PRESIDENT RAVINDER RAINA SAID THE PARTY'S POLICY OF 'SABKA SAATH, SABKA VIKAS' WAS ATTRACTING PROMINENT PERSONS FROM VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES

He said the Centre is working on every loophole that has been "left in the system since Independence" and all efforts are being made to uplift the status of neglected and rejected sections of society.

"Under the strong leadership of Modi, India has witnessed phenomenal increase in its graph on global platform," he said.

Welcoming the new entrants into the party fold, Jammu & Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina said the party's policy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' was attracting prominent persons from various political parties.

"The people from every section have a strong belief that as a worker of the BJP, they will be in better position to serve society and the nation with a clean and clear mind," he said.

Meanwhile, Raina chaired a meeting of the party leaders in connection with the upcoming Lok Sabha and assembly polls and asked the party leaders to frame constituency-wise teams to reach out to the people.

"Involve senior leaders in the teams which will work in unison with ground level workers to secure a win for the party in the upcoming elections," he said. **PTI**

UN Disability & Development report cites MGNREGA

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) - the world's largest wage-based social protection programme has been cited, in a first-ever UN report on Disability and Development, as one of the growing number of good practices being implemented by the countries that can create a more inclusive society in which people with disabilities (PwDs) can live independently.

"One example of a public employment program with measures to effectively include persons with disabilities is provided by India," says the report which was launched on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities last week.

It further noted that "through this programme, which guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household, state governments in India have to make efforts to ensure that PwDs are provided work opportunities close to their place of residence, as well as paid wages equal to PwDs."

"This public employment programme also seeks to ensure a stigma-free environment at the



workplace, so that workers with disabilities are not looked down upon or face any form of discrimination. In 2015-16, about half of the 130,420 persons with disabilities registered under this programme engaged in work under the scheme," says the report. Countries that have started to explicitly take disability into account in their public employment services include India, Ivory Coast, Mexico, Peru, Philippines and Vietnam, said the report.

However, the report at the same time also points out that, in India as also in Cameroon, awareness of health services among PwDs is extremely low. In India, only 49 per cent have even heard of any general health services, whereas in Cameroon only 73 per cent

have, it adds.

Overall, the UN's flagship report in disability and development, paints a gloomy picture on the state of the affairs of the PwDs, noting that the sector is at a disadvantage as far as the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is considered across the countries.

The SDGs are a collection of 17 global goals set by the UN in 2015, which include ending global poverty and hunger, implementing sustainable environmental practices and more. UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized that the 2030 Agenda represents a commitment to reduce inequality and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including those with disabilities.

"In many societies, PwDs often end up disconnected, living in isolation and facing discrimination," he said, highlighting that more than one billion people in the world live with some form of disability.

The report demonstrates how disability-based discrimination has severe effects on transport, cultural life, and access to public places and services, and thus, the report leads with a push to change urban environments to make them more accessible.

The above challenges often go unseen as a result of insufficient questions relevant to disability, and consequently, an underestimation of the number of persons living with disabilities and affected by discrimination, and other barriers.

Javier Vasquez, who helps head up the health division at Special Olympics International in his role as Vice President, echoed the issue of gaps in inclusion and representation. On average, PwDs die 16 years sooner than those living without disabilities, however: "A lot of people think people with intellectual disabilities die earlier because of their disabilities, and this is not true," he said according to reports.

CASE OF UNATTENDED EVM

EC removes returning officer of Pali

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Taking note of a viral video purportedly showing an electronic voting machine laying unattended at the house of a BJP candidate, the Election Commission (EC) has ordered the removal of returning officer of Pali Assembly seat in Rajasthan

The EC ordered removal of Pali returning officer Mahaveer, who has been transferred, and Rakesh from Jodhpur has been asked to take the charge, the commission said. The EC said that a section officer carrying a reserve machine had gone to the BJP candidate's house following which the officer was removed and the EVM taken out of election system.

Adding to the headache of the EC a ballot unit (BBAUD 41390) was found lying on the road in Rajasthan's Kishanganj constituency, hours after voting ended for the high-stake elections in the State. The incident prompted Election Commission to suspend two poll officials on grounds of negligence .

"During transportation it was fell down on the way, was reported to Returning Officer Kishanganj. He examined the matter and found guilty the officials accompanying during transportation. Abdul Rasheeq and Patwari Naval Singh were suspended with immediate effect on Friday after the unit was near a high-way found in constituency's Shahabad area in Baran district", an EC order said.

It is not just in Rajasthan, but in other state like Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh which also went to the polls the conduct of some election officials have caused the opposition crying foul play. A number of incidents, mostly related to Electronic Voting Machines took place this year in five assembly polls.

Earlier, in Chhattisgarh three men with laptops were detained by police from near a strong room in Bastar under suspicious circumstances.

The men had claimed that they were employees of Reliance Jio. The company, however, refuted the claims and said that

the men were not employees of Reliance Jio, but technicians of a local vendor who had gone to the site to carry out regular maintenance work after an outage was reported with one of their mobile tower located at the Mahila Polytechnic College Jagdalpur. In Madhya Pradesh, a set of voting machines reached the strong room in Sagar, 48 hours after voting ended. According to reports the EVMs were kept at a police station in Khurai city in the district, where state home minister Bhupendra Singh, the sitting MLA was seeking re-election. The EC in its report said that the EVMs in question were not used for voting, were kept on standby. In a similar incident, an EVM strong room in Bhopal suffered a blackout for nearly one and a half hours on Friday. It is also reported that the CCTV cameras at the strong room were switched off. Even in this case, the EC admitted that that CCTV cameras in the strong room did not work for over an hour but there was no discrepancy in EVMs found as it was reserved voting machines.

Rouhani: US sanctions are economic terrorism

AFP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said US sanctions were "economic terrorism", as he sought to foster a united front from visiting regional officials on Saturday. Washington has reimposed an oil embargo and other damaging sanctions on Iran since pulling out in May from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers.

"America's unjust and illegal sanctions against the honourable nation of Iran have targeted our nation in a clear instance of terrorism," Rouhani said in a televised speech. He was speaking at a conference on terrorism and regional cooperation attended by parliament speakers from Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey.

"We are facing an all-out assault which is not only threatening our independence and identity but also is bent on breaking our longstanding ties," he added. Rouhani drew parallels with the sanctions and other pressure faced by the countries attending the conference.

"When they put pressure



on China's trade, we are all harmed... By punishing Turkey, we are all punished. Any time they threaten Russia, we too consider our security to be endangered," he said. "When they impose sanctions on Iran, they deprive all of us of the benefits of international trade, energy security and sustainable development. And in fact, they impose sanctions on everyone. "We are here to say that we don't intend to tolerate such insolence." Rouhani also warned Europe - which has strongly objected to the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal - that much is at stake in its efforts to bypass US sanctions and maintain trade with

Iran.

"They should know that by sanctioning Iran, they would harm our ability to fight drugs and terrorism," Rouhani said, referring to Iran's efforts to combat smuggling, particularly from Afghanistan.

The European Union is working on a payment system, known as the "special purpose vehicle", to keep money flowing into Iran, but has struggled to find a host since many countries fear repercussions from the Trump administration.

The conference in Tehran was the second regional meeting on terrorism - the first was held last December in Islamabad.

6 dead in Italy nightclub stampede

AFP ■ CORINALDO (ITALY)

Six people, including five teenagers, died and dozens were injured in a stampede when panic broke out during a rap concert at an Italian nightclub early Saturday. The suspected use of a pepper spray-like substance is thought to have sparked the chaos at the venue in the town of Corinaldo, near Ancona in central Italy.

"The cause may have been the dispersal of a stinging substance, the young people fled and trampled over each other. Sadly, six people died and dozens are injured," the fire service said in a statement on Twitter. The victims include five people under the age of 18 — three girls and two boys - and an adult woman who accompanied her daughter to the concert.

Local fire chief Dino Poggiali said that 14 of the injured were in a serious condition, and 40 less serious. As the crowd panicked, people ran for the three emergency exits, one of which led to a small bridge and the car park.

The force of the fleeing crowd made a railing collapse and dozens of people fell, crushing those at the bottom of the pile, according to a preliminary investigation. Rainy mobile phone footage appeared to show part of a



Ancona's head of Police Oreste Capocasa answers to reporters in front of the disco 'Lanterna Azzurra' in Corinaldo, central Italy on Saturday. AP

walkway collapsing, sending dozens of people tumbling down. Ironically, those who remained inside the nightclub as emergency vehicles tended to the injured, local newspaper Ancona Today reported. "It can't be! You can't die like that. Wake up Mattia, I beg you," one unnamed woman cried as she knelt by her son's body, the paper said.

Around 1,000 people — many of them young — were

doned shoes testified to the chaos of the stampede, with survivors and the bereaved weeping outside the nightclub as emergency vehicles tended to the injured, local newspaper Ancona Today reported. "It can't be! You can't die like that. Wake up Mattia, I beg you," one unnamed woman cried as she knelt by her son's body, the paper said.

Around 1,000 people — many of them young — were

in the Lanterna Azzurra (Blue Lantern) club for a performance by Italian rapper Sfera Ebbasta, known as "the king of the trap" for his style of Hip Hop. The Ancona public prosecutor and police are trying to establish how many people were in the venue at the time of the stampede, with media reporting many more people inside than the authorised maximum of 871.

The accident happened at

around 1 am (0000 GMT). The injured were taken to hospital in the nearby town of Senigallia and the most serious on to Ancona.

"You can't die like this at 15," said far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, promising to "find those responsible for these six broken lives, those who through wickedness, stupidity or greed turned a festive evening into a tragedy." His anti-immigrant League party was to hold a minute's silence during a previously planned rally in Rome on Saturday morning.

In 2017, a woman died and 1,500 were injured in a crush during the outdoor broadcast in Turin of a Champions League football match final when rumours of a bombing sparked panic.

Around 30,000 people had gathered in June last year to watch the broadcast from Cardiff, Wales, of the local team Juventus play Real Madrid when pepper spray was shot into the crowd as part of a robbery attempt.

Erika Pioletti, 38, died two weeks later after being left in a coma by the crush. She had gone to watch the game in the square with her boyfriend. Eight people were arrested on suspicion of causing the scramble by dispersing the irritating substance.

Nearly 300 detained as Paris braces for 'yellow vest' protests

Paris (AFP): Paris police detained nearly 300 people Saturday ahead of fresh anti-government "yellow vest" protests which authorities fear could turn violent for a third weekend in a row. Clad in their luminous road safety jackets, dozens of demonstrators — who accuse President Emmanuel Macron of only looking out for the rich — gathered at dawn on the Champs-Elysees, the scene last Saturday of the worst rioting in Paris for decades.

"We had to come to Paris to be heard," said protester Herve Benoit, arriving with three friends from the Dordogne in western France. He called on the government to boost people's spending power and increase taxes on the wealthy. By 8.40 am (0740 GMT) police had already detained 278 people. Some 8,000 police were deployed, carrying out checks on people arriving at train stations and at protest hotspots such as the Champs-Elysees and Bastille monument.

A source close to the operation told AFP that at least 34 people were arrested for carrying masks, hammers, slingshots and rocks that could be used to attack police. Shops, museums, the Eiffel Tower and many metro stations were closed as much of the city-centre went on effective lockdown.

Top-flight football matches and concerts were cancelled. Last weekend's violence, which saw some 200 cars torched and the Arc de Triomphe vandalised, shook France and plunged Macron's government into its deepest crisis so far.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said he expected "only a few thousand people" to descend on Paris after the 8,000 protesters counted last weekend, "but among them are ultraviolent individuals." "These

past three weeks have produced a monster that its creators no longer control," Castaner said, vowing "zero tolerance" towards those aiming to wreak further destruction.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe on Friday evening met a delegation of self-described "moderate" yellow vests who have urged people not to join the protests. After the meeting a spokesman from the movement, Christophe Chalencon, said Philippe had "listened to us and promised to take our demands to the president".

"Now we await Mr Macron. I hope he will speak to the people of France as a father, with love and respect and that he will take strong decisions," he said. Philippe said some 89,000 police were being mobilised nationwide, with a dozen armoured vehicles deployed in Paris for the first time in decades.

Shops around the Champs-Elysees boulevard boarded up their windows and emptied them of merchandise on Friday, while the Louvre, Musee d'Orsay and other museums were shut.

Department stores were also staying closed due to the risk of looting on what would normally be a busy shopping weekend in the run-up to Christmas. Foreign governments are watching developments closely in one of the world's most visited cities.

The US embassy issued a warning to Americans in Paris to "keep a low profile and avoid the crowds", while Belgium, Portugal and the Czech Republic advised citizens planning to visit Paris over the weekend to postpone their visit.

In a warning of impending violence, an MP for Macron's party, Benoit Motter, received a bullet in the post on Friday with the words: "Next time it will be between your eyes."



A protester holds the flag of the Corsica island near the Champs-Elysees avenue on Saturday. AP

Robert Mueller files new papers in court on Russian investigations

Washington (PTI): Special Counsel Robert Mueller has filed a new set of papers in court that may increase the legal woes of US President Donald Trump in connection with the alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election and possible contacts between the Trump's presidential campaign and Moscow.

While the court papers does not answer the central question of whether Trump or his associates conspired with the Russians, the documents suggest that the president's legal woes are far from over and

reveal a previously unreported contact from a Russian to Trump's inner circle during the campaign, according to a report in the Washington Post.

The Court papers directly implicated Trump in plans to buy women's silence as far back as 2014 and offering new evidence of Russian efforts to forge a political alliance with Trump before he became the president - disclosures that show the deepening political and legal morass enveloping the administration, said the report. In his filings before a US federal court in Washington DC,

Muller said that Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign manager lied to prosecutors about his contacts with the White House and an associate with suspected ties to Russian intelligence. The president and the White House denied of any wrongdoings. "Totally clears the President. Thank You," Trump responded with his characteristic fiery tweets. In another court submission, Mueller said Michael Cohen, the former personal attorney of Trump, has gone to "significant lengths" to assist his ongoing Russia investigation.

Chinese executive facing US extradition appears in court

Vancouver (AP): A Canadian prosecutor urged a Vancouver court to deny bail to a Chinese executive at the heart of a case that is shaking up US-China relations and worrying global financial markets. Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of telecommunications giant Huawei and daughter of its founder, was detained at the request of the US during a lay-over at the Vancouver airport last Saturday — the same day that Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping of China agreed over dinner to a 90-day ceasefire in a trade dispute that threatens to disrupt global commerce.

The US alleges that Huawei used a Hong Kong shell company to sell equipment in Iran in violation of US sanctions. It also says that Meng and Huawei misled American banks about its business dealings in Iran.

The surprise arrest, already denounced by Beijing, raises doubts about whether the trade truce will hold and whether the world's two biggest economies can resolve the complicated issues that divide them. "I think it will have a distinctively negative effect on the US-



China talks," said Philip Levy, senior fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and an economic adviser in President George W Bush's White House.

"There's the humiliating way this happened right before the dinner, with Xi unaware. Very hard to save face on this one. And we may see (Chinese retaliation), which will embitter relations." Canadian prosecutor John Gibb-Carsley said in a court hearing Friday that a warrant had been issued for Meng's arrest in New York August 22. He said Meng, arrested en route to Mexico from Hong Kong, was aware of the investigation and had been avoiding the United States for months, even though her teenage son goes to school in Boston. Gibb-Carsley alleged

that Huawei had done business in Iran through a Hong Kong company called Skycom. Meng, he said, had misled US banks into thinking that Huawei and Skycom were separate when, in fact, "Skycom was Huawei."

Meng has contended that Huawei sold Skycom in 2009. In urging the court to reject Meng's bail request, Gibb-Carsley said the Huawei executive had vast resources and a strong incentive to bolt: She's facing fraud charges in the United States that could put her in prison for 30 years.

Meng's lawyer, David Martin, argued that it would be unfair to deny her bail just because she "has worked hard and has extraordinary resources." He told the court that her personal integrity and respect for her father, Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei, would prevent her violating a court order. Meng, who owns two homes in Vancouver, was willing to wear an ankle bracelet and put the houses up as collateral, he said. There was no bail decision by the judge on Friday so Meng will spend the weekend in jail and the hearing will resume Monday.

Parrot genome reveals insights into longevity, cognition

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Scientists have sequenced the genome of the blue-fronted Amazon parrot, unveiling new insights into longevity and highly developed cognitive abilities that give the talkative birds so much in common with humans. The first comparative study of parrot genome by researchers from the Carnegie Mellon University in the US will also provide clues about how parrots learn to vocalise so well.

By comparing the blue-fronted Amazon with 30 other long- and short-lived birds — including four additional parrot species — the researchers identified a suite of genes previously not known to play a role in longevity that deserves further study. They also identified genes associated with longevity



in fruit flies and worms. "In many cases, this is the first time we've connected those genes to longevity in vertebrates," said Morgan Wirthlin, a post-doctoral fellow in Carnegie Mellon University.

Parrots are known to live up to 90 years in captivity — a lifespan that would be equivalent to hundreds of years for humans, Wirthlin said. The genes associated with longevity include telomerase, responsible for DNA repair of telomeres (the ends of chromosomes), which are known to

shorten with age.

Changes in these DNA repair genes can potentially turn cells malignant. The researchers have found evidence that changes in the DNA repair genes of long-lived birds appear to be balanced with changes in genes that control cell proliferation and cancer. They also discovered changes in gene-regulating regions of the genome — which seem to be parrot-specific — that were situated near genes associated with neural development. Those same genes are also linked with cognitive abilities in humans, suggesting that both humans and parrots evolved similar methods for developing higher cognitive abilities. "Unfortunately, we didn't find as many speech-related changes as I had hoped," said Wirthlin.

India, US partners in defence, says commander ... as Sitharaman tours Hawaii military facilities

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India and the US are global partners in defence and regional security, a top American commander has said, as Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman toured the headquarters of the strategic Indo-Pacific command in Hawaii before concluding her maiden visit to America. Sitharaman described her US visit as part of her endeavour to "take forward the bilateral defence cooperation".

Noting that the India-US relationship in defence has acquired the dimensions of a strategic partnership over the last decade, she said that the two countries have made considerable progress. Sitharaman capped off her trip with a visit to Hawaii — the headquarters



Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

of what early this year was rechristened as US Indo-Pacific Command.

The US calls Asia Pacific as Indo-Pacific. It has renamed Pacific Command as Indo-Pacific Command or INDOPACOM. "Our two democratic nations are com-

mitted to upholding a rules-based international order which has brought decades of peace, stability and prosperity. We are global partners on defence and security, and this exemplifies our mutual cooperation to assure a free and open Indo-Pacific," said US

INDOPACOM Commander Admiral Phil Davidson.

US INDOPACOM, at the conclusion of Sitharaman's visit, said that this partnership was a reflection of the increasing strategic importance of the US-India security relationship and the progress both countries have made in advancing their defence cooperation.

The scope for mutual coordination and collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region continues to grow.

Air forces of India and the US are currently conducting a 12-day military exercise in Kalaikunda and Panagarh air bases in West Bengal, with an aim to enhance operational coordination, Indian officials said. The 'Ex Cope India-18'

will be the fourth edition to the series of bilateral drills between the Indian Air Force and the US Air Force.

Meeting Her American counterpart Defence Secretary James Mattis at the Pentagon, Sitharaman said the recent high-level meetings are an indication of the depth and quality of "our bilateral partnership, as well as our mutual desire" to work closely on a range of bilateral and global issues.

While no announcements were made with regard to shifting of F-16 production base to India or deals in armed drones, officials privy to the high-level talks said: "US is leaning a way forward" in meeting India's needs and aspirations in the defence sector and is taking steps that would help it achieve its strategic goals.

GST ANNUAL RETURNS Deadline extended till March 31

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry has extended the last date for filing annual GST return forms by three months until March 31, 2019.

The annual returns form in which businesses registered under the GST have to provide consolidated details of sales, purchases and input tax credit (ITC) benefits accrued to them during 2017-18 fiscal was notified in September. The last date for filing was set at December 31, 2018.

In a statement, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said, "the competent authority has decided to extend the due date for filing Form GSTR-9, GSTR-9A and GSTR-9C till March 31, 2019.

The requisite Forms shall be made available on the GST common portal shortly".

GSTR-9 is the annual return form for normal taxpayers, GSTR-9A is composition taxpayers, while GSTR-9C is a rec-



conciliation statement. Trade and industry players have been seeking an extension of the deadline for filing the annual returns.

EY Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said industry players have been struggling to collate the information required to be disclosed in GSTR-9 and GSTR-9C.

PwC Partner and Leader (Indirect Tax) Pratik Jain said, "Industry, as well as consultants, were struggling with December 31 deadline, given the volume of work involved including preparing a virtual P&L at a State level".

PTI

No GST on sale of properties with completion certificate

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Saturday said GST will not be levied on buyers of real estate properties for which completion certificate is issued at the time of sale.

However, Goods and Services Tax (GST) is applicable on sale of under-construction property or ready to move in flats where completion certificate is not issued at the time of sale, it said.

The Ministry also asked the builders to reduce the prices of properties by passing on the benefit of lower GST rate.

"It is brought to the notice

of buyers of constructed property that there is no GST on sale of complex/ building and ready to move in flats where sale takes place after issue of completion certificate by the competent authority," the Ministry said in a statement.

It further said affordable housing projects like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Rajiv Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana or any other housing scheme of State Governments attracts 8 per cent GST, which can be adjusted by the builders against its accumulated input tax credit (ITC).

PTI

After temple lands, temple sold off in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu is infamous for "vanished temple lands" across the length and breadth of the State. But the situation in the State has deteriorated to such an extent that a former police officer has approached the Madras High Court with a complaint that a famous temple itself has been sold off by its hereditary trustees. The temple is situated at Nungambakkam, a posh residential locality in Chennai city and right close to the Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment Department, the government agency in charge of temples in the State.

The Madras High Court early this year has directed the HRCE Department to furnish the "whereabouts" of 50,000 acres of prime temple lands which have been mysteriously disappeared from the documents and records.

The Agastheewarar Temple, a 400-year-old shrine has been sold off by the temple trustees "without" the concurrence and authorisation of the HR&CE Department, alleges Jebamani Mohanraj, the petitioner.

Mohanraj, a police officer who took voluntary retirement from Government service told *The Pioneer* that though he had filed a petition in the Madras High Court in 2014, the HRCE Department was "deliberately delaying" the case by not filing its response in spite of the directive by the court.

Mohanraj said that as per a Government order , no one could sell off temple properties. "But this rule has been violated with impunity by the Dravidian parties ruling the State since 1967. About 300 grounds of land owned by the temple has been sold off with the connivance of the HRCE staff," he charged..

"Land records available with the government state that the property belongs to the temple. As per market value, the land is worth Rs 1800 crore," said Mohanraj, who had also served the CBI as an

Agastheewarar Temple, a 400-year-old shrine has been sold off by the temple trustees 'without' the concurrence and authorisation of the HR&CE Department, alleges Jebamani Mohanraj, the petitioner

investigator.

Mohanraj said though he took up the matter with the HRCE Department, it ignored his petition and that was why he approached the High Court. "The HR&CE Department has been packed with atheists by the DMK as well as the AIADMK and the officials are continuing robbing temples across the State.

"The modus operandi has been planned very intelligently by the trustees and the officials. The government survey records confirm that the land is registered with the temple. But in reality, the land is now owned by private citizens," he said.

The Madras High Court has adjourned the petition to January 11 since the HRCE officials failed to file the response in the past. "I do not think they would file the affidavit this time too," said an exasperated Mohanraj. The report about the temple being sold off comes at a time when Madras High Court is hearing a series of petitions filed by Temple Worshipers Society highlighting the disappearance of temple lands, idols and antique statues and stone pillars from temples. The Madras High Court has extended the services of A G Pon Manickavel, Inspector General of Police (Temple Idol Theft Wing) who retired from Government service on November 30 for a period of one year to complete the investigation into the missing idols cases.

‘India to retain top position in remittances with \$80 bn’

Washington: India will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year with its diaspora sending a whopping ₹80 billion back home, the World Bank said

in a report on Saturday.

India is followed by China (\$67 billion), Mexico and the Philippines (\$34 billion each) and Egypt (\$26 billion), according to the global lender.

With this, India has retained its top spot on remittances, according to the latest edition of the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief.

The Bank estimates that officially-recorded remittances to developing countries will increase by 10.8 per cent to reach \$528 billion in 2018. This new record level follows a

robust growth of 7.8 per cent in 2017. Global remittances, which include flows to high-income countries, are projected to grow by 10.3 per cent to \$689 billion, it said.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD												
L.No: P/Agra/Rectt./Act apprentices/2018-19										Dated: 30.11.2018		
Notification No. Act App./01/2018/Agra Division												
Engagement of Act Apprentices for training under Apprentice Act. 1961 for the year 2018-19 in Agra Division												
1. Applications are invited for Act. Apprentice training under Apprentice Act 1961 for the year 2018-19 in Agra division for 296 seats from candidates fulfilling the conditions mentioned in notification in the under mentioned designated trades as per Railway Board's letter No. E(MPP)2009/6/14 dated 06.10.2015, Details of the seats are as under												
S. N.	Trade	No. of seats					PWD					
		Gen.	OBC	SC	ST	Total	OH	HH	VH			
1	Fitter	23	12	07	03	45	1(OL,BL)	01	Nil			
2	Electrician	38	20	11	06	75	1(OL)	01	Nil			
3	Welder	03	02	01	00	06	Nil	Nil	Nil			
4	Machinist	03	02	01	00	06	Nil	Nil	Nil			
5	Carpenter	08	04	02	02	16	Nil	01	1(LV)			
6	Painter	03	02	01	00	06	Nil	Nil	Nil			
7	House Keeper (Institution)	02	01	01	00	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
8	Information Technology & Electronics System Maintenance	05	03	01	01	10	1(OL)	Nil	Nil			
9	Plumber	08	04	02	02	16	Nil	Nil	1(LV)			
10	Pump Operator cum Mechanic	03	01	01	00	05	Nil	Nil	Nil			
11	Draftsman (Civil)	06	03	02	01	12	Nil	Nil	Nil			
12	Building Maintenance Technicians	05	03	01	01	10	Nil	Nil	Nil			
13	Stenography (English)	10	06	03	01	20	Nil	Nil	1(LV)			
14	Lineman	04	02	01	01	08	Nil	Nil	Nil			
15	Wireman	04	02	01	01	08	Nil	Nil	Nil			
16	Cable Joiner	02	01	01	00	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
17	Sanitary Hardware Fitter	03	02	01	00	06	Nil	Nil	Nil			
18	House Keeper (Hospital)	02	02	01	00	05	Nil	Nil	Nil			
19	Mechanic-Cum-Operator Electronics Communication System	02	01	01	00	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
20	Mechanic Communication Equipment Maintenance	02	01	01	00	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
21	Data Preparation & Computer Software	03	01	00	01	05	Nil	Nil	Nil			
22	Mechanic (Electrical Domestic Appliances)	02	01	01	00	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
23	Computer Networking Technician	03	01	00	01	05	Nil	Nil	Nil			
24	Dental Laboratory Technician	02	01	01	00	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
25	Health Sanitary Inspector	02	01	01	00	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
26	Hospital Waste Management Assistant	02	01	00	01	04	Nil	Nil	Nil			
Total		150	80	44	22	296	03	03	03			
Training period (As per Apprentice Act, 1961): 01 (One) year (A)- *Reservation is as per Rly. Bd's L.No- E(MPP)2002/6/10 Dt.- 17.06.2011, the reserved places are SC-15%, ST- 7.5% and OBC- 27%. If the prescribed number of person belonging either to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes are not available, then the seats so reserved for them may be filled by persons exchanging the posts between reserved for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. If the prescribed seats can not be filled even in the above given manner then the seats so lying unfilled may be filled by persons belonging to unreserved category. Similarly the seats remaining unfilled by OBC candidates will be filled up by unreserved category.												
**03% of total seats are reserved for Ex.-Service Men, their children and children of Armed Force Personnel, as per details mentioned below. Person who wants to avail the benefit of reservation would have to submit certificate issued by competent authority												
(a) Children of deceased/disabled Ex-serviceman including those killed/disabled during peace time.												
(b) Children of Ex.-serviceman.												
(c) Children of serving jawans.												
(d) Children of serving officers.												
(e) Ex-serviceman.												
*** 03% total seats will be reserved for physically handicapped candidates as per rule. A physically handicapped person who wants to avail the benefit of reservation would have to submit a disability certificate issued by a competent authority i.e. Medical Board constituted by the Central or State Government.												
1(B) All the candidates should have register themselves for Apprenticeship registration on the website www.apprenticeship.gov.in of NCVT and get registration number before applying for Apprentice training in reference to this notification. Apprenticeship registration number should be entered on appropriate place in application form and a print of registration number should be enclosed with application form otherwise application will be rejected.												
2 Training period and training Place -												
Training period will be as per Railway Board's letter RBE No 54/2017 dated 31.05.2017, RBE No. 14/2018 dated 30.01.2018 and RBE No- 119/2002 dated- 22.07.2002 Training place will be in Agra division.												
3. ELIGIBILITY												
3.1 Age Limit:												
(a) Candidate must have completed 15 years and should not have completed 24 years of age on the cutoff date for receiving of applications												
(b) The upper age limit may be relaxed by 05 years in case of SC/ST candidates and 03 years in case of OBC candidates.												
(c) For physically handicapped persons, upper age limit is relaxed by 10 years												
3.2 Educational qualification:												
(A) The candidate must have passed 10th class examination or its equivalent (under 10+2 system) with 50% marks and ITI pass certificate in related trade from a recognized industrial Training Institute affiliated to NCVT/SCVT.												
(B) The minimum qualification for following Trades in addition to 50% in 10 th class will be as under-												
(i) Stenographer (English) Trade- 12 th class (under 10+2 system) passed and ITI pass certificate in relevant trade from NCVT/SCVT.												
(ii) House Keeper (Hospital) Trade- 12 th class with Science subject Physics, Chemistry, Biology (under 10+2 system) passed and ITI pass certificate in relevant trade from NCVT/SCVT.												
(iii) Data Preparation & Computer Software trade- 12 th class with Science/Commerce (under 10+2 system) passed and ITI pass certificate in relevant trade from NCVT/SCVT.												
(C) The candidate should complete their educational and Technical qualification on the date of issue of this notification.												
4. Physical Fitness:- A person shall be eligible for being trained under Apprentices Act, 1961 and Apprenticeships Rules-1992 as amended from time to time, if he or she satisfies the minimum standard of Physical fitness as prescribed in the aforesaid Act and rules and the standards prescribed for imparting training to the relevant trade which will be certified by a railway doctor.												
5. Stipend:- Stipend will be paid as per instructions issued by Railway Board from time to time.												
6. The application and call letter must be filled by candidate in his/her own hand writing in the given format on full scape paper with Blue Ballpoint pen and sent to Office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Personnel), Recruitment Section, North Central Railway, Agra Cantt. (Uttar Pradesh), Pin Code-282001. The following must be annexed with application and call letter in the envelope- "Self addressed two envelopes size '11x5' and envelope must be pasted with minimum registered postage stamp (Rs 42/-)" (SC/ST candidates are being exempted for pasting of stamps.)												
6.1 - Fee:- A postal order/Demand Draft of Rs. 100/- in the name of Sr. Divisional Finance Manager, North Central Railway, Agra Cantt. as processing fee which is not refundable is to be enclosed with the application form. No fee is required to be paid by SC/ST/PH/Women candidate. Applications not accompanied by processing fee, wherever required, will be summarily rejected.												
6.2 The candidate has to paste one passport size recent photograph on the application form and one on the call letter on the appropriate place. Photographs should be selfattested by the candidate.												
6.3 Candidate must ensure before submission of application that he/she is fulfilling qualifications and other standards prescribed. If any candidate does not fulfill the prescribed qualification and other eligibility criteria, the administration has the right to cancel / reject such application at any stage of selection process and if the candidate has been engaged for training his/her candidature will be cancelled without prior intimation.												
6.4 Other required documents-												
1. Valid email of applicant												
2. Name of candidate and his/her father should be as per high school marksheet.												
3. PIN code of post office of candidate's area.												
4 Mobile number												
5. Selfattested copy of marksheet of 10 th , 12 th class, I.T.I. and Caste/Handicaped certificate. Caste certificate must be on the valid Formate for the services of Central Government												
6. A copy of selfattested Aadhar Card/ Voter I Card/ PAN card/Driving Licence for identity.												
7. Last date:- The last date of receiving of the complete application form in all respects in the office is 10.01.2019 at 17:45 PM by ordinary/Registered post. The candidate may also drop his/her application in the box on any working day between 10:00 AM to 17:45 PM up to 10.01.2019 in the Office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Personnel), Recruitment Section, North Central Railway, Agra Cantt. (Uttar Pradesh), Pin Code-282001.												
8. Precautions for submission of application- The applicant's name, address with pin-code should be clearly mentioned on call letter. Call letter has to be sent with application form. Incomplete /overwriting/erased application forms will not be accepted. Application without selfattested copies of SC/ST/OBC/Handicapped certificate/Educational/Technical qualification certificate will not be accepted and no correspondence will be entertained from any person or organization in such applications and no reply will be given. No application will be accepted after last date. Office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Personnel), North Central Railway, Agra Cantt will not be responsible for late or wrong delivery of postal department at any stage of engagement process. "Application under Apprentice Act. 1961 for the Year 2018-19 in Agra division" and "Name of Trade" must be clearly mentioned on the envelope.												
9. Selection Process-												
(i) The selection of Act Apprentice for training will be done on the basis of merit list of the candidates who have applied and are eligible in reference to the notification. There will be no written exam or interview/oral exam in this selection.												
(ii) Merit list will be prepared on the basis of Percentage of total marks obtained by the candidates in both 10 th or its equivalent examination from a recognized education Board/Institute and ITI examination giving equal weightage to both.												
(iii) The calculation of percentage of marks will be based on the total marks obtained in 10 th or its equivalent examination from a recognized educational Board/Institute and not on the basis of mark of any subject or a group of subject.												
(iv) If more than one candidate gets equal marks/percentage in merit list of selection then the older candidate whose date of birth is earlier will be higher in rank than the other whose date of birth is later.												
(v) Trade/Community/Category wise Select List will be prepared on the basis of merit.												
(vi) The candidates placed in the select list will be called for verification of documents in due time. No Daily allowance or Travelling allowance will be admissible.												
(vii) The candidate equal to 1.5 times of the number of slots for Act Apprentice shall be called for verification of original testimonials and their physical fitness. A final merit list of relevant trade will be prepared equal to the number of slots in the descending order of average percentage of marks obtained by the candidate in matriculation and ITI.												
(viii) Hostel/Residential facility will not be provided to selected candidates and as per apprentice Act, 1961 the selected candidates have to arrange accommodation for themselves.												
(ix) List of selected candidates will be uploaded on the official website www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in of North Central Railway and selected candidates shall be informed by post. No correspondence of the other candidates will be entertained.												
9.1 It is made clear that Indian Railway will not have any binding to give employment to Apprenties. As per para 10 of schedule 5(ii) of apprenticeship rule 1992 (notified on 15.07.1992) government will not be responsible to give employment to trained Act Apprentice. (Authority-Railway Board letter No. E(MPP)2009/6/14 dated 06.10.2015).												
9.2 The candidates who have already completed their training under apprentice Act, 1961 from any institute/establishment are not eligible to apply under this notification.												
10. Agreement of Training:- The selected candidate or his/her guardian (in case of minor) has to execute an apprenticeship contract or agreement with employer before apprenticeship training as prescribed under the Apprentice Act, 1961.												
11. After completion of training every apprentice has to undergo to Trade Test conducted by Director General, Employment & Training, Ministry of Labour & Employment, New Delhi. Passed candidate will get national Trade Certificate but there is no guarantee of employment.												
12. The decision of administration regarding selection of candidates and their training will be final. If at a later stage it is found that the selected candidate has given wrong/ false information, then the candidate will be dismissed without giving any notice. If any policy make a change occurred during course of selection process the criterion will be followed accordingly.												
(Mansi Varma) Divisional Personnel Officer North Central Railway, Agra												
Application Format												
Application for Engagement of Act Apprentice Under Apprentice Act. 1961 for the year 2018-19 Agra Division North Central Railway												
To,												
The Divisional Railway Manager (Personnel) North Central Railway, Agra												
Trade (in capital letters).....												
1. Please tick right mark in the appropriate box-												
Gen.	SC	ST	OBC	PWD	Ex.-Ser.							
2. Full name (in capital letter)												
3. Father's name & occupation												
4. Nationality												
5. Religion												
6. Date of Birth (in figures)												
(in words)												
7. Registration number on website www.apprenticeship.gov.in												
8. Mobile No.												
9. email												
10. Correspondence Address												
11. Permanent Address												
12. Category												
SC		ST		OBC		UR						
13. Ex.serviceman												
		Yes		No								
14. Physically handicapped.												
		Yes		No								
15. Educational Qualification												
High School or Equivalent	Year of passing	Board/Educational Authority/Institute		Maximum Marks		Marks Obtained		Percentage				
16. Technical Qualification												
ITI	Year of passing	Board/Educational Authority/Institute		Trade		Total Marks in all semesters		Marks obtained in all semesters		Percentage		
17. Details of Postal Order/Bank Draft												
Name of Post Office/Bank		Number of Postal Order/Draft		Date of issue		Amount in Rs.		Validity of upto				
18. Two personal identification marks of applicant 12.....												
19. No of enclosures.....												
20. Declaration - I do hereby declare that all the statements as mentioned in the above application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that in the event of any particular or information given above is found false or incorrect, my candidature will be liable to be rejected. I also understand fully that the obligation under apprentice Act, 1961, on the part of the Railways is to provide me only training in the allotted trade and not to give employment in the Railways on completion of my training and thus I have no right to claim for employment for the same.												
Place												
Date												
Impression of left thumb												
Signature of candidate												
1237/18(I)												
North central railways												
www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in												
CPRONCR												

SHOW TIME

Arresting love story amid disaster

KEDARNATH
***ing:** Sushant Singh Rajput, Sara Ali Khan, Nitish Bharadwaj, Aika Amin, Sonali Sachdev, Pooja Gor, Nishant Dahiya
Rated: 7/10

Love in the time of catastrophe, especially a disaster as recent in public memory as the Kedarnath tsunami, is pregnant with possibilities and this Ronnie Screwvala production for most part of the film lives up to the expectations. The brewing inter-religion romance between Sara Ali Khan and Sushant Singh Rajput is peppery enough to hold much of your attention even though the imminent deluge that would eventually sweep away everything is constantly knocking the doors of your mind.

You get to wait endlessly for the disaster while unravelling the common nuts and bolts of a love story between a *pandit ki beti* and a *musalmaan pitthuwalla* in a Bholey Baba *ka* pilgrim town. Sushant makes his presence felt not just with his



dimpled cheeks but also the effort he puts into living the part of a hesitant boy who knows his limits when it comes to the girl he is romancing. Rajput gives you many moments in the film as does debutante Sara Ali Khan.

She is feisty, full of verve and displays a body language which goes with her *bindaas* take-it-all attitude with which she graces the screen with all the pedigree that comes from the Khan *khandan* of patiala.

Together they stitch up the film till the deluge builds up to breach all barriers of life and take 4300 people to their watery grave. The credits tell you 70000 are still missing since the 2013 catastrophe.

Going by that figure alone, one would have wanted to know more about the tragedy than one gets to know through this big canvas, well shot, slim on music film which engages the audience nevertheless. The debate will be on whether the love angle could have been the side story and the disaster notes kept on a tidal high. For me, *Kedarnath* work as a good combination story told and depicted excellently.

It is strangely compelling

MORTAL ENGINES
***ing:** Hugo Weaving, Hera Hilmar, Robert Sheehan, Jihae, Ronan Rafferty, Leila George, Patrick Malahide, Stephen Lang
Rated: 8/10

All the human emotions of betrayal obsession anger jealousy and revenge are the nuts and bolts of this machine centric freaky post apocalyptic action adventure.

The good news is that even if you are spareparts allergic, you will get caught in marvelling at the super human imagination that has been put into the movie to show you how London is a tanker city on wheels headed to collide and destroy anything that comes in its way.

Hollywood's cinematic imagination has long been running wild and *Mortal Engines* is a quantum but intoxicating leap in that direction. The wheel city of



London looks amazingly similar to a pirate ship on Tanker crawlies and the entire story of revenge, ambition and survival mix well into the well-knit scenario which keeps you on the hook for the entire show. Brilliant localing and special effects get you going in a manner that may even surprise your responses.

A must film to watch and enjoy.

Neither here nor there

THE POSSESSION OF HANNAH GRACE
***ing:** Shay Mitchell, Grey Damon, Kirby Johnson, Stana Katic
Rated: 6/10

As possession films go, this one, for once, is in a totally new setting — the morgue where dead bodies come in with clockwork regularity. It is dark, dingy and spooky despite the gizmotic interiors where you can fingerprint the bodies and pack them off hygienically. But when Hannah Grace is wheeled in all hell and fear break loose and the audience never have enough of it. A moderately fearful horror movie which comes with an adult tag.



PlanYour Sunday

SEA FOOD FESTIVAL

WHERE: Larry's China at the Vivanta Ambassador
WHEN: December 9, 2018
TIMINGS: lunch & dinner
COST: A la Carte
This winter, sink your teeth into some authentic sea food at Larry's China, the premiere Chinese restaurant at the Vivanta Ambassador. The Sea Food Festival offers a potpourri of scrumptious Chinese seafood creations and drinks prepared by master chefs for foodies to revel in. The seafood menu is specially curated to infuse the indigenous flavours and aroma of Chinese cuisine. The menu offers a wide variety of fresh seafood delicacies like Lobster with double mushroom along with ginger wine sauce and many more to choose from.



THE IRISH CHRISTMAS

WHERE: The Irish House – Nehru Place, connaught place & Noida
TILL: December 30, 2018
TIME: Noon – 12 am
COST FOR TWO: ₹1700
Get your jing-bang to The Irish House and celebrate the most magical month of the year by digging into a wide range of dishes such as the Spinach and cheese tortellini on a cheesy onion jalapeno smear; mushroom ragout puff; cheesy potato skins with herb cream; cheesy potato skins with turkey ham and crispy bacon; turkey ham and cheese sandwich; roast chicken with blueberry balsamic sauce, grilled brussels sprouts and bread pudding; pork ribs with cranberry apple sauce, roasted carrots and baby potatoes; and a classic yule log for a sweet ending. The Irish House offers a wide range of festive winter cocktails like the winter sangria, earlgray & blackberry martini, rosemary & maple sour, christmas toddy, irish butterbeer, and also bon-bon orange shake, caramel hot chocolate and non-alcoholic Butterbeer.



WILDERFEST— VEGAN FESTIVAL

WHERE: Plaza area, Select Citywalk, Saket
WHEN: Till December 9
TIME: 12 noon onwards
COST FOR TWO: ₹1700
WildFest will offer the patrons a wholesome variety of scrumptious vegan food and is directed towards making veganism accessible and enabling the masses in making more conscious life choices in the long run. From lip-smacking live food to cruelty free fashion to vegan flea market to mind opening talk shows to cooking and baking workshops & entertaining music.



GLASS BLOWING AND FLAMEWORK WORKSHOP

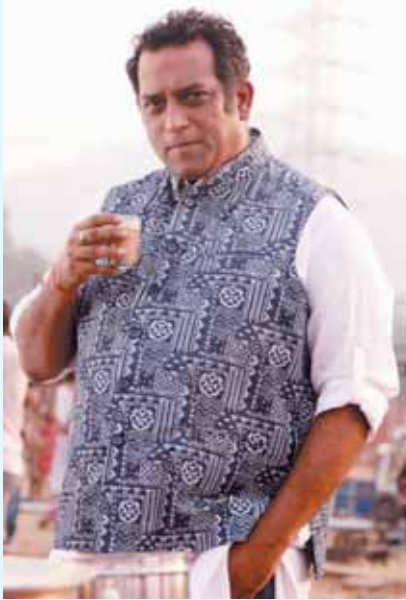
WHERE: Glass Sutra, 19, Ambavatta Green Road, Chattarpur Farms, Delhi
TILL: December 13
TIME: 12 noon onwards
REGISTER: Email at glasssutrateam@gmail.com
Indulge in its one-of-a-kind Christmas workshops for three day, one day as well as experiential for one hour. Under the guidance of experienced visiting artist Brent Sheehan, Reshmi Dey and skilled craftsman from Firozabad, you will learn techniques of Hot Glass Blowing and Flame-work. Doesn't matter whether you have the experience (of working with glass) or not, this workshop is suitable for those who would like to try their hands on flame-working and Glass Blowing for the first time. Surely something new for the month of Christmas!

TELLYTALE



GET SET FOR SUPER DANCER 3

Choreographer Geeta Kapur and filmmaker Anurag Basu gear up for the upcoming dance reality show – Super Dancer Chapter 3. The show will



bring together Shilpa Shetty, Kapur and Basu yet again as judges. Having completed the auditions across 11 cities, the show is set to go on floor soon and will air on Sony Entertainment Television.

PREMIERE OF FLATLINERS

What would you do if you had a chance to leap forth into your afterlife? And what if your afterlife becomes your living nightmare? While curiosity may open doors to many avenues, it is the one that kills the cat, doesn't it? That is exactly what the American sci-fi psychological horror film Flatliners is all about, which is the next Flix First Premiere on &flix, on December 9, Sunday, at 9 pm.

The 2017 film is a remake of the 1990's Flatliners. Directed by Nils Arden Oplev, and written by Ben Ripley, the movie has an ensemble star cast including Ellen Page, Diego Luna, Nina Dobrev, James Norton and Kiersey Clemons.

Five medical students obsessed with what lies beyond and after life, set out to conduct a weird experiment, each triggering a near-death experience — giving them a firsthand account of the afterlife.



The five of them, who have experienced death, seem to be able to live life to the fullest until they realize that they cannot. Not really, anyway! The group is consistently haunted by their afterlife memories and what they saw during the experiment. At one point, while it seems that they almost deserve the consequences, the raw gore of it makes you also want to save

them from their acts. Will they live to appreciate the present or will they be trapped in the grey area not knowing where they truly belong? Destiny always has something else in store for those who wish to go against the law of nature.

Quench your thirst about afterlife as &flix is all set to premiere *Flatliners* on December 9, Sunday at 9PM!



YET ANOTHER SHOW ON DAAYAN

Transporting its viewers into an alternate world of mystery and horror, &TV and Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms' present Daayan. The show is a gripping tale of a girl's quest in revealing the identity of the evil force hidden amongst her close ones and defeating its sinister plans. With popular TV actors Tinaa Dattaa and Mohit Malhotra in the lead, the new weekend fiction property is slated to go on air from December 15, 2018 every Saturday and Sunday at 9 pm on &TV.

Daayan is a mystifying narrative of a young Jhanvi Morya (Tinaa Dattaa), a well-educated and family-oriented girl hailing from Ujjain. It maps her race against time as she stumbles upon a dangerous ploy of the evil force, as many unusual and mysterious happenings repeatedly occur in her hometown. With a threat to her life, it's

her journey of unmasking the identity of the Daayan who is one of her close ones. Accompanying her in this mission, will be Jhanvi's childhood friend and love interest, the wealthy and chivalrous Akarsh Sharma (Mohit Malhotra).

The show also brings together a powerful ensemble cast with names like Amit Thakur, Aakash Talwar, Rishita Nag, Kanika Shivpuri, Prabhat Bhattacharya, Priya Bhatija amongst others in various roles.

Talking about her show, producer Ekta Kapoor, Balaji Telefilms, said: "Taking viewers through the protagonist, Jhanvi's journey of unraveling the mystery of the Daayan, the show promises horror, drama, thrill, romance, mystery, an all-in-all great entertainer. With a fantastic team of artists on board, we are sure to create intrigue with the layered plot that will keep the viewers

guessing. I have enjoyed creating content in the horror space and I'm glad that audiences have responded well to it. This time too, I'm positive that we have a winner on our hands. With the blessings of God, now the show belongs to the audiences."

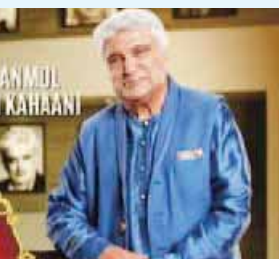
Having essayed varied roles in the past, talented actress Tinaa Dattaa said: "I'm grateful to have been chosen to play Jhanvi, working with Balaji Telefilms and Ekta again. Horror-mystery as a genre has seen great interest from viewers at large and I'm excited to make way in this space. Jhanvi's character is unlike any that I have played before, she grows from being vulnerable to being courageous, battling her own demons at times. It's a thrilling narrative of a simple girl's repeated trysts with the supernatural and her journey to unveil the evil Daayan amongst her close ones."

NEW SEASON OF THE CLASSIC LEGENDS

Giving viewers an opportunity to enjoy the stories of some of the most renowned cinema maestros and their distinguished work, ZEE announces the launch of the fifth season of Classic Legends. The show, hosted by the legendary lyricist-writer JavedAkhtar, will familiarise lovers of cinema with the lives and careers of stalwarts who have left an indelible footprint in the world of Indian films.

The Classic Legends Season 5 will take the viewers on a mesmerising journey and give them a glimpse into the lives of 26 Bollywood legends who have contributed to Indian Cinema. An elated JavedAkhtar who announced the show, said: "My association with Zee began with the Season 1 of this iconic show and we have come a long way from there. It has been an absolute honour to be able to share the exemplary lives of Hindi Cinema legends. Hindi Cinema owes its grandeur to the matchless contribution of these entertainers and I am sure Season 5 will also charm the audience with lesser known stories about them."

Classic Legends began as a step towards creating awareness about the stalwarts of Hindi Cinema whose invaluable offerings continue to stand the test of time. The first four seasons, each of which delved deep into the enthralling lives of Bollywood luminaries, received phenomenal response from people across age groups. Riding on this admiration, Zee Anmol Cinema, Zee Bollywood & Zee Cinema HD will showcase Classic Legends Season 5, a distinguished property presented



by the multi-talented JavedAkhtar. Drawing from his vast personal and professional experience in the industry, JavedAkhtar will take viewers on a journey through the lives of cinema legends that have brought Indian cinema to the staggering high point at which it stands today. Viewers will learn more about the lives of these champions by the person who has had the good fortune of following these legends' work extremely closely. JavedAkhtar will regale viewers with interesting stories about Hindi film legends through 13 episodes, each featuring 2 celebrities every Saturday. The show will premiere on Zee Anmol Cinema on December 8 at 6pm and on Zee Bollywood at 8pm. This season of Classic Legends will showcase the lives of actors like late Sridevi, Mumtaz, Omprakash, AmrishPuri, Jaya Bhaduri and HemaMalini amongst others. It will also include music directors SH Bihari, Khayyam, legendary playback singer Manna Dey, noted film-makers BasuChatterjee, PrakashMehra and AmiyaChakraborty to name a few.

Premiering on December 8, Classic Legends Season 5 will air every Saturday on Zee Anmol Cinema at 6pm and Zee Bollywood at 8pm.



the Bigg Boss house. Jasleen Matharu entered the Bigg Boss house as a jodi with renowned bhajan singer Anup Jalota. Her relationship with her jodidaar always remained a bone of contention for the other contestants and the viewers on whether it was a guru-shishya relationship or a romantic one. Jasleen's journey in the BB house has been rather an interesting one with a lot of highs and lows. Her jodidaar was evicted earlier and everyone

thought that she wouldn't survive in the show without him. But Jasleen became a strong contender and battled it out with others week after week until the 12th week, where she got eliminated. Jasleen was seen to bond well with Dipika, Sreesanth and Megha over the last few weeks. Along with Matharu, the winner of Bigg Boss Marathi and one the wild card entries of the season, Megha Dhadhe also got eliminated this week. Megha walked in the house with a winning attitude and also proved to be a tough contender. Initially, her competition was with Dipika and wanted to take over the kitchen. But soon the both turned out to be good friends. Megha had always shown a dedication in performing the tasks with all her grit.

BREAK THE BUFFER TRAP

Though Tiger Reserves like Ranthambore are thriving, experts tell SANGEETA YADAV that there is a need for an inclusive conservation model for all reserves dealing with issues of faulty buffer zones, relocation and community support.

You have to be lucky to spot a tiger at a national park and at Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, there are high chances of you not leaving the forest disappointed.

Watching the big cat at close quarters is an awe-inspiring experience. From its graceful walk and beautiful thick yellow coat with dark stripes, to reflecting enormous power, strength and agility as he jumps and roar, the king of the jungle and India's national animal is a delight to be with. Credit goes to safari guides who track the tiger movement from their pugmarks and trajectory.

From spotted deer, peacock, nilgai, crane to many more species of birds and animals, Ranthambore buzzes with wildlife. WWF India CEO & Secretary General Ravi Singh says that wildlife conservation has been deeply rooted in our religion, heritage and history. So much so that families used to raise deer, nilgai, crane and other wild animals in their homes.

"There is a village in Panna where the wild animals used to come regularly and take refuge. There was a crane bird raised by a family who used to fly as the child would go and come back from the school. There was a dhobi family which had two nilgais at pets. We don't see any of it now. There is no institutionalisation of protection of rare species. The main repository and protectors are the Forest Ministry, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and other groups. India's voice is heard at CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) where a larger framework and policies are agreed upon for endangered species. The challenge is we don't have enough people, corridors and conservation approaches," Singh tells you.

For tiger conservation, Ranthambore is considered one of the best models of India. With a thriving population of over 65 tigers, the reserve has become a breeding habitat for other neighbouring forests as well and powers the success story for many other national parks.

"Every protected forest has to have a neighbouring population with a good number of breeding tigresses as it prevents them from inbreeding and increases the viability of the population. By relocating the tigers to other forests for breeding, they pass on their special genes to the next generation which prevents a genetic drift. It is important to have a sustainable population. We lost our Sariska tigers because there was no connectivity with other neighbouring population but now the population has been revived," renowned conservation biologist Dr Raghu Chundawat, says during his talk at International Tiger Week held recently in Ranthambore.

The relocation of the tigers happens in a very well-planned manner. Sometimes it turns out to be a success and sometimes, a failure. "When we relocate the breeding tigers, we look at maintaining the ecology of the habitat of the source and the place they are relocated to and how it affects the population. There are many factors that go into consideration. It is difficult for the tigers to adjust to a new place. In a recent case, two tigers were being translocated inter-state for the first time in India from Sarika Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, to Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Odisha. Unfortunately, one of them — Mahavir died of poaching as speculated and the other one Sundari still not settle down yet," Ritika Maheshwari, veterinarian, Wildlife Protection Society of India, explains.

As the number of tigers increases, it raises the challenge for occupancy in the forest. One of the threats to the tiger is range restriction within the given protected habitat. "Range restriction is the first sign of an



Tiger passes by at the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

extinction of any species due to poaching, harsh climate, development activities, transferring of tigers to other regions, and many others. As per the report, tigers are only limited to seven per cent of the original range of habitat. The solution of this is to bring seven per cent to 20 per cent presence. The challenge is we can't do it within the protected area. Thus, we have to go outside the protected area. In India, the big problem is we have only one exclusive conservation model which is Protected Area Network (PAN)," Chundawat explains.

The size of the protected areas is very crucial and there is a lot of scale mismatch as the area required to have a viable population and the area that is provided is not enough. "Ranthambore is a success story right not but it is not a viable model. We have to deal with scale mismatch which can be dealt with the number of breeding females required to sustain the viability of the population. To avoid the scale mismatch, we need 14-15 breeding females which can be divided into three to four core places. This will help to sustain a population of 170 plus individuals. But do not have that much of territories to protect," Chundawat points out.

Because of this, the tigers go out of their territory and are spotted in the towns and villages. This leads to tigers preying on cattle and sometimes humans as well. The con-

FROM 2015 TO 2017, 415 TIGERS HAVE DIED DUE TO POACHING & OVER 117 LEOPARDS & 32 TIGERS WERE FOUND DEAD THIS YEAR. BESIDES POACHING AS THE BIGGEST THREAT TO TIGERS, MANY OTHER REASONS LIKE CONFLICT WITH THE HUMANS, RESCUE OPERATIONS AND WRONG TREATMENT ARE ALSO INCREASING THEIR MORTALITY RATE

flict between the tigers and humans have always been a topic of debate on who is at the priority — the tiger or people, when in co-existence. But experts opine that removal of the tiger from the unprotected area is not a solution. The challenge lies in support from the community.

"Our conservation model is such that it goes outside the protected area and is entirely dependent on volunteering participation of the local communities. More than a volunteer activity, we need to make it an incentive activity for the villagers and community people to value tigers and not kill them. They should be compensated for their cattle loss due to tiger prey and for crop damage as well. When the villagers see that the tigers are bringing them money, they will not kill the animal, instead become more tolerant. By working with the community and minimise the killings will help the tigers survive in the landscape. We have to look at conflict as a journey to make much more comfortable for the tiger and villagers to survive and co-exist," Chundawat explains.

To have this good practice going, the tigers have to be present. And taking away the tigers from the region will make the people from the community anti-tiger and non-sensitive. "If you disconnect the tigers

from the environment, it can do more harm as people will become more violent in killing them. If you want to work with the conflict, you need to have tiger in the region. We need to find a solution from the old traditions and look for contemporary ways to for the peaceful co-existence," he adds.

At the same time, the safety of villagers need to be the topmost priority which can be made viable with the help of technology. "We must have radars installed to keep a track of the whereabouts of the tigers and create an alarm in the region to make the villagers alert. That is how we can turn around the situation," he says.

When the conflict happens, a team of biologist, veterinarian, scientists and many others come to rescue the tigers from the conflicted zone. "In one of our ongoing tiger conservation projects in Sundarbans, which has a lot of tigers in islands, the fishery community ended up being attacked by the tigers. The most difficult thing to do during conflict is crowd control. At times, local representative help to resolve the situation locally and police help in controlling crowds. We look for long-term support from the community and make people interested in conservation. We need of the hour is to make the community people realise the

importance of protecting tigers from getting killed and organisation to focus on people and what they want and not just the tigers," Maheshwari says.

Where some feel that it is best to give euthanasia once a tiger becomes a man-eater, some believe that they are best kept in captivity. But Wildlife warden of Ranthambore Balendu Singh says that the best solution to this is to create a large enclosure to keep the man-eater tiger instead of killing them or keeping them in captivity.

"About three years ago in Ranthambore, with a heavy heart, we had to send one of our tigers Ustad into captivity in Udaipur because he had killed four people. He was one of the more visible tigers on the main road and we were blamed for not looking after the tiger and why are we encroaching in his territory. There are many people who believe that tiger should not be assisted when they live in the wild but we don't have the luxury of not assisting our animals in living lovely and we don't have enough of them left. And if they do become a problem, rather than put them in captivity it is better to end their life. There are some instances where we had no choice. You have to end their life. One can create a large enclosure of one or two hectares per animal, and let them live there and even feed them," Balendu says.

Another major issue is of Buffer zone which Chundawat believes is a flawed concept. According to Wildlife Protection Act 1972, that was amended in 2006, it made it mandatory to create an attractive buffer (unprotected forest area with human intervention) around core (protected area) of the tiger reserve. Scientifically, by doing this, it created, what we scientifically call, an ecological trap (inherent dangers) for the tigers which led to increase in mortality rate.

"I am completely against buffer when it comes to tiger conservation. It is a disaster and doesn't solve any problem. By creating this, we have developed a small core which is the protected area with a high survival rate of tigers, and huge buffer outside it which is absolutely non-protected and it is just expanding and encroaching inside the core. This is leading to a high mortality rate of tigers, the risk of getting disease and rise in conflict with the humans and poaching cases," Chundawat says.

He opines that the reason for a high mortality rate of the tigress in Panna National Park has been poaching. "Over the past nine years, we have lost seven tigresses in Panna which is a serious problem. The solution lies in creating hard boundaries and if the animals come out in high mortality zone, they spend less time and move back to the protected zone," he tells you.

From 2015 to 2017, 415 tigers have died due to poaching and over 117 leopard and 32 tigers were found dead this year. "Poaching being the biggest threat to the tigers which is operated in a well organised way, there are other factors that contribute to high mortality like seizure, natural deaths, injuries, habitat fragmentation, deforestation, electrocution and others. Due to conflict with the humans, tigers were shot by the forest department and villagers or died during rescue operations and treatment," Maheshwari says.

Every wildlife conservation areas have different attributes and having Protected Area Network model might not be enough to conserve the wildlife animals. "Through PAN, we created an environment which had no signs of threats and we relocated the tigers to other forests and achieve success. Some protected areas have done well and some protected areas have not done well. The need of the hour is to have several inclusive conservation models which include community people and can also generate goodwill to all," Chundawat tells you.

■ Tell us about the history of Ranthambore?

The National Park is not just a Tiger Reserve but also holds a significant place in our history. The Ranthambore Fort dates back to the 9th century and is attributed to the Chauhans and then Akbar. The Trinetra Ganesha Temple inside the fort dates even further; it finds a mention in Valmiki's Ramayan which was translated in the 4th century. The deity is that of a three-eyed Ganesha with his wives — Ridhi and Siddhi and his children Shubh and Labh. This temple also has a Post Office and in Hindu marriage, people from all over India send their first wedding invitation to Trinetra Ganesha Temple and the priest dutifully reads it out. Five years back, the fort was declared as UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Moreover, Ranthambore is the best example of dry scrub forest which makes it best for photography. Around 80 per cent of tiger photographs and clippings worldwide have been taken here. Because of its dry nature of the forest, the visibility is very good and the natural light is fantastic.

■ How did the forest change for over the years?

Back then the park, covering 392 sq km was protected by the maharajas and villagers who have been residing in the forest for centuries. The park was established as the Sawai Madhopur Game Sanctuary in 1955 by the Government and declared a Project Tiger reserve in 1973. Since 1950 till now, 70 per cent of our landmass covering forest has shrunk to just under 20 per cent. It has been an uphill task for us to keep these forests connected so that the gene pool of the tigers does not get stagnant. This is our biggest challenge.



Trinetra Ganesha Temple at Ranthambore Fort

■ Has the tiger population increased?

In 2004-2005, the population of breeding tigers had come down to almost 11. But today we have recorded over 64 breeding adults, excluding the cubs and sub-adults. This is the largest ever counted the population of Ranthambore. Even when the maharajas had this forest, we never had

more than 40 breeding tigers.

■ What led to this success?

Ranthambore's deputy conservator of forests (DCF) YK Sahu, along with his team worked closely with the non-government organisations. As a wildlife warden, I assisted the Forest Department in what they do and be a bridge between the



Balendu Singh, Wildlife warden of Ranthambore, addressing the gathering at International Tiger Week

Government and the NGOs. The public-private partnership is the way to go forward. It is going to take a while and through educating people, who are equal stakeholders in this, about what you are paid to do and spreading awareness amongst villagers on co-existing with the wildlife will get us there.

■ Do we have enough funds?

Forest is managed and maintained by each State. Any area which is declared a National Park is then funded by the Centre, through the implementation of the policies remains with the States. Six years back, Ranthambore National Park declared itself self-funded. The entry fee collected from the tourists, which earlier used to go to the exchequers, now stays with the park. Last year, the collection of Ranthambore was ₹28 crores.

It used to take us three to four months to compensate the villagers whose cattle were killed by the tigers. But now with the gate money staying here, their compensation time has come down to two weeks.

■ What about the implementation of the policies?

We have been good at capturing the poachers. In the old system, you waited for the poacher to make a kill and then went and caught him. The animal is already gone. The success is in preventing him from poaching and this is where Ranthambore has been good. In the last three years, we have been successful in capturing more than 30 people involved in poaching. It is not just tigers, but Sambar, Nil Gai, Spotted Deer as well.

Since 2005, we have had a couple of unnatural deaths attributed to revenge

killing or animal conflict. We have been successful the way the Forest Department of Rajasthan has worked.

■ Is there corruption?

Trade and wildlife are second only to the drug trade and human trafficking. It is a global trade which involves enormous amounts of money. The lure of money will always be there. Corruption is rampant in our country in almost every section of the society. Unfortunately, it is deeply rooted in our DNA but it is up to us how you limit it. It is wrong to say that everybody is corrupt. We have some people who stand out on their honesty. We have the best laws for wildlife conservation but the implementation of it is a big issue. In some cases, wildlife poaching and violation of rules have been done by influential people or are found to be a relative of politician or bureaucrats.

■ How is technology helping?

We are using modern day technology like remote sensing cameras, drones and camera trap. Every villager has GPS enabled smartphones through which they capture pug marks, kills and send it to the forest department. So we know where the animal is moving and can monitor and protect it.

■ Why there is zero rate of conviction in wildlife poaching cases?

The culprits are getting captured but go scot-free because the case that is presented to the court has not been prepared well at the lower level. It is important to educate the people to present the case which is non-refutable. If the case is good, a poacher will go to jail for a long time.

‘Public-private partnership is way forward’

Wildlife warden of Ranthambore BALENDU SINGH talks to SANGEETA YADAV about how the rich legacy of Nature and wildlife in the area has evolved and why it is considered to be a successful model

INDIA ON DRIVER'S SEAT

Visitors build on first innings advantage and extend lead to 166 runs after sweeping Aussies for 235 runs in rain-hit first session

MOST RUNS FOR INDIA IN AUSTRALIA					
Batsman	M	Runs	AVG	HS	100/50
Sachin Tendulkar	20	1809	53.20	241*	6/7
VVS Laxman	15	1236	44.14	178	4/4
Rahul Dravid	15	1143	43.96	233	1/6
Virat Kohli	9	1029	57.16	169	5/2
Virender Sehwag	10	948	47.40	195	2/4

Faisal Features

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

The sun took a break but India shone to stay ahead of Australia in the opening Test after sporadic rain intrusions, K L Rahul's enterprise and Cheteshwar Pujara's obduracy culminated in a 166-run lead here on Saturday.

Virat Kohli was dismissed late in the final session as India reached 151 for three at stumps on day three at the Adelaide Oval.

The Indian skipper lunged forward to defend off Nathan Lyon (1-48) but was caught at short leg for an uncharacteristic knock of 34 (104 balls). At close of play, Cheteshwar Pujara was unbeaten on 40 runs, while Ajinkya Rahane was batting on 1 not out. India led by 166 runs.

Post tea, Kohli and Pujara took their third-wicket partnership to 71 runs, albeit it was low on strike-rate, coming off 197 balls.

Pujara survived early in the last session, courtesy DRS again, as the ball seemed to miss the stumps on account of bounce in the 40th over by Lyon.

At the other end, Kohli became the fourth Indian batsman after Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman and Rahul Dravid to score 1000-plus runs in Test cricket against Australia.

The hosts though cut off most of his scoring opportunities, and Kohli was happy to play for time as he didn't dominate the bowling for once. Their third-wicket partnership crossed 50 off 149 balls.

India's lead swelled past 150 shortly thereafter, and just when it appeared to be smooth sailing for the visitors, Lyon struck to remove Kohli before stumps and put the match in balance again.

Earlier, K L Rahul scored a quick-fire 44 off 67 balls as India reached 86 for two at tea. Rain had further caused delays post lunch and another 23 minutes were lost before play could finally get underway, with 61 overs remaining for the day.

As opposed to the first innings, Rahul and Murali Vijay (18) were more careful and negotiated the Australian pace battery without much discomfort. They left well and looked to cut out any high-risk shots as India were placed at 19 for no loss in 10 overs.

Vijay was the first to go, out driving again, and caught at second slip off Mitchell Starc (1-18). It fizzled out the Indian momentum, even as Rahul continued playing his shots.

Pujara survived a scare in the 24th over, using DRS to overturn a caught-behind decision off Lyon. But two balls later, Australia's desperation for a wicket paid off as Rahul edged behind off Josh Hazlewood (1-25).



KL Rahul plays a shot during his innings against Australia during third day of 1st Test; (below) Australian players celebrate after Nathan Lyon dismissed Indian skipper Virat Kohli

ICC/AP



Kohli walked out to boos from the Australian fans but made sure there was no further loss until tea as India's lead crossed 100.

Earlier, rain hampered play on day three as India took a 15-run lead in the first innings after Australia were bowled out for 235 in reply to the visitors' 250.

Inclement weather first delayed play by 45 minutes in the morning session, and then there were two more delays in the first session before lunch was taken.

During the first 20 minutes of play, starting from overnight 191 for seven, Australia crossed 200 in the 91st over but India managed to sneak in a breakthrough before rain came again.

Mitchell Starc (15) was caught behind off Jasprit Bumrah (3-47) as covers came on.

Play was held up for 55 minutes thereafter, and the number of overs for the day were reduced to 79. On resumption, the remaining one-hour session was cut short again after 40 minutes but this time India made good use of the overs.

Both Bumrah and Ishant Sharma (2-47) were guilty of bowling shorter to the tail-enders, and it didn't change this morning either. Nathan Lyon (24 not out) made good use of this, hitting two fours and a six, as he put on 31 runs for the ninth wicket with Travis Head (72).

Head's immaculate knock came to an end when he edged Mohammed Shami (2-58) behind, and the very next ball, the pacer finished things off with Josh Hazlewood out caught similarly for a first-ball duck.

Wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant finished with six catches, while Head faced 167 deliveries in all, inclusive of six fours.

Australia were then happier of the two sides having added 44 runs in just 10.4 overs of play. In their bid to get the lower order out quickly, India were guilty of leaking easy runs.

On day one, Pujara's 16th Test century saved India the blushes. The Indian bowling attack then worked hard to restrict the Australian batsmen with Head the only one to cross the 50-mark.

VIRAT BOOED

Virat Kohli was booed by a small section of the Adelaide Oval crowd when he stepped out to bat in the second innings against Australia, an act that has been criticised by rival batsman Travis Head and former skipper Ricky Ponting.

Travis Head wasn't impressed by the behaviour of the crowd.

"He's a pretty good player and probably doesn't deserve to be booed but that's how it is. It's probably not needed but that's the crowd," he said.

ASHWIN WILL PLAY CRUCIAL ROLE: BUMRAH



PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Nathan Lyon has been using the rough patches effectively during the ongoing Indian second innings which is an indicator that Ravichandran Ashwin will have a bigger role to play during Australian second innings, reckons pacer Jasprit Bumrah.

"Ashwin will obviously play a more crucial now role because with the rough, we saw Nathan Lyon using the rough to his advantage. He is an experienced bowler and knows what he has to do. So he will probably work on it and he will play a crucial role for sure," Bumrah said at the end of the second day's play.

India dismissed Australia for 235 in their first innings and it was a collective effort from the bowlers, who shared the spoils.

"We were trying to figure out the lengths that are useful over here. In South Africa and England, there was a lot of lateral movement. Here the wickets are slightly flatter because you get bounce, but you have to be consistent."

"That's the thing we have read over the years. We were trying to focus on that, that if we don't give runs, we are creating pressure from both ends and then we could get wickets," said Bumrah.

Bumrah is confident that India will take a substantial lead on day four.

"I think it is slightly in our favour because the late wicket (Kohli) was a good thing for them. But we have a good lead. First session on Sunday will be a very important. If we capitalize on that, that will leave us in a very good place in this match," the pacer said.

Pant equals Dhoni's record of most catches



PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Young Rishabh Pant on Saturday took six catches during Australia's first innings to equal predecessor Mahendra Singh Dhoni's record of most catches by an Indian wicketkeeper in a Test innings.

The 21-year-old Pant had a hand in dismissing Usman Khawaja, Peter

Handscomb and Tim Paine on the second day before pouncing on to edges off Mitchell Starc, Travis Head and Josh Hazlewood's willow on Saturday.

He equalled the record after taking Hazlewood's catch off Mohammed Shami's ball in the first innings here.

In 2009, Dhoni had achieved his record feat

during the Wellington Test against New Zealand. Pant, who is playing his sixth Test, was selected in the Indian team following the injury of Wriddhiman Saha and retirement of Dhoni in 2014.

He has so far scored 346 runs with an average of 43.25 with the highest score of 114 against England.

SINGLES

UTTAR PRADESH BEAT J&K

JAMMU: Uttar Pradesh defeated Jammu and Kashmir by 6 wickets in Jammu as experienced Suresh Raina played a crucial knock of 66 not out in the second innings. At Agartala, hosts Tripura needed another 58 runs for an outright win against Haryana with only three wickets in hand. At Ranchi, Odisha have a task at hand as they need another 179 runs to win with seven wickets in hand against hosts Jharkhand. Meanwhile, Rajasthan pacer Aniket Choudhary grabbed his second five-wicket haul as the hosts recorded an emphatic innings and 43-run win against Assam in their Elite Group C match here on Saturday. 28-year-old left-arm pacer Choudhary, who had picked up a five-wicket haul in the first innings, shone in the second innings too to return with exceptional figures of 5-40 as Rajasthan bundled out Assam for 174. Choudhary ended the match with excellent figures of 10-78 (5-38 and 5-40). This is Rajasthan's fourth win of the season. After bundling out Assam for 108 in their first essay at the Savai Mansingh Stadium here, Rajasthan had posted 325 in their first essay to take a healthy 217-run first innings lead, with skipper Mahipal Lomror hitting a stroke-filled 133. Assam, who began the penultimate day at 109 for 3, slumped to 174 all out in their second essay, as Choudhary and other pacers TM Haq (2-44) and Nathu Singh (2-28) wreaked havoc. For Assam, only Gokul Sharma (77) and wicket-keeper Kunal Saikia (49) delayed the inevitable. But after the duo fell, it was smooth sailing for the visitors.

RAJASTHAN THRASH ASSAM

JAIPUR: Rajasthan pacer Aniket Choudhary grabbed his second five-wicket haul as the hosts recorded an emphatic innings and 43-run win against Assam in their Elite Group C match. 28-year-old left-arm pacer Choudhary, who had picked up a five-wicket haul in the first innings, shone in the second innings too to return with exceptional figures of 5-40 as Rajasthan bundled out Assam for 174. Choudhary ended the match with excellent figures of 10-78 (5-38 and 5-40). This is Rajasthan's fourth win of the season. Assam, who began the penultimate day at 109 for 3, slumped to 174 all out in their second essay.

KERALA FACE UPHILL TASK AGAINST TN

CHENNAI: Kerala was chasing 369 for a win against Tamil Nadu in the Elite Group 'B' match. K B Arun Karthick (on 12) and Sijomon Joseph (1) were at the crease at close of play. Tamil Nadu declared their second innings at 252 for 7, riding on half-centuries from captain Baba Indrajith (92) and M Kaushik Gandhi (59) to set the visitors a daunting target. The home team bowlers came to the fore to dismiss Kerala for 152 in the first innings in response to TN's 268 early this morning as the visitors could add only one run to the overnight score. Rahul Shah removed Sijomon Joseph (29) to finish with 4 for 32. Left-arm medium-pacer T Natarajan ended with three wickets and R Sai Kishore had two scalps.

Gambhir's ton helps Delhi take 1st innings lead

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gautam Gambhir scored the 43rd and final first-class century of his career as Delhi ensured at least three points by virtue of first innings lead against Andhra on the third day of a group B encounter.

At stumps, Delhi ended the day at 409 for 7 in reply to Andhra's 380 but every other details was of little consequence because of one man playing his last game. The entire focus was on Gambhir, who is set to hang his boots on Sunday, made it memorable for the 500-odd spectators, who were present at the Feroz Shah Kotla to cheer every run that he scored.

A streaky boundary through the slips took him to 98 and then he square drove pacer Bandaru Ayappa to scamper home for a double to complete one of his more emotionally exhausting hundreds.

While the 100-odd youngsters sporting "Miss you Gauti" T-shirts were overwhelmed with emotion, the former India

opener was muted in his celebrations as he didn't even bother to open his helmet.

He added 113 runs for the second wicket with skipper Dhruv Shorey (98) before India A keeper Kona Bharat finally held onto an edge with off-spinner Shoaib Mohammed Khan being the bowler.

It wasn't a smooth innings but no one cared for the details like 10 boundaries and 185 balls as he got a generous applause.

The Delhi players gave him a 'Guard of Honour', the spectators gave a standing ovation and the entire Andhra team came up to congratulate him.

He strode back to pavilion in a matter of fact manner as the interest in the day's proceedings suddenly waned.

However, it was Shorey, Delhi's most consistent batsmen over past two seasons, who played with a lot of confidence, wearing the Andhra attack on a low and slow track.

He batted patiently playing 259 balls,



hitting six fours, adding 86 with Vaibhav Rawal (33) after century stand with Gambhir.

After Rawal was dismissed, Dhruv was

stuck and left-arm spinner Manish Golamaru trapped him with a short mid-off fielder. Sai Krishna stationed at the particular position took a smart low catch.

LOCAL EVENTS

LUCKNOW EMERGE CHAMP

Lucknow blanked Gorakhpur 4-0 to emerge winner in the State-Level Senior Women's Hockey Tournament at Mohd Shahid Stadium on Saturday. Archana started the proceedings with a field goal in the 15th minute while Sonal Tiwari extended the lead in the 28th minute. Archana and Sonal again struck in 32nd and 57th minute respectively to seal the match 4-0. Information commissioner Hafiz Usman gave away the prizes. Also present were director (sports) RP Singh, Vijay Singh Chauhan, Sadhna Singh and Lata Chaudhary.

KV RDSO, ST FEDLIS WIN

KV RDSO blanked Shiv Football Academy 3-0 in a league match of the 7th La Martiniere Football Cup on Saturday. In another match, St Fedlis defeated APS Academy 4-2 in a tie-breaker.

ARUN KAKKAR IN FINAL

Arun Kakkar defeated Imtiyaz Ahmed 21-15, 21-14 to enter the 65 years age category final of Lucknow District Veteran Badminton Championship at UP Badminton



Academy on Saturday. In the women's 40 years category, Sarita Tiwari beat Nisha 21-12, 21-15 while Kalpana Singh outclassed Pooja Mishra in the 55 years category.

WUSHU

Uttar Pradesh wushu team

bagged two gold, two silver and six bronze medals in the 17th National Junior Wushu Championship held at Tamil Nadu on Saturday.

RESULTS: (Gold) Nitin Chaudhary, Rishabh; (Silver) Sagar Rana, Chavi; (Bronze) Lavish Sharma, Shivani, Sushmita Tripathi, Ajiguddin, Shrishti Goel, Rashmi Gupta.

West Indies seek to end series drought

AFF ■ DHAKA

The West Indies are looking to end their four-year wait for a one-day international series win when they take on hosts Bangladesh starting on Sunday.

Stand-in skipper Rovman Powell said winning the three-match series in Bangladesh would give his side the perfect boost ahead of the World Cup next year, for which they had to qualify after failing to secure one of the eight automatic berths.

"We haven't won an ODI series in a long time," Powell told reporters on Saturday ahead of the first game in Dhaka.

"The guys are upbeat and raring to go. No better opportunity to change it in Bangladesh." "It will be good to get the series win under our belt" before the World Cup, Powell added.

The Caribbean side last won an ODI series in 2014 when they beat Bangladesh 3-0 at home. They have since lost 11 series and drew against minnows Afghanistan last year. The streak includes a 2-1 loss to Bangladesh in July at home and a 3-1 loss to India in October.

Powell, who will be leading the side in the absence of the injured Jason Holder, said the Test

defeats to Bangladesh are in the past.

"We are focused on white-ball cricket. (The) guys are motivated and upbeat and hopefully we can get best possible result," he said.

"Both teams have good spinners, fast bowlers and batters. It will be a very competitive series." Bangladesh have been boosted by the return of batsman Tamim Iqbal and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who both missed the ODI series against Zimbabwe in October because of injury.

Shakib played in the Tests against the West Indies and was named man-of-the-series, while Tamim showcased his abilities with a blistering 107 off 73 balls in Thursday's 51-run warm-up match win over the visitors.

"Obviously having Shakib, Tamim in the team is a big advantage for us," said Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza.

"In the practice game, Tamim played brilliantly which is a great relief for Tamim as well as for us," added Mashrafe, who is set to become the first Bangladeshi to play 200 ODIs on Sunday. The second and third matches of the series will be played on December 11 and 14 in Dhaka and Sylhet.

The West Indies will wrap up the Bangladesh tour with three Twenty20 internationals.



Talktime

SHIBANI KASHYAP

The singer who sung for films like Jack and Dil, speaks with Shalini Saxena about how doing live shows helps her reach out to her fans and why so many artists are taking advantage of the indie space

■ What is keeping you busy these days?

Lots of live shows. I am also judging a show in Dubai, it is called The One. We have already started shooting for the show. We are looking for the most sensational singer from UAE. The only criterion is that the person has to be a resident of UAE. A song from the film *Jack And Dil* released a couple of weeks back. I sang *Bezuban Dil Ki*. I also represented India in the New York India Day Parade. I performed at Madison Avenue. I released a couple of indie songs as well.

■ How did your musical journey begin?

It began when I was still in school. I did a jingle for FM when it launched its services. That's how I started my career —

with jingles and singing for ad commercials. Then my first album was out when I was in college — *Ho Gayi Hai Mohabat*. I went to Mumbai for the auditions and I got selected. That song and the album became a hit and here I am.

■ You are an English graduate end up learning classical music?

Just because you are a singer doesn't mean that you have to be illiterate! Education is a totally different dimension. I am an Indian. My Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi are fantastic. Your talent gets accentuated if you can converse well too. Talent and education should go hand in hand.

■ How does live shows help you?

It helps me to reach out to my fans and better my craft. It is very good practise and helps you to keep a pulse of what the audience wants. I have been performing for over 15 years, so I hope I have mastered the art of performing live. But there is still so much to learn. Connecting with the audience helps me as an artist.

■ Are you still part of the band that

CONTENT IS IMPORTANT. IF YOU STUDY THE CAREER OF SINGERS LIKE KAILASH KHER, HONEY SINGH AND BADSHAH, THEY HAVE HAD BIG HITS IN INDIE SPACE. THEY PROVE THAT GOOD CONTENT NEVER FAILS

you formed in Delhi?

Not anymore. It was a great way to earn some pocket during my college days. It was great fun and a learning experience.

■ What is the best part of being in Mumbai and the worst thing about Delhi?

The best part of Mumbai is that it is safe for women. It has great amenities. You get whatever you want in the middle of the night like medicines or even food. The work-energy here is great; people are so motivated. This helps you keep up your energy. It is such a cosmopolitan city and you meet people from all walks of life and learn different things.

The worst thing about Delhi is the pollution in the city during winters, it is a killer. Then there is the rise in crime. Third, is the increase in the number of cars and the traffic jams as a result of it.

■ Why are so many artists doing indie music today?

When I started my career, indie music space was rocking and flour-

ishing in the 90s. It was a great time for singers like me. At that time I never thought of Bollywood. Also, the voices in the film songs were high pitched and too long — almost six to seven minutes long. Somehow I didn't see myself fit into that scenario. But then Bollywood music evolved in 2000s. I did a few songs which were a hit and I became a part of the industry which I still can't fathom how it works — how to give your next hit. Today, indie space has so more to offer and many more platforms. The only problem is people still want to know what your Bollywood hit is.

■ Does this mean that a Bollywood hit is important for you?

No, not really. Content is important. If you study the career of singers like Kailash Kher, Honey Singh and Badshah, they have had big hits in indie space. They prove that good content never fails. Bollywood will call you when your indie songs do well. One should not run after fame. People from Bollywood call me today because they want to have my style of singing in their films.

WORSHIP DANCE OF YORE

BHANANANDA BARBAYAN, an internationally renowned exponent of Sattriya culture, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA how he is taking a 600-year-old dance from Assam beyond the boundaries by performing the world over

We are all familiar with Bharatnatyam from Tamil Nadu, Kathak from Uttar Pradesh, Kuchipudi from Andhra Pradesh and Odissi from Odisha. But how many of us are aware of yet another dance form that is 600-year-olds and not just surviving but thriving and making waves in India and internationally as well?

Welcome to the world of Sattriya dance (pronounced Hottriya) from Assam and Dr Bhanananda Barbayan an internationally renowned exponent of this dance who has performed in France, Switzerland, Germany, Portugal and Bangladesh. Not only this, but he has also directed the music for eminent French filmmaker Emanuel Petit's documentary titled *Dans Les Drumes De Majuli*, where he appeared in a number of sequences. He is a regular visiting faculty in Paris -VIII University, Kings College London besides being a Cultural Associate with Jawaharlal University Brown University, US and Drexel University, US.

He has been honoured with several awards — La Maison de Ananda Award 2012-13, Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar of Sangeet Natak Academy 2012 and Fellow of Neuron-Somatic Integration Programme.

He was just four when he started learning the art form from Uttar Kamalabari Satra under the guidance of gurus Paramananda Barbayan and Tuniram Barbayan (nritya), Cheniram Barbayan (khol bayan), Kamal Bargayan (gayan), and Baluram Bargayan and Gupiram Bargayan (oja). He was just 17 when he became the youngest Barbayan (one of the 12 cultural heads) of the Satra.

He tells you that the dance was introduced in the 15th century by Sankar Dev, a Vaishnavite saint, scholar, playwright, a social and religious reformer from Assam.

"The drama written by him are known as ankia naat and sattriya dance, at that time, was a part of it. The idea was to use dance as a medium of instructions that were mixed entertainment with devotion," Bhanananda says.

The reason why this dance form, (now recognised as a classical art form by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 2000), spread was because the State has over 900 satras — Vaishnavite monasteries — an initia-

tive by the Ahom Kings in the 17th Century to promote neo-Vaishnavism in the region. As it was a place only for the monks the dance was only performed by the men.

"This dance form is dedicated to Lord Krishna. The dance can be classified into two styles — Paurashik Bhang (tandava or masculine style) and Sri Bhang (lasya or feminine style). It is an art form that is part of a prayer during ceremonies by the monks. It is performed thrice a day — morning, afternoon and evening. But as time passed, this dance is taught as an art form. When we perform on stage, the dance is designed into different parts like Guru vandana, Ram vandana, Geet abhinaya, Varnan, Shlokas (which doesn't involve any dance) and the last is Melana, an elaborate dance form in its purest form," Bhanananda explains and tell you that the influence of Lord Krishna spread due to Sankar Dev who traveled the whole of India.

"It was his influence that spread in the

THE GOOD PART IS THAT THIS DANCE FORM HAS MANY TAKERS. TO BEGIN WITH, NOT MANY WERE INTERESTED IN LEARNING THIS DANCE OUTSIDE OF THE SATRA. BUT NOW IT HAS BECOME POPULAR

region. He was a staunch propagator of Lord Krishna and didn't consider him as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu but that he is the supreme Lord," Bhanananda tells you.

The dance itself has elements of masculinity due to strong Lord Krishna influence and the fact that it was solely performed by men; this included men dressing up as women to perform.

"There is a reason why this dance form is so male-oriented. The satras consider Lord Krishna as the man. It was much later, in 1960s, that women were taught this dance form. Of course, they can't perform inside the satras. They can only perform on stage as an art form," Bhanananda says.

He tells you that the satras allowed woman participation in this dance form because they enjoy a lot of importance in the society.

"When the women started demanding that they too are taught this ageold art form, the satras agreed. The result is that it has brought in the grace and femininity to the dance. There are two types of Vaishnav monks in

the satra; the kewalia bhakat or the celibate monks and then you have monks who can marry. Bhakti is about love for Lord Krishna. Hence, there is no conflict when it comes to teaching women," Bhanananda tells you.

The costumes too are different. Each dance number has a different costume. The men wear dhoti, chaadar and paguri (turban). They wear jewellery too — Mata Moni — around the neck. The women wear ghuri and chaadar. The waist cloth which is worn by both men and women is called kanchi or kingkini.

"Traditionally, the costumes were of white or raw silk colour with the use of red, blue and yellow for specific dance numbers. Earlier, velvet and satin were mostly used for creating elaborate costumes. But times changed and as the dance evolved, so did the design and material for the costumes. Now, muga is used to make the costumes," Bhanananda says.

The good part is that this dance form has many takers. "To begin with, not many were interested in learning this dance outside of the satra. But now that the dance has been recognised as a classical form, the younger generation is more open to learning it. Even though this form is relatively unknown outside of Assam, a lot is being done to promote it via dance festivals that are organised across the country. It is a beautiful dance as it comes with a message — how to develop bhakti, love for others and spirituality," Bhanananda says.



‘Films are crisp, TV is stretched’

NANDISH SINGH, who shot to fame as Veer Singh Bundela in *Uttaran*, is all set to make his Bollywood debut with *Super 30* opposite Hrithik Roshan. SANGEETA YADAV chats him up

■ What is your role in *Super 30*?

It is a real life story of the founders of Super 30 coaching institute which has been helping underprivileged students prepare for IIT JEE. I play Pranav Kumar, Anand Kumar's (Hrithik Roshan) elder brother who has played an integral role in taking care of the management of the institute — from the selection of the students to handling its functioning. He is the backbone of Super 30. This is what has been shown in the film as well.

■ What took you so long to make your Bollywood debut?

Just the right project made me wait for a little longer. There were times when I did get a couple of roles but it was not something I would want to do as my debut film. The films that I wanted to do didn't work out due to something or the other. But now with *Super 30*, the wait has been worth it.

■ What was the biggest challenge for you?

My biggest fear was whether I will be able to pull off the Bihari character. I have never imagined myself playing a person who is not so good looking, speaks Bihari and has a certain body language. I expressed my concern to the creative directors. But I was told that if Hrithik Roshan can pull it off, why can't I? That motivated me to overcome my fear. If it was somebody else in place of Hrithik, who didn't have to transform to come closer to Anand Kumar, then it could have been a bigger challenge for me.

■ How did you get into the skin of the character?

We did workshops where I learnt body language and dialects. I had to lose a lot of weight too. What really helped me was, before shifting to Mumbai, I spent 16-17 years of my life in a small town of Dhaulpur near Agra. I know the nuances of how people from UP and Bihar think, their body language and personality. They are a little loud when it comes to talking and expressing themselves; they are not so sophisticated as well. They would hold the hand of their friends while walking. All these minute details helped me to pull of this character well.

The makers strictly forbade me to take reference from other roles. Whenever I needed help, I would call up Pranav (the real person) and ask him how he would react. That helped a lot.

■ How was it to share screen space with Hrithik Roshan?

Working with him was a great learning experience. As soon as he walks in to the set and till the time he leaves, he lives the character. He was speaking to everyone in Bihari. Whether it is a co-actor, junior artist or assistant directors, he is a friend to everybody. There was no tantrum throwing or airs about him because he is a star.

■ Was it difficult for you to make a switch from TV to films?

Initially, it was. A very common feedback that I have got during in my auditions for films was that that I was acting in TV style. I had to put a lot of effort in unlearning and relearning to be able to reinvent myself. Even for stage actors, there was a misconception that they are always loud but they had to be loud to be able to heard by the audience sitting in the last row. Similarly, there are certain things about TV that you have to do which I had to unlearn to be able to fit in films. That unlearning process was more tedious than the learning which took time.

■ What difference did you find in acting for films?

Acting is the same everywhere, you have to feel the emotion and emot it.

But the treatment is different. Everything is a little stretched in TV because you have to create content on daily basis and it is impossible to shoot 12 to 18 scenes in a day for half an hour episode. There are deadlines to meet. You have to deliver on the spot. In films, you get ample of time to think and work on the character.

■ What are you working on next?

I have started shooting for second film in Lucknow which is tentatively titled *Family of Thakurgunj*.

Bringing the splendour alive

SHALINI SAKSENA tells you how & why Madhya Pradesh Tourism ads have been winning awards at international platforms

Many of us have seen the Madhya Pradesh Tourism ads. Not just the latest — with the staccato pictures of tourists in must-see places in the State but the earlier one as well — with bobble-heads and kids' toys and the not to forget ad back in 2010 that revived the art shadowgraphy.

The idea behind the ads, according to the officials at the tourism department, is not to attract tourists by showing them picture perfect, spectacular images which the eyes will never see in real, but to show tourist destinations that look exactly how it would look in reality and "to create the world's most honest tourism film."

Talking about the latest ad, Azazul Haque, Chief Creative Officer, Ogilvy, South, tells you that in the earlier ads, they had never shown the destinations in their real form ever in any of our previous ads. "We have

either shown shadows or silhouettes through colours, faces and or toys. But then the client wanted to showcase what the places really looked like. An idea was born — to shoot real people at these locations and put them all together. A tall order and the execution was tough as well. The team shot 40,000 pictures in one month. Selecting and stitching together the final 500-600 pictures took close to three months and creating that catchy audio which matched beautifully with the frames took another month," Haque says.

Every frame in the film gives the viewer an experience of a tourist visiting these destinations. "Be it the architectural marvels of Gwalior and Mandu, the picturesque beauty of Pachmarhi and Orchha, the sight of the majestic tiger in the National Parks, the breathtaking views of the Dhuadhar falls or the bustling, delectable tastes and sights of the Sarafa



Bazar in Indore; this film is an honest expression of what one will truly experience in the State," Haque tells you.

This campaign bagged a Silver Lion for its editing and a Bronze Lion for its addictive music at Cannes International Festival of Creativity this year in the highly competitive Film Craft category. Not only, this before the Cannes 2018, but the tourism's toy film has also been internationally awarded a Graphite Pencil at D&AD Awards 2018 in Shoreditch, England.

Deepika Roy Choudhury, Deputy Director (Publicity, Creatives & Digital) tells you that tourism is overwhelmed by the response that audio-visual advertisement (TVC) has generated. "I congratulate the State tourism officials associated with the ad for their wonderful effort and the overall help in producing such a marvel," Choudhury says.

the pioneer agenda



3 Of law and economics

Kaushik Basu has an entertaining variation on Nash's Game Theory to argue that laws must make sense for the enforcers as well as the people



6

Not 'the other Obama'

With an army of fans and one of the biggest book tours in history, Michelle is not 'the other Obama' anymore; she is the Obama people want to see



7

Learning to love

Love can only originate in a heart that is pure and connected with one's soul. We must first learn to care about all beings on Earth

I want to be good at my craft. I don't care about fame. As long as people know what I am as an actress, I'm set for my career right now — *Chloe Moretz*



TO LAHORE, WITH LOVE

I had heard several tales about the love and respect that Lahoris had for Indians, but it was only when I found myself in their presence — perhaps the only Indian to have got the visa after 2015 — did I realise the truth of that claim

If someone had forecasted four years ago that I would celebrate my PhD submission in English Literature at Cambridge with an extraordinary trip to Pakistan, I would have laughed at the strangeness of the idea. But the idea is now a reality, and the trip is done and dusted and firmly imprinted on my mind as one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. In the middle of this year, I was selected to present a paper at a conference on the theme of 'Art, Democracy and Tolerance' organised by the Trust for Heritage,



SIDDHARTH PANDEY

Art and Architecture of Pakistan (THAAP) in the city of Lahore. I was to speak on the politics of aesthetics in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's most controversial film *Padmaavat*, on which I had already articulated some ideas in this

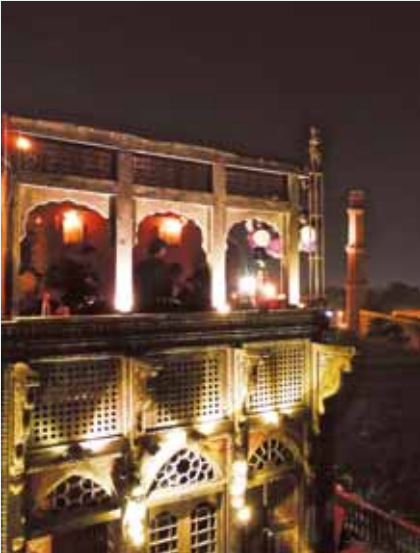
very newspaper way back in April. At the time of my selection, I found myself in a frenzy of writing, since my PhD on British fantasy fiction was just a few months away from the October deadline. Nonetheless, the opportunity from the city of Lahore came with a sense of excitement and wonder, paving way for a dramatic turn of events that would keep me on my toes and eventually usher in a new sense of vitality and being. For as the old Punjabi saying goes: "*Jinhan Lahore nahi waikhaya o jammia hi nahi*" ("One who hasn't seen Lahore has not been born yet").

The notion and process of acquiring a visa for Pakistan as an Indian citizen has developed an incredulous appeal about itself in popular consciousness. More than one person believed that, "Indians were not allowed to travel to Pakistan", a near de-facto utterance that popped up when I told them that I 'might' soon be travelling to our neighbouring country. Other more knowledgeable folks averred: "How would I get the visa"? 'Visa' was mostly what I heard when I mentioned 'Pakistan' to any South Asian around me. Of course, the reason for such reactions was well-known, given the history of relations between the two countries. But it was still somewhat off-putting to experience the negativity inherent in that questioning, even though, on the other hand, I knew equally well that this querying was principally an expression of concern and genuine interest. Just a month before receiving my own invitation in July, media across the world was splashed with reports on India banning several Pakistani origin academics from attending a seminar in the country. I, therefore, had reasons enough to think the same way as my interrogators ("how would I get the visa"), but

I still hoped that it all might just work out. There were five other Indians as well whose names appeared in the preliminary conference list, but unlike me, they would all be travelling from India to Lahore. Since I would be flying from and returning to the UK, some sympathetic souls imagined that I could be especially lucky. And so, luck did dawn, albeit with some additional drama.

On the day I received the visa from one of the private outlets of the Pakistani High Commission in London, I discovered that my passport booklet had got loosened from the spine of the cover, possibly in response to some unsophisticated handling during its checks and scans. At the moment of receiving the document, however, I was too elated by the fact that I had finally, really 'won' a visa after so much paperwork and coordination, which seemed nothing short of a challenging victory, given the countless tales that surrounded its procurement and the mounting pressure of the PhD. The receptionists at the collection centre for their part didn't consider the physical deformation of my passport a big an issue either, when I made them aware of its condition. It was only later that I confirmed from relevant authorities that the passport had indeed been damaged. Annoyance and irritation entered me while another part of myself tried to keep the wildness of my imagination at bay as to 'why' and 'how' had the visa booklet got loosened. After all, I had a doctoral dissertation to submit within a month's time, and that required its own mental energy. Applying for a new 'tatkaal' passport further took its time and expenses, but despite the persistent advice of well-wishers to altogether drop the idea of going, I couldn't quite settle with their proposition, for this still seemed too precious an opportunity to lose. The greatest assurance and decisive factor, however, came from my conference organisers themselves, who not only apologised for all the unnecessary and unforeseen trouble I had to undergo, but also promised to refund me for the new passport in addition to paying for the entirety of the conference travel and accommodation. It is easy to let annoyance and irritation transform into anger, and to let that anger mutate into paranoia (to be honest, such metamorphosis is often subconscious). But here I was, having the choice to forgive the drama of damage and control, and accept the incredible generosity of my hosts, that sowed the seeds of reorienting my perspective. And in retrospect, I am only too glad that better sense prevailed and warmth won over worry.

I like to believe that the beginnings of my musical sensibilities as an amateur pianist lie in Pakistan. More than 25 years ago, my father had bought me a small toy keyboard from his first and only trip to Lahore, that I taught myself to play over the years following the age of five. That was a small 'Casio' model, and



THERE WERE COUNTLESS MOMENTS WHEN I COULDN'T QUITE PINPOINT WHETHER I WAS IN PAKISTAN OR INDIA — IT WAS ALL SO LIKE HOME. MY VISIT DOES FEEL LIKE A REBIRTH OF SORTS. IT'S TRUE: *JINHAN LAHORE NAHI WAIKHAYA O JAMMIA HI NAHI* (ONE WHO HASN'T SEEN LAHORE HAS NOT BEEN BORN YET)

like so many people around me, 'Casio' always (and only) denoted a keyboard and nothing else, although it essentially referred to a full-fledged electronics company. Years later, the association of my neighbouring country with a refined sense of music would only intensify, and there is hardly a day now when I don't listen to one or two numbers from the extraordinary productions of *Coke Studio Pakistan* (as I write this piece, the transcendental compositions of Ustad Farid Ayaz and Ustad Abu Muhammad play in the background for the umpteenth time, whom I first got to know through *Coke Studio*).

In the early days of television, my parents would enthusiastically record musical shows aired from Pakistan via PTV, and I still remember the countless times they viewed those programmes in the grainy, pixelated format that was then the order of the day. But if those shows, along with *Coke Studio* productions, demonstrated a palpably sophisticated and liberating sensibility of music entrenched in Pakistan's cultural ethos, then Shoaib Mansoor's exquisitely crafted 2007 Pakistani drama film, *Khuda Ke Liye* (*In the Name of God*), also showed another facet of the country, where some circles were extremely conservative about the place of music and musical joy in society. It was this duality of dispositions that eventually greeted me as I landed in Lahore within the wee hours of the beginning of November.

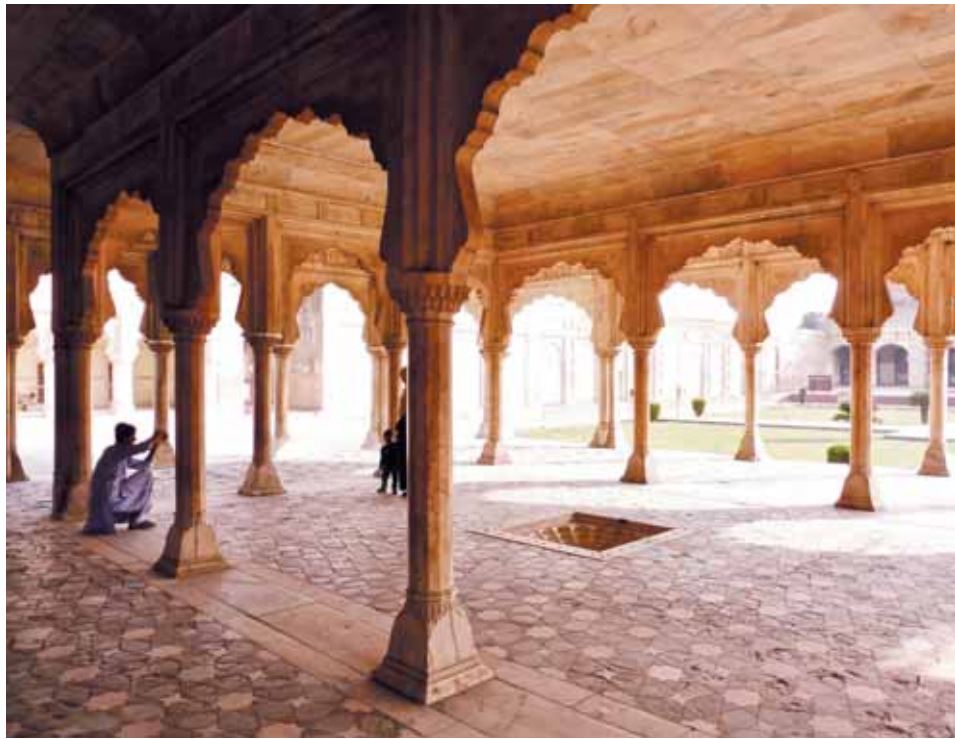
An hour before taking off from Heathrow in London, I learned from the conference organisers about the historic judgment on the Asia Bibi blasphemy case, that had thrown the country in turmoil and forced the cancellation of the conference inauguration on the first day, since the venue lay in a "high risk area". Meanwhile, my accommodation had also been changed, and mobile networks had been completely shut down for two days. I could sense that the drama that had begun with my passport had no plans of abating, and so I entered the country to find it in a storm of anger and violence. Islamist hardliners raged across different parts of Lahore, protesting against the acquittal of the Christian woman over a nine-year-old alleged profanity, and with this, I received a slice of fundamentalism that typically characterises much popular opinion about Pakistan the world over. But after the cancellation of the inauguration, the conference nonetheless began on the second day, and along with it evolved a completely different image of the nation and its citizens, one that was rooted in congeniality, kindness, and a hospitality that simply has no parallel.

As extremists took over the streets outside, not very far from our venue, a motley group of speakers predominantly from Pakistan and handful from other countries (Austria, Australia, Indonesia, and India) discussed a

wide array of ideas and practices under the selected theme of 'art, democracy, and tolerance', in what has to be the most intimate of all conferences I have ever attended. It took some time to adjust to the fact that the event was being held in the beautiful drawing room of my hosts, Professor Pervaiz Vandal and his wife Professor Sajida Haider Vandal, for I was used to the rather impersonal settings that typically define academic assemblages. Not so here. The papers ranged from topics concentrating on the beginnings of liberal and secular thought in both the West and East, to commentaries on Sufi saints, Mughal emperors' secular practices, contemporary conservation strategies in architecture and heritage management, and creative methods of engaging common audiences in developing artistic and democratic consciousness in a variety of contexts. Throughout the event, I couldn't help but think of the irony springing from the imbalance between what we were all collectively engaged in versus what was happening outside. After every two presentations, a sprawling layout of food and beverages greeted us in the leafy backyard of the Vandal home, where I was greeted with a warmth that is hard to define. I learned that I was the only Indian to have got the visa after 2015, even though THAAP (the organisation) had been selecting numerous Indians every year. It was then that I truly realised how lucky I was to be present there. But this sense of good fortune increased many times over once I mingled with the sundry Pakistanis present at the event (which was open to the public), from students to lecturers and other professionals. Before leaving for the conference, I had heard several tales almost bordering on the legendary about the love and respect that Lahoris had for Indians, but it was only when I found myself in their presence did I realise the truth of that claim.

As Pervaiz sa'ab introduced me to the gathering as the sole Indian present (who had managed to get a 'visa', for the word 'visa' was still circulating), a number of people from all ages stood up to welcome me individually, shaking hands and hugging me like a long lost friend now returning home. I heard several other visa-related stories too from this side of the border, even as the Pakistanis expressed heartfelt concern and genuine sympathy for what had transpired with regard to my passport. During lunches and teas, some students conveyed their desire to share food from the same plate as mine as a mark of respect and love, while another, after my presentation, became visibly emotional and offered his watch as a gift of brotherhood in addition to apologising for not having anything "proper" to give me.

A N E X P L O R E R ' S P A R A D I S E



In his 1667 epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, writer John Milton had referred to Lahore as one of the few cities that the archangel Michael showed to Adam before his expulsion from Paradise as a great example of God's future creations: "To show him all Earth's kingdoms and their glory... city of old or modern fame... to Agra and Lahore of great Mogul". While these lines are from a Christian epic, the name of Lahore itself is supposed to have derived from its old name Lava, after the son of Lord Ram, who, according to myth, founded the city. In my week-long travels across this bustling, enchanting place, I took pleasure in observing and capturing this polyphonic identity of the city. From the sprawling stateliness of the Badshahi Masjid to the magical interiors of the Lahore Fort, endlessly detailed with Sikh, Islamic, and Hindu motifs, and from the energy of the Anaarkali Bazaar to the solemnity of Emperor Jahangir's tomb, Lahore had it all



PICS: SIDDHARTH PANDEY

FROM PAGE 1

To Lahore, with love

Then, owing to the theme of my paper, yet another group of students happily approached me to 'guide' them on a film assignment, and I had a rather joyful time holding an impromptu session there and then. While making such connections, every second person intoned his or her sadness regarding the political enmity between the two nations, a visceral emotion that also seemed to erupt as a desire to prove that their country had another side to it that had nothing to do with the largely negative, 'terrorist' image that still floated so freely. At such moments, I was reminded of many similar testimonies from Pakistani youth whose writings I was privileged to examine as a final panel jury member of the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Writing Competition in 2016 and 2017, the world's largest literary contest for school children (incidentally, this year's senior winner from a total of 12,000 young people across 53 countries hails from Lahore). With this enormous profound culture of warmth and bonhomie that never ceased to move me, all my apprehensions regarding my own paper also got dispelled, for I was to argue against the interpretations that rendered Bhansali's *Padmaavat* and the director himself as Islamophobic and misogynist — a position I had already chalked out in a concise form in this newspaper.

This is not to say that there weren't people who disagreed with my analysis, but rather to point out that the setting I found myself in was as liberal and conducive to my ideas as any other. Even though I had read articles earlier this year on how a number of Pakistanis were deeply offended by the filmmaker's portrayals of Islamic culture, my own experiences at the conference proved otherwise, for with its diversity of people, the event demonstrated that there simply was no 'one' Pakistani identity that informed an opinion, and that fresh analytical standpoints always held the power to initiate newer ways of thinking (notwithstanding the disagreements) if provided a safe and peaceful environment (like the conference itself).

I had been drawn to Bhansali's cinema for a long time before *Padmaavat*, not because of its grandiosity but because of its eclecticism that I could trace in every film of his oeuvre. My favourite was and still remains the box-office flop *Saawariya*, and I continue to get enchanted by its marvellous juxtaposition of multi-faith imagery, with Buddhist statues sitting comfortably in the presence of Islamic calligraphy and Christian architecture. It was

precisely this microcosm of inter-religious aesthetic that I experienced when I visited Cooco's Den, one of the most famous restaurants of Lahore that is located in the city's famous Food Street, which I randomly chanced upon with a newly made conference friend Adnan, who was extremely excited to show me around the city and introduce me to other Lahoris. Reaching the restaurant's terrace left me speechless for a while as I soaked in the grandness of the 17th Century Badshahi Mosque sitting majestically at a distance, while the architecture and décor of the eatery itself paid homage to Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism. As we walked through the Food Street, the connections with *Saawariya* became even more apparent as I learned that the area historically served as Lahore's red light district where erstwhile princes and aristocrats would come to learn *tehzeeb* (manners) from courtesans, a point well illustrated in several early Hindi films and then memorialised by Bhansali's venture. Returning to the hotel, I was further thrilled to read the news that the director might be eyeing the Heera Mandi area for his next film, for that was the other name of the place I had visited only a

I EXPERIENCED A MICROCOSM OF INTER-RELIGIOUS AESTHETIC WHEN I VISITED COOCO'S DEN, A FAMOUS RESTAURANT IN LAHORE, WHOSE ARCHITECTURE AND DÉCOR PAY HOMAGE TO BUDDHISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND HINDUISM

few hours earlier. In retrospect, it feels nothing short of magical that I had come to Pakistan to deliver a paper on *Padmaavat* and would leave it having taken a slice of the well illustrated in several early Hindi films and then memorialised by Bhansali's venture. It was in the setting of Cooco's Den that I had a long conversation with Adnan and another friend of his on religious identity. This other friend was a Hindu, who had recently shifted to Lahore from Sindh, and it was

instructive to learn the disturbing stories of discrimination he had been facing in the new city. He told me about the times that he had to hide behind his religion-neutral surname to avert discrimination on the basis of his first, Hindu-sounding name. But after speaking poignantly about his plight, it was equally moving to hear him narrate a number of other stories as well which shed light on some extraordinary moments when his close Muslim friends and teachers had come to his defence in order to combat bigotry from other Muslims. One such friend was sitting in our midst itself (Adnan), patiently and sympathetically listening to his friend's experiences, and his demeanour was a living testimony to the idea of tolerance that we had been debating in the conference. In this short, one-week visit then, I had got the rare opportunity to interact with the minority communities of Pakistan as well, which included the conference driver who was ferrying me back and forth from the event, who had similarly expressed fear as a Christian, particularly in light of the recent judgment's aftermath. But like the Hindu man's bonding with Adnan, this driver too shared a wonderfully convivial relationship with other members

of THAAP, all mostly Muslim, and that friendship again gave me hope and happiness. In the days that followed, it was this practice of friendship that continuously got intensified with all the people I met. After the conference, I shifted to another beautiful location where I was being hosted by my wonderful friends, Sahar and Fazal Khan, whom I had first met in Cambridge three years ago. Like the people at the conference, Sahar and Fazal's hospitality too moved me to tears as they left no stone unturned to make my stay a most comfortable one. It was with them that I 'formally' celebrated my PhD submission dinner, which they grandly organised at the Lahore Gymkhana, as well as the Diwali meal. When Fazal drove me across the lanes of Lahore in his car, just like Adnan had driven me on his bike, there were countless moments when I couldn't quite pinpoint whether I was in Pakistan or India: It was all so like home. Connections continued to mushroom as my walk outside the Lahore Museum brought back the introductory pages from Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* that I had first read in Class V, and the gorgeous murals and stonework at the Lahore Fort and Jahangir's Tomb evoked the fine craftsmanship of the Mughals and Sikhs in India. I was also fortunate to meet Ryan, a young British whom I had known only cursorily in Cambridge, who had decided to devote two years of his

life teaching in a local school here, for he had fallen in love with Lahore when he first visited it. Like him, I too had assimilated myself in the people around me, and by the middle of my week-long stay, I was comfortable doing a gesture that oddly combined *Namaste* with *As-Salaam-Alaikum* ('Peace be unto you'). As I got ready for my farewell in the early hours of November 8, Sahar and Fazal prepared a delicious Diwali dinner, and I happily WhatsApped a photograph of the Badshahi Masjid to my friends and family in the manner of a festival card. After my father had returned from Lahore a quarter of a century ago, he often used to say: "*Unhone humein palkein par hi biha kar nahi rakha, unhone palkein jhap-kaai tak nahi*", something which I find difficult to translate, but which loosely means that "not only did the Lahoris treat us with exquisite care, their treatment also never wavered for a bit". Years later, I can safely say that the saying holds incredibly true, and that my visit does feel like a rebirth of sorts (*Jinhan Lahore nahi waikhaya o jammia hi nahi*). I am privileged to have travelled to the 'Land of the Pure', and in the hope of peace and friendship, here's to Lahore, with love. The writer submitted his PhD in English and Materiality Studies at Cambridge before setting off for Lahore, and will join the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany, as a Research Scholar in Global History during the summer of 2019

LAW AND ECONOMICS MUST MEET

Kaushik Basu puts out an entertaining variation on Nash's Game Theory to argue that laws must make sense for the enforcers as well as the people and must be in agreement with the economic context, writes GAUTAM MUKHERJEE

Kaushik Basu currently teaches Economics and International Studies at Cornell University in the US. He has had an illustrious career, with distinguished stints as chief economist and senior vice president at the World Bank, and later, in this neck of the woods, Basu was chief economic adviser to the Government of India during UPA rule. Basu mostly leans Left in his economic ideas, and is a former student, amongst several others, of Nobel Laureate and "Welfare" economist Amartya Sen — who is also from India and a fellow Bengali too.

This latest, extensively researched book, that quotes many thinkers to illustrate his points, has Kaushik Basu exploring the co-relationship between laws and economics. It tries, to an extent to speak to the ordinary reader, but is, in fact, quite an academic tome. Still, some of its basic premises are readily graspable. Why are some laws both obeyed and enforced, he asks, while others stay quite ineffective on the statute books? In India, he points out, there are, in fact, many laws that are rarely used or enforced. Basu writes, that in order for a law to be properly implemented and used, it must intersect at a "focal point" with society and its economic ideas.

In other words it must make sense both to the enforcers of the law and the people it is intended for. Otherwise, both are likely to collude in its subversion or leaving it on the shelf.

"The most important ingredients of a republic, including its power and might, reside in nothing more than the beliefs and expectations of ordinary people going about their daily lives and quotidian chores. It is in this sense that we are all citizens of



the republic of beliefs," writes Kaushik Basu. He goes on to write: "The focal point is a somewhat mysterious concept that emerged from modern game theory". This concept of intersecting beliefs however, is the main point of this book, and Basu's suggestions towards a more effective socio-legal environment essential for orderly progress, are predicated upon it.

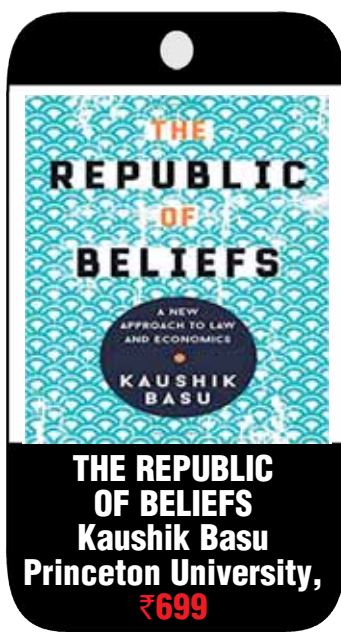
Basu believes one of the purposes of law, which is an instrument of the State as a collective, is

to influence and alter the collective behavior of its people towards preset objectives. In this, he goes beyond the more usual objective of an "orderly society" so that economics can do its stuff in peace. He actually wants to influence the populace via the laws adopted. He writes, "The focal point approach relies on the expressive function or suggestive power of the law and not on any human irrationality. It is purely a device that uses suggestion to facilitate coordination". Basu clarifies

further: "What the focal approach to law and economics does is to take on the full economy game, including the police and the judge, and then tries to explain how and why the law works". In other words, you need all the ingredients to be in some form of tacit agreement on the premises assumed by both the given law, and the economic context it operates in, for it to be widely adopted and used.

But, quite often, "It is not evident what constitutes a focal point

for different groups of people". In a highly diversified country like India this becomes doubly relevant and even more difficult to arrive at. Traditional laws, he says, were less inclusive in their approach, and usually were made up based on the consensus of a few, and then, sometimes imposed, when they were vigorously enforced, upon the many. He states that is why they often did not work, even though his outright demoting of the traditional approach without very



much ado, is less than convincing.

However, for a left-leaning thinker, inclusiveness must appear far more attractive as a basis to build upon, rather than a top-down approach to economic order and law-giving. Even if the latter method goes back to the Hammurabi Code and Moses' Ten Commandments.

Basu is an admirer of the ancient Greek City States, and the way they went about their business. He wants to see the principles enunciated then, spread across a 21st century global canvas to the extent possible. But this tends to be an impossible seduction, as the many self-contradictory effects in Democracy show. The idea is pleasant, but it is not easy to remain democratic in a so-called Democracy!

Focal points can be arrived at via custom, and tradition, writes Basu, as in the "tenacious" Indian caste system. They can also be arrived at by discrimination. That

is, by giving advantages to a specific group over another or several others. But predictably, Basu is not for allowing free play to it with its overtones of apartheid.

He writes: "The popular view is that if you leave it all to the market, with no Government regulations and intervention, discrimination will go away, is not valid. Discrimination arises from a free market. If you want to stop discrimination, you may, in fact, need regulation and conscious affirmative action".

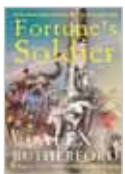
Kaushik Basu is certainly not for rank Capitalism. He writes: "Once we move beyond payoff-focused critiques to generalised ones, many challenges open up. Human beings are guided not just by their own payoffs but also by habit, fairness, altruism, empathy, envy and many other emotional and psychological proclivities... Conservative economists, who condone selfishness by believing Adam Smith's concept of the invisible hand will invariably lead such a society to optimal results, end up creating failed societies".

Is Basu right? That depends on your own politics and economics. But he certainly puts out an entertaining variation on Nash's Game Theory to support his plumping for the old economic concept of the Focal Point.

Is such a thing rather theoretical when it comes to Law and Economics? My view is that it certainly is. And also it is not the job of Law so much as Justice to set Society on the right track. Economics marches to its own drummer. Recent progressive Supreme Court judgements on Homosexuality, Triple Talaq, and women between the ages of 12 and 50 being allowed to go to a revered temple that kept them out for millennia, are all cases in point.

NEW ARRIVALS

FORTUNE'S SOLDIER
Alex Rutherford
Hachette, ₹599



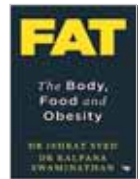
It is 1744, and Nicholas Ballantyne, a young Scotsman dreaming of a life as laird of his ancestral estate finds himself quite on the Winchester, a ship bound for Hindustan, seeking to begin a new life as a 'writer' on the rolls of the British East India Company. On board, he meets the spirited and mercurial Robert Clive, determined — at whatever cost — to make a fortune in a land of opportunity. Over the years that follow, their friendship sees many twists and turns.



THE LONG MARCH
Namita Waikar
Speaking Tiger, ₹223

In Mumbai, 26-year-old Mallika Joshi works with an NGO. While on assignment in Vidarbha, she meets farming families neglected by the Government and suffering under the weight of increasing debts. Moved by the hardships they've faced, and inspired by Vikram's efforts, she becomes an integral part of the movement. Together they embark on a mission to draw attention to the plight of farmers and other underprivileged sections of society, and finally mobilise millions of people to march into the major cities of India.

FAT: THE BODY, FOOD AND OBESITY
Dr Ishrat Syed
and Dr Kalpana Swaminathan
Speaking Tiger, ₹269



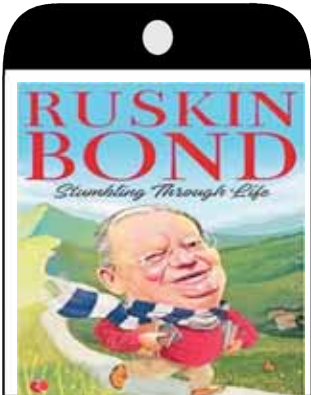
Doctors Ishrat Syed and Kalpana Swaminathan meld the newest research with their own clinical experience to answer these questions and uncover the links between food and our bodies. We discover the magical relationship between the brain and the fat cell; how it enhances our enjoyment of a delicious meal, how it tricks us into choosing the right foods in the right amounts, and how this perfect balance can go haywire. We learn of the ways in which the stresses of our modern lifestyles — especially in urban India — are pushing us into becoming overweight.

In this short book about the small and big decisions he has made in life, Ruskin Bond offers another juicy slice of his anecdotes and observations to the readers, writes UMANG AGGARWAL

Bond-ing over secrets

Ruskin Bond is one of those children's author that most adults still can't resist reading. And if one looks at the author's journey, this reader tendency makes perfect sense. When Bond had first started writing professionally, he had not planned it for children. It was his publishers who thought that Bond's consciously simple style of writing will make his books perfect for the young readers. It reflects rather well on the author, then, that decades down the line, children obviously adore him, and even the grown-ups can't get enough of his short stories and novellas. The reason is probably that even though he consciously keeps his sentences short and his ideas graspable, one still has a lot to cherish and ponder over when reading Bond.

Most of the author's stories are written in first person, whether he is sharing a slice from his own life or taking on the persona of an imagined character. In *Stumbling Through Life*, one of his latest books, he takes the readers through various stages of his own life while sharing humorous, sometimes tragic, and sometimes even spooky incidents with them. The events don't necessarily follow chronology, but they certainly give the readers a better sense about Ruskin Bond, the person. There are parts that make one chuckle and parts that



STUMBLING THROUGH LIFE
Ruskin Bond
Rupa, ₹295

make one laugh out loud, too. By the end of the book, one feels all the more enamoured with the author.

Bond expresses his opinion on a wide range of topics through this book. Selfies, privacy in the modern society, the hill culture, the changing size of books, and the hangover of colonialism are some of them. The book is divided into small chapters, each of them dedicated to one such topic.

The reader finds that the author has a strong sense of attachment to certain 'old fashioned' ways as makes an apology for them. He argues that even though modern day publishing has moved miles ahead, he just can't seem to say goodbye to the writing process that



involves good old handwritten manuscripts. "The power of the pen" seems to become all the more real when one puts pen to paper and creates a draft, he says. Chapters dedicated to such personal opinions are intertwined with intriguing tales about celebrated authors that Bond himself grew up reading. For instance, the readers get a peep into a unique writing experiment

conducted by Mark Twain where he would write a letter to a person and see if the message reaches them even if he doesn't post it. Luckily for Twain, it did!

Making lighthearted observations about the activities of people around him in his trademark style, the author says that the selfie culture is hardly the devil it is being made out to be as long as the

human being clicking it has his/her head on the shoulders. He also comments on the culture of getting other authors to write an introduction for one's book as it has often put him in a spot. His commentary on Landour Bazaar, the importance of postmen in his life, the difficult search for solitude even on the hills, and the childish ways even 70-year-old people tend to adopt just in

order to save a childhood memory — the book is filled with priceless narratives.

Even though its such a short book, Bond has managed to fill selected sections with elements of the gothic. In a chapter titled "The Trouble with Jinns," he dabbles in the genre as he writes about a schoolmate who had the powers of a jinn. He concludes that one is better off appreciating and utilising his/her powers as a regular human being. Hill legends about old lady ghosts are also given a curious twist in the compilation.

The best one out of these is probably the part where Bond is visited by the spirit of Rudyard Kipling, an author he himself admires. The spirit of Kipling then talks about the white man's burden — how he was young and could not help himself while calling imperialism glorious.

Bond takes the readers though a period of dilemma in his personal life when he felt like more of an Indian even when in England, and finally decided to return to the home he felt a stronger sense of belonging with. The author's views on why he celebrates Holi, and how he feels towards his Indian friends and neighbours, how he 'found' a family to call his own, and how every day with them in Landour, which is not far away from his granny's old house in Mussoorie, adds up to just the idyllic journey he had always hoped to "stumble" through, fill the reader with the kind of happiness and peace one experiences while looking at happy, childhood pictures.

"And I enjoy writing. It's not a burdensome task. I may not have anything of earth-shattering significance to convey to the world, but in conveying my sentiments to you, dear reader, and in telling you something about my relationship with people and the natural world, I hope to bring a little pleasure and sunshine into your life," the author writes towards the end of the book. And that's exactly what he does. Needless to say, he does it exceedingly well as always.

Disjunction between human rights and IPR

Many of us have completely overlooked how human rights of the indigenous people, the needy and the poor are violated by giant MNCs in the guise of protecting their prized Intellectual Property Rights



MAKHAN SAINIA

On December 10, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of the UN is completing its 70th anniversary. At this juncture, our planet has seen numerous instances of horrendous violation of the basic human rights of the millions. While looking at these tragedies, many of us have completely overlooked how human rights of the indigenous people, the needy and the poor are violated by giant multinational corporations (MNCs) in the guise of protecting their prized Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).

It has happened mainly in the field of traditional knowledge, health, food and Geographical Indications (GI) in several parts of the developing world. This does not bear the fact that human rights and the IPRs are two antagonistic poles by nature. However, ironically, the two of them have been put in parallel lines by many to serve their vested interests.

The interface between human rights and IPRs draw the attention of the governments, policy makers, civil society organisations (CSOs), and a number of individual activists.

The irony is that these actors advance human rights arguments as counterweights to the massive extension and the enforcement of the global IPR regime from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) through the WTO-TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) of our time in the fields of health, education, freedom of expression, privacy and the rights of indigenous people. Simultaneously, innovators and owners of IP are offering human rights justification for seeking legal protection of their exclusive rights.

But then it is possible to envision the connection between human rights and IPRs as kind of massive expansion of the horizons of both domestic and international legal instruments over the years. In fact, the growth of global institutions and awareness about them has supported the coming of human rights and IPRs to a point of conversion.

Needless to say, initially, the whole journey of IPRs started with discrete bilateral agreements between nations of Europe and



A journalist reads the WIPO's 2018 World Intellectual Property Indicators report during a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva on December 3

mostly restricted to the developed countries. The harbinger of its modern form came along with two trendsetting multilateral treaties which took place by the end of the 19th century: The Paris Convention of Industrial Property (1883) and the Berne Convention of Literary and Artistic Works (1886).

This has literally laid the foundation stone of the international IPR regime much before the onset of the two World Wars which largely affected the conception of the global human rights framework. Only after 65 years of the starting of the Paris Convention, the first UN sponsored human rights declaration saw its beginning. Thus the inception of an international human

rights perspective is of recent origin than IPRs, though concern and struggle for basic rights is as old as human civilisation.

From these humble beginnings, both human rights and IPRs terrain evolved much faster than one could imagine in their geographic scope, substantive reach and in prescriptive detail. Thus, issues multiplied, with the advancement of the information revolution and population, accompanied by an array of actors mostly heralded by globalisation and technology. It is realised that the form and pattern of the juridical boundary, as well as a mature interface between human rights and the IPRs are yet to crystallise.

Now let us see how human

rights and IPRs go together and where they come in conflict. Notwithstanding their long period of separation or non-interaction, there are ample juridical evidences that they converge both on conceptual and practical grounds. And, it is precisely mentioned in the International Bill of Rights. The Article 27 of the UDHR provides: A) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

B) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Besides, Article 25.1 of the UDHR states, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate to the health of himself and his family, including clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services." While offering clear legal backing to these provisions of the UDHR, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 in its Article 12.1 says State parties to the Covenant recognises the "right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".

Today, overall impression is that the global IP regime directly supervised by the WTO and post-TRIPS WIPO truly caters to the

demands of the rights holders than serving common man on the road.

Far beyond this, much controversial TPP (minus America) is increasingly becoming a grave threat to human rights protection in several fields. Even way back in 2016, an independent UN expert on human rights, Dr Alfred de Zayas, warned that the TPP is a serious threat to human rights and no country should sign it. Further he commented that the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), a unique built-in mechanism in the TPP, arbitrations are fundamentally imbalanced and unjust, adding that the historic agreement conflicted with guarantees of human rights and State sovereignty in the UN Charter.

He said, "The last 25 years have delivered numerous examples of abuse of rights by investors and unconscionable arbitral awards that have not only led to violations of human rights, but have engendered a 'regulatory chill' or even a 'regulatory freeze'." In a nutshell, what has come around and making headlines in popular perception today is that business treaties, particularly mega deals like the TRIPS or the TPP, pose harm to basic freedoms and rights such as access to water, food, medicine, education and very seriously to a clean environment. Above all, these trade treats make poverty even worse on this planet.

It is widely argued that the WIPO, the nodal and specialised agency of the UN, needs to walk an extra mile for turning the existing global IPR regime into a more human rights friendly one. Equally the WTO-TRIPS framework is to see that the developing and the least developed nations should not lose their valued resources in the hands of the MNCs of the developed world in the name of research, development and creation of more employment opportunities for locals.

The WIPO and the WTO policy-making and implementation are to ensure that the needy and poor are away from the clutches of the giant corporations while expanding and promoting the new IPR network. Some researchers have already had their opinions that there has been a serious lack of emphasis of basic or human rights in the works and all treaties of the

WIPO. It is believed that a human rights perspective of the WIPO would provide greater accessibility and participation of society. It is interesting to note that there is nothing in the WIPO mandate that prevents the organisation from stressing human rights to a greater extent, the integration of human rights into existing IPR policies and programmes into the future development of the WIPO Development Agenda. This would finally be advancement in building up a human rights framework for the WIPO.

With the Doha Declaration of 2001, the lingering doubts over the jurisprudential grounding or the interface between human rights and the IPRs should have been over. Because this declaration tried to moderate the TRIPS Agreement to be responsive to the development imperative that it alleged to have sidelined or rather ignored. But then since 2001, the emergence of numerous post-TRIPS bilateral and multilateral treaties has further raised the concern of violation of human rights.

At this point, when the entire world is fast moving towards an era of "intellectual capitalism", such an advanced system of social relations is defined not more by social divisions of labour but by social divisions of knowledge.

These divisions are widely reflected in continuous creation of knowledge pools, clusters and networks both at global and local levels which have become irresistible today. What holds the key of this marauding expansionist regime is the centrality of the intangible form of property than the age-old tangible properties such as land and industrial assets. Simply put, it is a phenomenal change and a paradigm shift. At this hour, a sustained guarantee of the protection of our basic human rights while promoting and exploiting the IPRs is to be ensured by the international watchdogs such as the WIPO, the WTO and through an overall supervision of the UN by sticking to the cardinal principles of the UDHR with the assistance of an array of civil rights groups and activists.

(The writer is an expert on International affairs)

PERSPECTIVE

No reason to resume talks with Pak



SATISH KUMAR

There are many reasons to refuse the resumption of dialogue with Pakistan. India has been reiterating talks and terror cannot coexist. This policy has been conceived with clarity based on realism and subsequently pursued with consistency.

Since 2015, India has seen an upsurge in cross-border firing, ceasefire violations along the Line of Control and international border in Jammu & Kashmir. There are clear signs that the Pakistan Army and the ISI are doing everything to destabilise Kashmir.

But in a friendly gesture towards India, the Imran Khan Government in Pakistan opened Kartarpur Sahib Corridor. However, it is not enough to resume the stalled bilateral talks. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had first advocated for the corridor when he took the bus trip to Lahore in 1999. Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the corridor. Pakistan's decision to agree to the Kartarpur Corridor was driven by a desire to emerge out of its current state of isolation and to cash in on the opportunity to radicalise the pilgrims from India. And therefore, a leader of the dead

Khalistan movement was seen with Imran Khan during the inauguration.

After coming to power, Imran said, "My Government is not to be blamed for the existence of terror structures in Pakistan." This looks a blatant lie. His ministers share the public chair with the masterminds of the terror groups. Earlier, he wrote a letter to his counterpart in India, saying, "Pakistan and India have understandably challenging relationships. We, however, owe it to our people, especially the future generation to peacefully resolve all outstanding issues, including the Jammu & Kashmir dispute, to bridge differences and achieve a mutually beneficial outcome."

Pakistan is not seen to be acting against the perpetrators of terror. It has yet not said goodbye to terror as foreign policy. 26/11 Mumbai terror masterminds Hafiz Saeed and Lakhvi roam free in Pakistan and publicly spew venom against India.

It is an open secret that Pakistan is run by its military. Policies are structured by the Army. And most likely, Imran was supported to become Prime Minister so as to act as a rubber stamp of the Army.



Border Security Force personnel carry the mortal remains of Prosenjit Biswas during a wreath-laying ceremony in Jammu on December 7. Biswas was killed and one other soldier was injured in sniper fire from across the Line of Control in the Sunderbani sector of Jammu & Kashmir

Therefore, if Imran is harping on the resumption of bilateral dialogue, in fact it is the Pakistan Army's proxy move.

A key objective for Pakistan in reaching out to India is to unlock trade barriers, which would give Pakistan more access to regional mar-

kets. India sees Imran's outreach as the desire of the Pakistan Army and believes he will present General Bajwa's demands.

The Pakistan Army has realised country's battered economy as a security threat that may aggravate insurgency

situation in the country. The Bajwa Doctrine has linked Pakistani economy to the regional security. In desperation, the Pakistan Army chief approached Indian Army Chief Bipin Rawat, but the overtures proved futile. Perhaps, General Bajwa forgot that India has a

deep-rooted democratic set-up.

Pakistan outreach is also due to the Chinese pressure. Those who know Chinese policy understand it better that Beijing's interests in Pakistan are of paramount interest. For Beijing, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the

lynchpin for all ties with Pakistan. Beijing has prodded Pakistan to stabilise its border with India, hoping for greater stability as it pursues its regional economic ambitions.

Harsh American cut-off in military aid and economic bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are the unstated objectives guiding Pakistan's eagerness for peace.

But why should India take the bait? Pakistan continues to hurt India. Recently Pakistan released 20 special stamps in solidarity with Kashmiri terrorism, which glorify Burhan Wani, the Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist killed by security forces in 2016.

The true face of Imran has been exposed in his first few months in office, said External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar, adding that talks under the circumstances were meaningless. Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists are pressing local policemen of J&K to resign, failing which they are brutally killed. All these are happening at behest of Pakistan.

Dialogue between India and Pakistan has been suspended since 2015 over a series of attacks, especially the terror attack on Army camp in Uri

that left 19 soldiers dead.

The Pakistan Army has emerged as the self-designated custodian of Pakistan's destiny, unity and ideology. It has sustained its grip on power and influence because of the widespread perceptions and propaganda that India is an existential threat.

In 2015 when Modi flew to Lahore and embraced then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, there was a sense that relations will improve. But India was disappointed. The good gestures were rewarded with the Uri attack and intensified insurgencies. The current game plan of Pakistan is two-fold. First, Army doctrine is to open the peace gate through civilian Government and it will run its own game of infiltrations. Second, if talks fail, India will be blamed. Unless the Pakistan Army abandons the use of terror as its security doctrine, resumption of dialogue is not possible. India is now a decisive power, and diktats of external powers do not work any longer.

(The author teaches Political Science and IR at MMH College Ghaziabad. Earlier, he was Head of the Department of Political Science, Central University of Haryana)



BREAST CANCER MEDS FAIL TO INSPIRE TRUST

According to a recent study, only some women who are at higher risk of developing breast cancer think they need to take a drug proven to help prevent the disease. The researchers, led by a team from the University of Leeds, asked more than 400 women at a higher risk of breast cancer whether they thought they needed to take tamoxifen and their concerns about medication. Around 72 per cent said that they were worried about the long-term effects of tamoxifen and 57 per cent believed that the drug would give them unpleasant side-effects. The researchers found that almost 29 per cent of women thought doctors prescribed too many medicines, and more than 35 per cent thought that the doctors would prescribe fewer drugs if they had more time. Around a quarter 24 per cent of them had experienced bad reactions to medicines in the past. In a follow-up questionnaire, answered by 250 women, researchers found that fewer than 15 per cent were taking tamoxifen.

REPURPOSING CANCER DRUGS FOR HPV's

Researchers have identified cancer drugs that might be repurposed to treat infections caused by human papillomaviruses, or HPV's. HPV infections caused an estimated 2,66,000 deaths from cervical cancer worldwide in 2012, according to the World Health Organization. Routine screening by Pap smears or HPV DNA tests has reduced death rates in developed countries compared to less developed regions of the globe. Highly efficacious vaccines against HPV infection exist — including the recently approved Gardasil 9, which immunises against nine genotypes of HPV known to cause cervical, vulvar, vaginal and anal cancers, and genital warts. The vaccine needs to be given before a person becomes sexually active — it has no efficacy against existing HPV infections.

EXCESS LIGHT MAY CAUSE INSOMNIA



Exposure to night-time artificial, outdoor light may increase insomnia risk in older adults, scientists say. The study is the first population-based investigation to show that artificial, outdoor light exposure at night in an area increased prevalence of hypnotic prescriptions and daily dose intake. Also, older adults exposed to higher levels of artificial, outdoor light at night were more likely to use hypnotic drugs for longer periods or higher daily dosages. "This study observed a significant association between the intensity of outdoor, artificial, night-time lighting and the prevalence of insomnia as indicated by hypnotic agent prescriptions for older adults in South Korea," said Kyoung-bok Min, an associate professor at Seoul National University in South Korea. Researchers showed that the inappropriate or excessive use of artificial, outdoor light at night, referred to as "light pollution," has emerged as a novel environmental factor linked to human health.



LEARNING TO LOVE

Love can only originate in a heart that is pure and connected with one's soul. We must first learn to care about all beings, writes SANT RAJINDER SINGH

Once we open the doorway to the soul, we can learn to balance our life in the inner and outer worlds. Exploring our soul while fulfilling our purpose in the outer world is an art that we can master. Spirituality means love in action. It means enjoying our spiritual riches and sharing them with all we meet. We can learn to balance our spiritual practices with our worldly responsibilities, enjoying the fruits within ourselves and sharing our gifts with humanity.

LOOKING INWARD

Looking inward means that we are in a state of inner spiritual bliss. We are conscious of our soul's connectedness with God and all life. We are strengthened by the fearlessness that comes with identifying with our soul. We live in the knowledge that we are immortal. Just as a computer monitor is connected to the hard drive and can receive the data from it, we are plugged into and receive a continuous stream from the source all wisdom, unconditional love, and bliss. We devote specific time to meditation daily, but even when not in meditation, we are in tune with our soul. Throughout the day, as we go about our work, the bliss pours through us, the knowledge is available to us, the fearlessness and strength sustains us, and we are empowered to act on the basis of spiritual values. The stream sustains us from within at all times, enriching every moment of our life. When we are in love with an earthly beloved, the whole world takes on the colour of love. We see things as rosy and blissful. Similarly, when in a state of bliss from within, it colours the world as bliss. We then see ecstasy wherever we look.

LOOKING OUTWARD

While we need to invert to find God, we need not be introverted when dealing with the people around us. Looking outward means that we can also be highly attuned and aware of what is happening in our outer

environment. We can place our attention where we choose. Our awareness of the needs of others, our concentration, our sensitivity, and our compassion grow along with our spiritual development. The more we invert, we become aware of the needs of others. One sign that we have grown spiritually is that we are less self-absorbed and selfish and more humanity-absorbed and selfless. The more attuned we are to the soul within us, the greater our love, compassion, and service for our fellow beings.

When we see the outer world through the eyes of our soul, we see the light of God shining even in plants and animals, and we start to live our lives in such a way as to preserve all living things. As we grow spiritually, we become more receptive to others, including animals and plants. We become more giving and caring when we deal with other people and all forms of life.

LOOKING INWARD/OUTWARD

When we examine the lives of the saints and mystics, we find that they devoted their lives to helping others. They were like the swan that lives in water but flies with dry wings. While all the time they are in tune with the Creator, they still live amongst others, participating fully in life.

The Christian mystic, John Ruysbroeck, has said that "the truly inward man should flow out to all in common." St Catherine of Genoa, born in the 15th century, had a mystical experience in which she was transported to a state of pure and purifying love from God. Her mystical revelation was followed by a life of selfless service to others. She began working to help the sick and the poor. At the age of thirty, she founded the first hospital in the city of Genoa. For the next twenty-two years, she lived in a state of continued consciousness with the divine presence of the Lord filling her with joy, love, and bliss. Yet while she experienced perpetual ecstasy, she continued managing the hospital. She was punctual and efficient in

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her duties at the hospital and never let her spiritual absorption keep her from fulfilling her worldly responsibilities. When a plague swept through Genoa, she formed a group to nurse the victims. Thus, she showed her love for God through love for her fellow beings and all forms of life, including plants and animals. It was said of her: "If an animal were killed or a tree were cut down, she could hardly bear to see them lose the life that God had given them."

In the four stages of ardent love, St Richard of Victor describes the stages of betrothal, marriage, wedlock, and the fruitfulness of the soul. In the betrothal stage, the soul thirsts for God. It has a ruling passion to experience higher reality. The soul is touched by the spirit of God and is bathed in sweetness. This is the stage of the soul's awakening. In the second stage, the soul is burning with desire for God and is taken as the bride of the Lord. The soul ascends, sees the sun of righteousness, and takes the marriage vows to God. In the third stage, the soul has union with the Lord. The soul is in communion with God, is fully concentrated on God, and caught up in the divine Light. In the fourth stage of ardent love, we find the crux of the life of a true mystic: giving of one's spiritual wealth to humanity. The union of the soul with the Lord is not a childless union. The soul takes on the responsibilities, duties, and pains of parenthood to bring forth children. The children here are represented by good and noble works in the world that serve humanity. The empowered souls become centers of spiritual energy and are conscious co-workers of the divine plan. They live out their lives spreading spiritual love to all they meet, inspiring and uplifting others by their example.

We, too, can attain this state. By spending time daily in meditation, we can discover the power of our soul, enriching our lives with wisdom, immortality, love, fearlessness, connectedness, and bliss.

The writer is a spiritual leader



HIDDEN SOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK

Google-isation of knowledge



A very senior retired bureaucrat once requested me to review his book. After going through the book, which was a decent account of the socio-political scenario during the long tenure the author had served in several positions in the State and Central Governments, I came across a factual error. That was the only lapse in the voluminous book. Out of curiosity, I asked him where he got that information from. His answer was that it was from the Google. It would be futile to argue that everything posted on the search engine is wrong. But certainly, everything given there is not right either. And that's what needs to be understood. In today's age of easy access to astronomically large volume of information, authenticity is the first casualty. There is an old saying — little knowledge is dangerous. Well, we now realise that more knowledge has become even more dangerous because what we consider knowledge in common parlance these days is not knowledge in the right sense of the term. It is just information and this information can be both misinformation and disinformation depending on the intention of the post. It is against this backdrop that we need to think about a recent research finding in the UK on internet searches for serious health conditions commissioned by Perkbos Medical. It has been found that the searches on the net for serious health conditions have risen manifold in the last few years. Curiosity is obviously not bad. But what is happening is that access to information is giving a wrong sense of empowerment. In searches for medical conditions, people get to know the ailments, their etiology and symptoms and their treatment also. The problem is that this makes them think that they can substitute the doctor. Many go for self-medication, many buy anxiety in the process and many turn into hypochondriacs. In fact, hypochondriasis is a major problem these days as any one carefully observing outpatient departments in hospital can find out. In India, which is still a developing country where healthcare facilities are still not as streamlined, this tendency creates a fertile ground for quackery. As a result, even sales persons at local pharmacies have the temerity to overrule the doctor's advice. This is not the case with just medicine. In areas other than health, too, such situations have become prevalent. Students in teaching institutions have started considering the internet as substitute for teachers and are not keen to attend classes. In specialised subjects like Psychology where the dividing line between so called common sense and scientific conclusion is thin, this can lead to a lot of confusion. With such easy access to information, everyone considers himself/herself to be a psychologist. So it has become a major problem these days as street level generalists are replacing experts in a big way and this leads to a lot of misplaced assumptions. Francis Bacon opined that knowledge is power, but hardly did he realise that a time will come when information will become knowledge. More so, he could not figure out there will be a social media monster that would change opinions, create opinions and even replace scientific knowledge with whims and fancies. We have, thus, come to a state where Goebbellian hypotheses is pushing truth to the back seat. It is no longer about repeating a lie often. It is just about posting a lie on the net and the rest will follow.

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GOD'S SPECIAL QUALITIES

God has not made us omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient like Him, so that we can hold our heads on our shoulders, do our bit, and simply ask for His help whenever we are stuck, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

As well in the virtual sense with the help of scientific gadgets like cell phones. These days, people hold video conferences with the participants being present at different places. Additionally, we can travel to far off places with our minds; we can imagine ourselves to be somewhere else or at any place we choose to be.

As regards power, God has allowed us the choice of gaining more power than what is inherent in us with the help of other people by becoming their leaders. This way, we can pool individual powers under our control. There is another way. One can do severe austerities, please divine authorities and gain material *siddhis* or weapons. Persons like Arjuna had obtained divine weapons, which were very potent. Individual power is a sum total of physical, mental and intellectual powers.

Now coming to knowledge, one can gather as much knowledge as time permits. But time is the biggest constraint in this. Our brains are created for much more than



what we can imagine. It is said that the best of us use a maximum of 10% of our brains' capacities. This is also very rare. God has been very generous in this regard.

Therefore, we can see that the cosmic design is well suited for us human beings to

be able to exist well. Yes, there are many limitations which have been pointed out earlier but they can also be overcome if we follow the guidelines of our scriptures. The first way in to seek guidance from God whenever we are confused about anything.

God is willing to guide as Lord Krishna has pointed out at several places in the *Gita*. The second way is to be willing to do our duties as guided by God. Here again, God has offered to help if we are aligned with Him, ie we have become God conscious. Rather, God promises to help out in all situations which are challenging to our resources. Similarly, we can achieve almost anything like harnessing natural energy for common good by coming together.

Yes, we are incomplete without God, but God is ever willing to help. An objection may be raised about the requirement of us surrendering to God. God will never force us to do that. We will only deprive ourselves of what is available, ie God's help, if we choose not to surrender. Suppose a person decides not to use his eyes to see; can we blame God for that? There is no doubt that we are incomplete in ourselves, but are we really in the larger sense?

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