

OPINION 8
A MISSED
OPPORTUNITY**AVENUES 10**
H1B VISA FOR
STUDENTS**WORLD 13**
PRESIDENT XI TELLS WORLD:
DON'T DICTATE TO CHINA

LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 19, 2018; PAGES 16 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

MANCHESTER
UNITED SACK
MOURINHO
15 SPORT

Will trim GST for masses: PM

Working on to bring 99% items in sub-18% slab, says Modi

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has indicated that the Government is contemplating to bring 99 per cent of goods at or under the 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) slab, while restricting the remaining one per cent of luxury items, like aircraft, expensive vehicles, liquor and cigarettes, to a GST slab above 18 per cent.

"I would like to tell you one important thing that we are heading towards a situation wherein we intend to bring 99 per cent of goods at or below the 18 per cent GST slab. We intend to restrict the remaining one per cent of luxury items like the purchase of aircraft, expensive vehicles, liquor and cigarettes to above 18 per cent. Our intention is to make GST as simple as possible. I have already made this suggestion for placement before the next GST Council meeting," Modi said while addressing the Republic TV summit in Mumbai on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister said the GST system has more or less been established in the country and his Government is committed to make the GST conducive to the needs of the common man.

"In 2014, 65 lakh entrepreneurs had registered themselves for the payment of taxes. However, ever since the introduction of GST, 55 lakh more entrepreneurs have come under the taxation net," said the Prime Minister.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a gathering at the foundation stone laying ceremony of Metro Phase III via remote in Pune on Tuesday

Alluding to the economic progress made by the country on various fronts, Modi said there was only two mobile manufacturing companies in the country in 2014, the number has now crossed 120 companies.

Citing another example of "Surging India", the Prime Minister said as many as 450 aircraft were operational in the country since Independence, but airline companies placed orders for pur-

chase of a staggering 1,000 aircraft during the last one year itself

Modi said auto-rickshaw drivers, vegetable vendors and tea sellers currently use BHIM App and carry debit cards in their pockets. "The country has already tested a Made-in-India engine-less train running at 180 kmph, while the National Waterways has become a reality with a ship sailing on the Ganga from Bengal to Benares," Modi said.

"Could anyone think four years ago that India would launch 100 satellites at one go? We are moving ahead with the Gaganyaan Mission. The Gaganyaan Mission of ISRO is intended to take an Indian astronaut into space by 2022," he said.

On the steps taken by his Government to bring economic offenders, both based within the country and abroad, to justice, Modi made a special mention of the Insolvency &

Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018, and said the new legislations are helping prosecute those who had escaped the clutches of law. He said the economic fugitives and bank loan defaulters would not be spared.

"Our national interest now guides India's foreign policy. India's voice is being heard at international forums," he said.

During the course of his day-long visit to Maharashtra, the Prime Minister laid foundation stone for upcoming first-ever Metro Corridors in Thane district, launched a housing scheme of 90,000 homes and also performed "bhoomi puja" for Pune Metro Rail Phase-3.

After performing ground-breaking ceremony for two metro rail corridors at Kalyan in the neighbouring Thane district, the Prime Minister said by 2024 Mumbai would have 275-km long metro line.

Later, while laying the foundation stone for the ₹8,000-crore Pune Metro-III corridor, Modi said during the past four-and-half years, the Government had constantly laid stress on infrastructure, speed of connectivity through highways, railways, airways, waterways.

"No one in the country, whether in villages or cities, wants to remain insulated from the 'development highway' which drives the Government to focus on developing and expanding the infrastructure network in the country," he said.

Continued on Page 7

Won't let Modi sleep till farm loan waived: Rahul

BJP terms Cong chief's remarks lowest in nation's public discourse

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Buoyed by the just concluded electoral success, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday vowed to fight for the interest of farmers and said he and other Opposition leaders will not let Prime Minister Narendra Modi sleep until all farm loans are waived, prompting the ruling BJP to describe the Congress president's remarks as lowest in the country's public discourse.

Speaking on the Parliament premises, Rahul also raised the issue of alleged corruption in the Rafale fighter jet deal and accused the BJP of running away from a debate in Parliament. "We will force a JPC on the Rafale issue. Why are they running away from a debate in Parliament," he said.

Rahul said the Government has turned a blind eye to the loans given to 15 top industrialists of the country, including Reliance's Anil Ambani, but made no effort to alleviate the woes of the farmers in the last four years.

"We promised to waive loans in 10 days. In two States (Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh), we did it within six hours and we would do it in the third State very soon,"



Congress president Rahul Gandhi addresses the media during the Winter Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday

Rahul said talking to the media outside Parliament. He was referring to the Congress' promises made ahead of the Assembly polls and waiving loans on Monday.

Reacting to the Gandhi scion's onslaught on Modi, the BJP said nothing better can be expected from Rahul, whose party ensured that Indians did not sleep during its 60 years of rule due to rampant corrup-

tion. Hitting out at Rahul, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said he should come to Parliament and debate the Rafale issue there.

"Friends I am given to understand that Rahul Gandhi today said that he will not allow Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sleep. This is a new low in the public discourse of the country," Prasad said.

Continued on Page 7

BJP writes off ₹600 cr debt in Assam, ₹650 cr Gujarat rural power bill

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

After farm loan waiver announced by newly-elected Congress Governments in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the BJP-led Governments of Assam and Gujarat too have decided to write off farm loans and electricity bills of rural users respectively.

The BJP-led Government in Gujarat announced it will waive electricity bills of connection holders in rural areas to the tune of ₹650 crore.

The Assam Government approved ₹600-crore farm loan waiver which it said will benefit around eight lakh farmers of the State. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting held on Monday night.

According to the Assam Government scheme, it will write off 25 per cent loan of farmers up to a maximum of ₹25,000, State Government spokesperson and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said. The waiver will be for all the loans taken through Kisan

Credit Card (KCC) and from PSU banks, he said.

The MP Government had declared to waive individual loan of up to ₹2 lakh taken by farmers.

The Assam Government has also sanctioned an interest relief scheme which will enable around 19 lakh farmers to take loans at zero interest from the next financial year, said the Assam Parliamentary Affairs Minister.

"The debt relief scheme for farmers will waive 25 per cent of all loans taken till now. The benefit will be up to a maximum of ₹25,000. This scheme will immediately benefit around eight lakh farmers," he said.

Due to these schemes there will be an additional burden of ₹600 crore on the State exchequer this fiscal. "For the next fiscal, we will have to do budgetary provision for the schemes," Patowary said.

The Cabinet also approved subsidy up to ₹10,000 to incentivise farmers if they take loan from KCC.

Continued on Page 7



Yogi, AKY flay Kamal Nath for 'outsider' remarks

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Birla demanded an apology from Congress president Rahul Gandhi for the statement of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, terming migrants from UP and Bihar as 'outsiders'.

"The MP Chief Minister's statement is unfortunate and represents the divisive and subversive mindset of the Congress for which the party chief Rahul Gandhi must apologise to the nation," tweeted Yogi on Tuesday.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav voiced serious disagreement with MP Chief Minister for blaming 'outsiders' for grabbing jobs.

"MP Chief Minister Kamal Nath is following the path of regional parties Maharashtra and this is unacceptable. We are used to rants from Maharashtra where Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena often target migrants from UP and Bihar," said Akhilesh in Lucknow on Tuesday. Akhilesh said: "It's unfair on the part of the MP Chief Minister Kamal Nath to target people from UP and Bihar as voters of these two states decide the composition of government at the Centre every five years."

3 Asiatic lions mowed down by train in Guj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Almost two months after 23 Asiatic lions died in Gujarat's Gir forest following an outbreak of canine distemper virus (CDV), the State lost three more big cats on Monday midnight when they were mowed down by a goods train in Amreli district. Since September, the country has lost 35 lions, including cubs in and around the Gir forest, the only abode of the endangered predators.

The rail incident occurred near Borala village in Savarkunda taluka when a pride of six lions was walking along the railway track passing from the village, which is located near the Gir Forest. The ani-

mals were sub-adults in the age group of 1.5-2 years.

"A goods train, headed to Pipavav port from Botad, hit three of six lions of the pride during midnight, which led to the death of two lions and a lioness," said Chief Conservator of Forests, Junagadh wildlife circle, DT Vasavada. He said an enquiry has been ordered by the Gujarat Forest Department.

"We will enquire if the train was moving at a high speed which could have led to this unfortunate incident. We will also probe whether the forest staff or the lion trackers were at fault in discharging their duties. Stringent action will be taken against the guilty," he added.

Continued on Page 7



Cable TV to cost you more from Dec 29

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Cable TV consumers will have to shell out more from December 29. As per new directives of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, a consumer will have to pay to choose individual channels, which they want to see. Consumer will need to pay individually for each channel. In other word, current package of cable TV consumers will go ineffective from December 29 and they will have to renew their package under the new tariff regime.

According to cable operators, under the new tariff regime, a cable TV consumer's monthly bill will go up to ₹400 or ₹450 per month. If he or she is opting for premium bouquets, the bill will be over ₹600-700 per month.

Presently, there are 30 crore households in the country. Nearly 19 crore households have TV connections. It is estimated that at least 10 crore have connections provided through cable TV network.

Currently, consumers pay a monthly bill of ₹250-350 for a cable TV connection, which includes sports and regional channels depending on the



❖ Consumers of cable TV will have to renew their package under the new tariff regime from December 29

❖ Under the new tariff regime, a cable TV consumer's monthly bill will go up to ₹400 or ₹450 per month. If he or she is opting for premium bouquets, the bill will be over ₹600-700 per month

❖ Presently, there are as many as 30 crore households in the country. Of them, nearly 10 crore households have cable TV connections

localities.

As per the new tariff structure, a consumer will have to pay up to ₹130 (plus taxes) for first set of 100 channels, which will be mostly free-to-air (FTA) channels. As of now, Multiple System Operators or MSOs offer you a bundled package of channels. The MSOs such as Tata Sky or DishTV, Airtel, Hathway, SITI, DIGI Cable (INDIA), INDUSIND, DEN, DDC network choose random channels into a package, and offer it to consumers.

According to cable TV operators, all the broadcasters have also come up with their own MRP of their channels.

The first type of category is "free & cheap" channel package or "basic pack" which will be priced at around ₹150-200 by most cable players. This "basic pack" will be made out of "free" channels like B4U, Dabang and PTC, supplemented by the "1-rupee-channels" from big broadcasters like Star, Zee and Sony.

Continued on Page 7

Guilty Sajjan quits party to give Cong clean chit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress veteran Sajjan Kumar on Tuesday resigned from the primary membership of the party citing his conviction in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case. In a letter to Congress president Rahul Gandhi, the former Member of Parliament said his resignation should be accepted with immediate effect, AICC sources said.

"I tender my resignation with immediate effect from the primary membership of the Indian National Congress in the wake of the judgment of the honourable High Court of Delhi against me," Kumar said in the letter to Rahul on



Monday.

The Delhi High Court on Monday sentenced Kumar to imprisonment for life, the first conviction of a politician in the anti-Sikh riots in 1984 in which more than 2,700 people were killed.

Continued on Page 7

Winged guests take rain check on India invite

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

At time when the presence of birds is considered a sign of wildlife opulence for any nation, the northern States of India are awaiting the arrival of migratory birds into their habitat. Ornithologists working on birds' navigation have found that since 2017 the arrival of winged guests into the Indian territory has been delayed by at least three months.

The delay in arrival of migratory birds has been ascribed to climate change, claimed ornithologists of Delhi University.

This means that due to relatively more conducive weather climate patterns in Russia and other cold countries,



migratory birds preferred to stay put in the homeland between August and November.

"It is pivotal to understand the behaviour and overseas journeys of the birds. Their early arrival is always a good sign because they play crucial role in the balance of ecology and in large perspective the economy," an ornithologist said, adding, "The pattern has changed significantly. Earlier they arrived in August or maximum by September. However, this year is different."

Sharing more interesting facts about the migration route to breeding areas, a Delhi University Professor said the migration route is extended from Narurzum wetlands in

northern Kazakhstan, before diverging southwest to the Caspian Sea and southeast to India on journeys that navigate seven nations. "The migration route of these birds takes them over Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and then to the Gangetic basin of northern India; much of the journey is hazardous and through difficult terrains," the ornithologist explained.

However, he added a large number of birds have diverted to Rajasthan.

When asked about the reason, he said good amount of rains in northwestern region is pivotal factor in diverting migratory birds.

Continued on Page 7

State govt to give jobs a push in traditional sector

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

With an aim to generate employment in the traditional sector, the state government has launched Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana under which youths will be imparted training in traditional work like carpentry, tailoring, black smith, gold smith, pottery work and even running sweetmeat shops.

The proposal says that through this project handicraft and self-employment schemes will be promoted so that people can easily earn their livelihood.

The decision was taken in the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday.

The government spokesman said that interested people would be imparted six-day free of cost training in the

vocation of their choice. The training will be held at tehsil or district headquarters. During the training period, the trainee will get honorarium from the Labour department. "After the training, youths will be given tools and certificates," the spokesman said.

In another decision, the government has decided to opt for one-time stamp duty for policy bonds issued by LIC. Till now, insurance stamp was used and LIC had requested the state government to opt for one-time stamp duty.

"The government has accepted this proposal. It is believed that after this decision, there will be increase in government revenue as incidents of fake registration will be minimised," the spokesman said.

The government has pro-

posed to change the name of Allahabad Nagar Nigam to Prayagraj Nagar Nigam after the government had changed name of Allahabad to Prayagraj.

The Cabinet has also approved the proposal of Health department to select operators for the second tier of 108 emergency medical transport service. The spokesman said that under this scheme the government proposed to operate a fleet of 2200 ambulances by next five years. As this will be telecom-based service so request for proposal for east and west clusters is proposed.

"To make this service effective there is need to increase manpower as well as improve technical efficiency. There is a proposal that one person should operate 10 ambulances so that the response is good. Investors

willing to invest in the eastern sector should pay bid security of ₹2,29,00,000 while for western cluster it will be ₹1,14,00,000," the spokesman said. The government has also made changes in collection of mining byproducts. Licence will be given for three years.

In another decision, the Cabinet has proposed to table UP Water and Sewer Management (amendment) Act on the floor of the House. A sewage proposal for Jaunpur has also been approved. The estimated cost of the project will be ₹2,647 crore.

The government has also decided to provide houses to poor under Asra scheme without any lottery system. Those people will be entitled for such houses who have not got house under any scheme, the spokesman said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified bikers sent shock waves in Agra when they torched a 14-year-old girl for opposing their molestation bid in front of her house on Tuesday. The victim was later rushed to Agra Medical College with 80 per cent burns.

Harendra of Lalau hamlet of Malpura (Agra) complained that his daughter Anjali (14) is a student of class X at AP Inter College in Naumel area. He said that on Monday afternoon, when she was returning home from school, two bikers, wearing helmets, started teasing her. When she resisted, the miscreants stopped the girl before her house. Before the victim could sense foul play, they doused her with kerosene and set her afire.

After executing their sinister design, the miscreants sped off from the crime scene, while locals rushed in to save the victim.

Later SP (Rural), along

with Circle Officer of Achnera, rushed to the spot and shifted the victim to Agra Medical College where the doctors said that her condition was critical.

Meanwhile, in Lakhimpur Kheri, the bodies of two teenaged lovers, whose families objected to their liaison, were found hanging from a tree on Tuesday morning.

As per reports, Mahaveer Maurya (24) of Rahtara in Lakhimpur Kheri was in love with his neighbour Aarti (21). Their link-up, however, riled their families as they belonged to different castes.

On Monday evening, the young couple eloped from their houses and while their families launched a hunt, they finally found their bodies hanging from a tree outside the village the next morning. Their bodies were sent for autopsy and investigations were on.

Meanwhile, in Ghazipur, four youths were buried alive when a wall collapsed at Alipur village of Jangipur police sta-



Samajwadi Party members taking out a padyatra from 1090 Crossing on Tuesday

Pioneer

3 held in Bulandshahr cow slaughter case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Three miscreants involved in the alleged cow slaughter case in Bulandshahr were arrested by a police team on Tuesday. Those arrested were identified as Nadeem, Rahis and Kala, all of Syana police station area of Bulandshahr. The police said a team, led by SP, City, Atul Kumar Srivastava, got a tip-off about miscreants involved in the cow slaughtering case in Mahav village under Syana police station area on December 2 and 3 night. "A team laid a trap and nabbed the miscreants who were in a Gypsy near Pashu Paith market

in the locality," the police said.

The police said the miscreants were arrested on Tuesday morning. "A double barrel gun, a machete and a sharp-edged weapon were recovered from them," the police said, adding that one of their aides, identified as Harun of Syana locality, escaped arrest.

The miscreants owned up their crime and disclosed that they had killed a cow in a forest cover in Syana police station area on December 1 night. They disclosed that Harun had gun down the cow and later their distributed the meat among them before throwing the carcass in a sugarcane field.

The miscreants further disclosed that they had gunned down three cows on December 2 and December 3 night and had thrown the carcasses and some meat in a field before distributing the meat among them. They admitted that they had taken the hides of slaughtered cows with them.

The carcasses and meat were recovered from a field in Mahav village and that led to people of a community to take to the street in protest against the incident. While controlling the situation, inspector Subodh Kumar Singh had fallen victim to the bullet of some of the protesters.

UP Houses adjourn after condolence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly was adjourned on the first day of the winter session on Tuesday after condoling the deaths of former Chief Minister ND Tiwari and BJP legislator from Lakhimpur Kheri Patel Ram Kumar Verma.

The Legislative Council was adjourned for the day too after condoling the deaths of Tiwari and Union minister Ananth Kumar.

As soon as the Assembly met in the morning, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath read condolence messages. Leaders of the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Congress and other parties also mourned the deaths. After observing a two-minute silence, the House was adjourned for the day by Speaker Hriday Narayan Dixit.

Tiwari (93) died after a prolonged illness in New Delhi on October 18. The veteran leader had served as CM of UP four times, Union minister in several Congress governments and also as Andhra Pradesh Governor. He had also served as Uttarakhnd Chief Minister.

BJP legislator from Nighasan constituency of Lakhimpur Kheri Patel Ram Kumar Verma (64) died due to ailments at a hospital in Lucknow on September 30. He served as PWD Minister in the Kalyan Singh-led BJP gov-



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other MLAs mourning the death of former CM Narain Dutt Tewari at UP Assembly session on Tuesday

Pioneer

ernment in 1991 and also as Cooperative Minister in 1997.

As soon as the Council met

for the day, chairperson Ramesh Yadav read out condolence messages and members observed a two-minute silence. Senior BJP leader Ananth Kumar died at a hospital in Bengaluru last month at the age of 59.

Deputy CM Dinesh Sharma, Leader of Opposition in Council Ahmed Hasan and leaders of other parties recalled Tiwari's contribution in the development of UP.

Before the Upper House met, leaders of the Samajwadi Party protested near the statue

of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh in Vidhan Bhawan complex, demanding the arrest of the prime accused in Bulandshahr violence. "Law-and-order situation in the state is very bad. The government is yet to arrest the prime accused in the murder of inspector during Bulandshahr violence," SP leader Hasan told mediapersons. Hasan said that the government had announced that a CBI probe would be conducted in the Deoria shelter home case in August, but no action was taken till date.

Congress lawmakers said issues like Bulandshahr vio-

lence, alleged delay in payment of cane arrears and 'corruption' in recruitment drive would be raised by the Opposition during the session.

At an all-party meet on Monday, Yogi had appealed to Opposition parties for the smooth conduct of the House.

On the second day of the session on Wednesday, Finance Minister Rajesh Agarwal will table the supplementary budget of about Rs 11,000 crore after the Question Hour. The winter session of the legislature will conclude on December 21 with the approval of supplementary budget on Thursday.

Miffed PPS Assn members may skip Police Week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Members of Provincial Police Services (PPS) Association are up in arms against seniors and the government and are planning to distance themselves from the coming Police Week functions. The PPS officers are upset as they feel that not only their demands not being addressed, but senior officers avoid to give them audience and listen to their grievances.

Recently, PPS Association chief Ajay Mishra, who could not make it to the IPS cadre due to unnecessary delay in promotion, had resigned from the post, citing personal reasons.

Sources said that office-bearers and members of PPS Association chalked out an agenda to raise their voices in the coming Police Week.

Members said that during the programme of the Association during the last Police Week, the state government and the DGP promised them of addressing their problems which were put up before them. However, nothing was done in this regard and hence

RECENTLY, PPS ASSOCIATION CHIEF AJAY MISHRA, WHO COULD NOT MAKE IT TO THE IPS CADRE DUE TO UNNECESSARY DELAY IN PROMOTION, HAD RESIGNED FROM THE POST

it would be prudent to stay away from such programmes. The officers pointed out that all others, except for PPS cadre members, were getting timely promotion but their demands were ignored over the years. They claimed that 2006 batch constables had been promoted as head constable, 2005 batch sub-inspectors had become inspectors, 2005 IPS officers had become DIGs, 2005 batch PCS officers had been promoted as ADMs but 2001 batch PPS officers were still working as Deputy SP, a post on which they had joined the service.

The Association has hence decided to boycott the coming Police Week to highlight the step-motherly treatment being meted out to them.

BJP counters SP's charge

Lucknow (PNS): Countering charges of being anti-farmer, Cane Development Minister Suresh Rana blamed the previous Samajwadi Party regime for doing nothing for farmers' welfare, particularly cane farmers and accused the party of spreading canards against the government.

"The people raising farmers' issues should see what they did for them while in power. The allegation of the Samajwadi Party leaders is like pot calling the kettle black," Rana told mediapersons in the state BJP

headquarters in Lucknow on Tuesday.

Rana's reaction came after Samajwadi Party lawmakers protested on Vidhan Bhawan campus blaming the Yogi government for the agrarian crisis. The lawmakers staged a dharna before the winter session sporting garland of potatoes and onions. The minister said that the Opposition was spreading lies in the name of farmers. "They know well that this government has done commendable work in the farm sector," he added.

tion area on Tuesday. The youths were sitting on the wall in the morning when it suddenly collapsed and the youths were buried under its debris. The deceased were identified

as Akshay (22), Umesh (30), Ramesh (20) and Dharmendra (19) while another youth Guddu (17) suffered injuries. The bodies were sent for autopsy.

Information Technology Development Agency (I.T.D.A.)
(Department of IT, Government of Uttarakhand)
IT Bhawan, Plot No. IT-07, IT Park, Sahashradhara Road, Dehradun - 248001
Ph: 0135-2608330, email: dritda-uk@nic.in

e-Tender
Tender Notice No: 09/ITDA-346(Trans)/2018 dated 18/12/2018
Notice of Invitation for e-Tender
RFP (Request for Proposal) is being issued by ITDA, Department of IT, Uttarakhand to the reputed IT companies meeting the qualification criteria, for Selection of System Integrator For establishing Horizontal Connectivity- Transport Department, Govt. of Uttarakhand. The RFP document can be downloaded from www.uktenders.gov.in from 19/12/2018 The tender document fee of Rs 5000/- (Rupees Five Thousand Only) through demand draft/Banker's Cheque -non refundable) in favouring of 'Director, ITDA' payable at Dehradun should be submitted along with the Bid. The parties willing to participate in the bidding will have to apply through the Electronic Tendering Procedure (e-Tendering) as per the guidelines issued by Government of Uttarakhand available on the above mentioned web site under the link 'Bidders Manual Kit'. The Director ITDA reserves the rights to cancel the tender at any point of time without assigning any reason thereof.
RO. 1134 Dated 18.12.2018 **DIRECTOR**

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM
TENDER NOTICE NO. PCMM/EP/2018-19/5 dt. 17.12.2018
"SUPPLIERS ARE REQUESTED TO VISIT WEBSITE www.ireps.gov.in ON WHICH TENDERS ISSUED BY PCMM OFFICE, STORES DEPOT, Sr. DMMS OF NER DIVISION AND DY.CMM/CON/BG OFFICE ARE PUBLISHED AND TENDER DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE. THE SITE ALSO PERMITS FOR SUBMITTING THE OFFER ONLINE"
CPRO/S-17 PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIAL MANAGER, GORAKHPUR
About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 99794845955
" Do not cross unmanned level crossing using mobile phone."

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Guru Hargobind Thermal Plant, Lehra Mohabbat
Regd. Office: PSPCL Head Office: The Mall, Patiala-147004.
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in Phone: 0164-2756347
Fax No. 0164-2756255 E-Mail: se-hq-op-lehra@pspcl.in
GSTIN 03AAFCPS120Q1ZC

Tender Enquiry No. 1117/O&M/PC-2057 Dated: 11-12-2018
Short Description:- Hard Steel Plate 6mm Sall/ Tiscral or equipment.
Quantity = 15 MT
Last date & time of downloading of document 21-01-2019 & 3.00 PM
Last date & time of receipt / opening of e-tenders 25-01-2019 and up to 11.30 AM/ at 12.00 Noon. Tender Specification can only be download from PSPCL website <https://pspcl.abcpocure.com> and hard copy of the same will be issued by the offices.
Note:- The prospective bidders are requested to get clarification from this office and/ or M/s e-procurement Technologies Ltd. Contact number +91-(79)- 40016866/40/38/18/21 in case of any difficulty regarding upload of the tender well in time. It is also requested to get their digital signature well in time so as to submit tenders through e-tendering only.
Note: It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason no corrigendum will be published in news papers. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on official PSPCL website www.pspcl.in
Note: The Mobile No. of intending Officer: 96461-17733
GHTP-59/18
DPR/18DEC18/C-3649 Dt. 18-12-2018
Dy. Chief Engineer/ HQ,
For Chief Engineer/ O&M,
GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD
Office of The Principal Chief Materials
Manager / North Central Railway, Allahabad
No.: S/T& B/713 Dated: 14.12.2018
E-Procurement Tender Notice No.: 18/63 Dated: 14.12.2018
The complete details of the **Stores tenders** issued from the office of **Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway / Allahabad** are uploaded on **IREPS portal (www.ireps.gov.in)**. E-tender notices for Stores tenders will not be published in the newspapers by the office of **Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway / Allahabad** any more. Firms desirous to participate in the tenders of this office may visit **IREPS portal (www.ireps.gov.in)** regularly after registering themselves on IREPS portal and submit their e-bids on this portal only.
Principal Chief Materials Manager
North Central Railway, Allahabad
North central railways railwaynorthcentral@CPRONCR 127518 (A)

national health agency
Request for Proposal (RFP) for selection of service providers to Supply, Application and Maintenance of Vinyl Film Wrapping for Selected Train Coaches
Issued by : National Health Agency
Tender No : S.12014/16/2018-NHA
National Health Agency (NHA) invites proposals from reputed firms to **Supply, Application and Maintenance of Vinyl Film Wrapping for Selected Train Coaches**
Interested agencies may submit their proposals along with required support documents on or before **14:00 hrs (IST) on 27/12/2018**, addressed to :
"To, The General Manager (Administration), National Health Agency, 7th & 9th Floor, Tower-I, Jeevan Bharati Building, Connaught Place, New Delhi, 110001"
For eligibility criteria and other details of the RFP, please visit website: www.pmjay.gov.in **B.K. Datta**
Place: New Delhi GM-Administration
Date: 18-12-2018 National Health Agency, New Delhi
davp 17180 / 11 / 0011 / 1819

Make road safety a part of curriculum: Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The need of the hour is to make collective efforts through all departments associated with road safety to spread awareness on the issue because this could go a long way in giving good and qualitative results. The state of Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of deaths due to road accidents and with a maximum level of awareness the number of accidents could be brought to the minimum level.

These views were expressed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the valedictory session of the day-long workshop organised by the Transport department at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan here on Tuesday. The CM also felicitated winners of the debate competition organised in schools all over the state. On the occasion, he also dedicated 12 driving training institutes, two inspection and training centres and laid foundation stones of five Saarthi halls and dedicated two Saarthi halls to the public. The total cost of these road safety projects which were launched by the pressing of a button is ₹9697.29 lakh.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that he had

called several state-level meetings on road safety during the past one year and had expectations that awareness programmes would be spread by all the departments associated with road safety. "Awareness can go a long way in saving the loss of money and lives. A wise person is one who learns from the other person's experiences. The lives lost in accidents are more than in any other area. Only small things have to be kept in mind to keep the accidents to a minimum level," he said.

Pointing out that in all the meetings which he held, he always tried to explore the cause behind these accidents. He said: "If there is a reason for the accident, there is also a solution. The road safety rules may appear small to the general public but help in saving lives. In Lucknow itself, I have seen how incomplete flyovers are used by bikers for doing stunts. We took stringent action and now for the past one year, there have been no deaths because of stunts on bikes."

The Chief Minister said that it was important for the people to know that good roads did not mean that no monitoring should be carried out on their speed. "The commuters



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the road safety workshop held at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on Tuesday

now and then argue with the traffic police and the staff as to why they should wear helmets. People do not listen when it comes to wearing seat belts. Unfortunately, no health check-ups are carried out of the drivers who drive the four wheelers and they get no proper place to sleep when they accompany their masters. In

the last camp which we carried out we found that a large number of drivers were suffering from cataract and these were primarily the government ones," he added.

The CM stressed the need for making road safety a part of the curriculum. "It is the responsibility of all the institutes to ensure that the students

were imparted knowledge on this aspect apart from the general courses of study. These things should be told at the assembly itself because the students run at the time of crossing the road near these schools," he added.

Yogi said that road accidents also happen in the absence of good drivers.

"Behind most of the accidents it has been seen that human error is a reason which can be removed. If the Traffic Department is organising the drive then all the other departments should also be made a part of it," he added.

Earlier, while inaugurating the workshop, PWD Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that the first 10 winners amongst children who participated in the competitions on road safety organised by the PWD for making a special contribution in spreading awareness about it would have their residences linked to the main roads with pucca roads. He said that roads and vehicles were complementary to each other and hence one should follow road safety rules and ensure that there was no over loading. Minister for Transport Swatantra Deo Singh said that the Chief Minister had taken special interest in the issue of road safety and held several meetings in that regard. The occasion also witnessed the presence of the Minister for Transport Swatantra Dev Singh, Transport Commissioner P Guru Prasad, Principal Secretary Aradhana Shukla and Joint Secretary Abhay Damali.

Governor, CM to inaugurate Yuva Kumbh on Dec 23



Minister for Medical and Technical Education Ashutosh Tandon, Lucknow University V-C SP Singh and others during a meeting on Tuesday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Governor Ram Naik will inaugurate Yuva Kumbh which will be held at Smriti Upvan on December 23 and will witness the participation of over 6,000 youths from all over the country.

Minister for Medical and Technical Education Ashutosh Tandon and V-C of Lucknow University SP Singh, addressed a press conference regarding Yuva Kumbh at Lucknow University on Tuesday. It was said that well-known names in the field of education, films, industries, professionals, writers and sports people would be attending the Kumbh including Gautam Gambhir, Piyush Chawla, Madhur Bhandarkar, Vivek Oberoi, Sushil Kumar and Hima Das to name a few. It will also witness the participation of youths from the prestigious institutes such as IITs and IIMs. Only those youths who had registered themselves for the event will be participating in it. The various sessions will also see Rajnath Singh, Smriti Irani and Swami Ramdev addressing the session. Ashutosh Tandon said that there would be several discussions which would be held in various categories in which youths would focus on their contributions in those fields. On being asked whether there was any political agenda behind the Kumbh with elections round the corner, the minister said that there was no such thing.

Vice-Chancellor SP Singh, while giving a detailed overview, said that it was the decision of the state government to take up Vichar Kumbh implying a Kumbh on deliberations and a meeting was held at the Chief Minister's residence in this regard.

"This is in line with the other Kumbhs which are being held as a curtain raiser to the Kumbh in Allahabad such as Mahila Kumbh in Vrindavan and Samrasta Kumbh in Ayodhya," he said. Talking about the concept of Yuva Kumbh, he said that over 6,000 people from various fields would congregate and hold discussions. "It implies a discussion like a 'manthan' from which emerges the 'elixir'. The idea is that if at least one per cent, which is 600 out of them, will be inspired through these discussions then it is likely that they can emerge as leaders to take the country forward in the coming future."

He said that the keynote speaker at the inaugural session would be Dr Krishna Gopal. The second session would be addressed by secretary, ABVP, Sunel Ambedkar, minister Raghendra Singh Rathore, V-C of Dev Sanskrit University, Haridwar, Chinmay Pandey and scientist, DRDO, Sateesh Reddy. In the third session, the speakers will include Acharya Balkrishna from Patanjali, minister Smriti Irani and Ashish Gautam from the Divya Prem Seva Mission and the closing session will witness the presence of Swami Ramdev, Rajnath Singh and Deputy chief ministers Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dinesh Sharma.

Shatrud Pratap, national organiser, Yuva Kumbh, said that they took five months in making preparations for this Kumbh and 40 meetings were held across the country to carry out the campaign. These meetings were held by 300-1000 youths in places like Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Amritsar etc. "The participants will begin arriving on December 22 and the vision document will be revealed on that very day," he added.

Shop-owner abducted, let off after being thrashed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two unidentified miscreants allegedly abducted a middle-aged grocery shop-owner from his shop at Gokhale Marg in Hazratganj on Tuesday evening. Pankaj Jaiswal runs the shop from his house in the locality. Around 8 pm, two men reached the shop. The tipsy men had a verbal spat with Pankaj after which they asked him to come out to discuss some important issue. They forcibly made him sit on a bike and sped off.

A vegetable vendor, who is an eyewitness to the incident, told the police that he questioned the men but and they said they were going for some work and would return soon.

Later, victim's son Shreyas called the police to inform them about the incident. As the news spread, the Lucknow police came under pressure and a huge team, led by ASP (East) Sarvesh Mishra reached the scene. While the search was on, Pankaj returned home on his own. There were reports that Pankaj was thrashed by the miscreants and then dropped a few yards away from his shop. Rubbishing the reports of



abduction, the ASP said that the shop-owner had not paid arrears to a flour supplier. "Pankaj owed Rs 9,000 to the company. The men who reached the shop were employees of the company and they took him to discuss the issue with him," Mishra said.

However, the shop-owner said he was thrashed and dumped on the roadside at Nishatganj bridge. He said as he was scared out of his wits, he did not raise an alarm. Police said they were scanning CCTV footages to verify the claims.

A police spokesman said that a case was of illegal detention was registered in this connection and the police had launched a manhunt for the accused. "The miscreants took the route through Dainik Jagran crossing and then to a multi-storey building before

Nishatganj bridge. At all these places, there are several pickets. A police picket is also at the crossing. But the cops failed to sense any foul play," sources said.

Meanwhile, a group of persons wielding sticks and sharp-edged weapon attacked a neighbouring woman and her brother in Ganesh Kheda locality of Mohanlalganj on Tuesday. The siblings suffered injuries and were taken to hospital from where they were discharged after being administered first aid. As per reports, the woman, identified as Kiran, is staying at her parents' house these days. Her brother Pankaj also lives in the same house. On Tuesday, their neighbours Sadashiv and Kallu, along with their aides, reached the house and started abusing Kiran and Pankaj. When Pankaj offered resistance, he was attacked. When Kiran intervened, she was also attacked. Villagers helped in rushing the victims to hospital. Later, Kiran lodged a case in this connection against Sadashiv, Kallu and their aides. The police were searching for the accused even as no arrests were made till late night.

Retired employee of BSNL found dead in her flat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A retired woman employee of BSNL was found dead at her flat in Indira Nagar under mysterious circumstances in Ghazipur police station area on Tuesday. Police called her family members and the body was sent for autopsy.

As per reports, some residents of Adarsh Enclave in Indira Nagar noticed in the afternoon that their neighbour Shashi Singh did not come out of the house since morning and they sensed something fishy. They dialled the police control room after which a team, led by sub-inspector Sanjeev Singh from Ghazipur police station, reached the scene.

The police found the doors lying ajar. When the cops entered the flat, Shashi Singh (65) was found lying on the floor in a room while a blanket was lying on her bed. SHO, Ghazipur, Rakesh Singh said household goods were found intact and there was no sign of any forcible entry into the flat. "Prima facie, the woman had no injuries on her body. It seems that she fell down after suffering a heart attack sometime in the night," the SHO said, adding that her husband

Scolded for selling mother's ornaments, teen ends life

Lucknow (PNS): Scolded by his mother for stealing and selling her jewellery, a 17-year-old boy ended his life at his house in Mohanlalganj on Tuesday. The teen, identified as Ranjeet of Parwar West, was found hanging from the ceiling with a saree tied around his neck on Tuesday afternoon. He was all alone when he took the extreme step. Ranjeet's elder brother Sandeep said he left the house for a construction site in the locality. "A little later, my sister left for Mohanlalganj Kasba for some work while

the mother went to a neighbour's house. When she returned around noon, she found Ranjeet hanging from the ceiling," Sandeep said. While the police were yet to find out why Ranjeet ended his life, villagers said he had sold the ornaments of his mother to a local goldsmith at throwaway prices without her permission. When his mother came to know about this on Monday, she scolded him after which he wept for quite some time. The villagers suspected that Ranjeet might have ended his life over this.

had died some time back and the couple had no issue from the marriage. "Shashi was living in the flat on rent. Her sister, who lives in Banda and is married, has been informed about the incident. We don't have enough details about Shashi as yet," the SHO said.

Singh said Shashi's neighbours told the police that she was having some heart disease as well as high blood sugar level. "Some neighbours went

to the flat when they did not see Shashi come out as late as by 2 pm on Tuesday and dialled the police control room. After that, a team was sent to the place," the SHO said.

He said the autopsy report would ascertain the cause of death. "Prima facie, it does not appear to be a case of murder or loot in view of circumstantial evidence found by the investigating team as yet," he claimed.

House burgled in broad daylight

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Throwing an open challenge to police, thieves stole cash and jewellery from a house in Chinhat on Tuesday afternoon. Dinesh Yadav of Shiv Lakhna Vihar Colony (Chinhat) works with Sahara Housing Company and had gone to his workplace. His wife left the house around 12 noon to pick her son from school in the locality. When she returned around 12:40 pm, she found the main gate lock broken. As she went inside, she found articles lying strewn across the floor. She called her husband, who reached the house and later informed the police. Police spokesman AK Dwivedi said Dinesh was yet to give the list of articles stolen. An FIR was yet to be registered in this connection.

The theft in broad daylight came as a shock to locals. "The city is witnessing a spurt in theft cases and here the houses are not safe even during the day time. It is a great challenge for the police," a resident said. Sources said the Lucknow police apparently opted a cosmetic approach to show a good law and order record. "In a meeting at Reserve Police Lines, the SSP had directed SHOs and other subordinates to pull up their socks but despite that, the SHOs are yet to swing into action," they said.

Meanwhile, the arrest of a man in a case under SC/ST Act and that of eve-teasing kicked up a row as the Mahanagar police were accused of being biased

Police spokesman AK Dwivedi said house owner Dinesh was yet to give the list of articles stolen and an FIR was yet to be registered in this connection

against the family of the accused. As per reports, the police registered a case for eve-teasing, brawl, abusing and threatening against Rakesh Pandey aka Pandit of Rahim Nagar on December 15. On Monday, the police arrested Rakesh. Soon after his arrest, Rakesh's wife accused the Mahanagar police of being biased and showing promptness in arresting him to keep their slate clean. She also accused the Mahanagar police of initiating one-sided action and not accepting their complaint even though she lodged an FIR immediately after her opponent gave a complaint to the police.

As the news went viral on social media, the Lucknow police went on the back foot and issued an explanation later on Tuesday night. Police spokesman AK Dwivedi said Rakesh's wife was exerting pressure on the Mahanagar police to register a cross-FIR. "The police worked in the case in a transparent way," he said while defending the Mahanagar police.



Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, Suresh Rana and others all ears to the issues of people at Jan Sahyog Kendra in BJP office on Tuesday

Pioneer

Sale of LDA properties gathers pace

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

People in large numbers are coming forward to buy the unsold properties of Lucknow Development Authority in different areas of the city. LDA has earned Rs 100 crore since a special offer was made to the buyers in October last.

Nazul officer Sanjay Pandey said many people had shown interest in buy both commercial and residential properties. The sale was expected to go up in coming days, he said, adding that the revenue would give a fillip to LDA's financial status. Unsold properties worth Rs 1,200 crore had been lying unsold for

the past decade with buyers showing no interest. The properties are not in good shape due to lack of maintenance. However, the offer that buyers would be handed over the possession after repair work and whitewash evoked a good response. MK Agarwal from LDA's accounts department said he was optimistic that the sales would fetch over Rs 500 crore by March next year. People have purchased residential properties on Napier road while traders have bought 23 shops in Balaganj. People have also purchased residential accommodations and commercial establishments in Aishbagh. The LDA administration

has built 500 houses for people belonging middle income group but the results were not encouraging.

Now, the LDA administration will concentrate on the Kanpur road housing scheme where it had constructed 700 units in the early 90s, but only 11 per cent of the shelters were sold. The LDA administration is hopeful that all the unsold properties will be sold in about three years as according to a survey conducted recently, the demand for shelters has gone up in the past one year.

LDA Vice-Chairman PN Singh said the recent trends were encouraging and they were optimistic about the future.

	सेंट्रल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Central Bank of India	Regional Office: 73, M. G. Road, Hazratganj, Lucknow	{Rule 8(1)} POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)
CENTRAL TO YOU SINCE 1911			
Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Central Bank of India having its Central Office at Chanderbuxi, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021 and Branch Office, amongst others, at Following Places, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower/s, to repay the amounts mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.			
The borrower/s having failed to repay the entire amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic/Physical possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 5 of the said Rules on dates mentioned below.			
The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing with the property is will be subject to the charge of Central Bank of India for an amount mentioned below along with further interest thereon plus incidental expenses, costs charges etc. Details as under:-			
Sr. No.	Name of the Borrowers/ Name of the Branch	Description of the mortgaged Property/ies (All the part and parcel of the property consisting of)	Date of Demand Notice Date of Possession Amt outstanding (Rs.)
1.	(1). Mr. Nand Lal & (2). Mr. Dilip Kumar Valecha Branch: Alambagh, Lucknow	Property on House No. 551/1gha/18 (New Municipal No. 551/1gha/18/2) Govind Nagar, Nalkheda Road, Alambagh, Lucknow-226005, having area of 127.79 S.mtrs. Owned by Mr. Nand Lal Mr. Dilip Kumar Valecha. Boundaries: East- Sft. Road, West- Nala, North- House of Chhotey Lal, South- House of Wazeer Etc.	29.08.2018 13.12.2018 Rs. 9,27,988/- +Intt thereon & Other charges
Place- Lucknow, Date- 13.12.2018		AUTHORIZED OFFICER, Central Bank of India, Regional Office Lucknow	

LMC shifts over 1,700 vendors in all 8 zones

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Municipal Corporation has shifted more than 1,700 vendors uptill now in all the eight zones which come under the Nagar Nigam under the exercise which they are currently carrying out. Municipal Commissioner Indra Mani Tripathi admitted that the Municipal Corporation was facing several challenges in the implementation of the Vendors' Act and in shifting them.

The Municipal Commissioner said that they were trying to facilitate vendors even as they carried out their shifting to proper zones. He admitted that there were several challenges which they were facing in this regard. "The issues involve the coordination of many departments which include the Traffic and the Police departments. The first problem which we are facing are vending zones which had been decided earlier but are not getting the NOC from the Traffic department due to the congestion which they are causing. Hence these vending zones have not got the



Shahnajaf roadside vendors protesting at LMC headquarters on Tuesday

Pioneer

permits and new areas have to be selected for them. These are 40-45 zones for which alternative arrangements have to be made," he said.

He said that secondly even as the exercise of shifting the vendors was being carried out they also had to be facilitated in new areas. "The vendors

have to be facilitated with platforms where they are seated and also there is a provision of water for them in these areas. There are some vending zones which are being constructed by SUDA and the work is currently going on. There are 6-7 proposals which the Nagar Nigam has also submitted in this regard. These are a total of 274 proposals which are under construction," he added.

The official said that the other problems which they were facing were from a different category of traders. "There are traders of fruits and vegetables who are not ready to shift and are protesting that they don't want to move from that area. There is a need to convince them to shift to the new area," he added.

However, he stated that they had shifted over 1,700 vendors across the city and some of them were from all the zones. In the wake of these protests which were being carried out their strategy was to carry out both the facilitation of the vendors and their shifting simultaneously, he added.

CITYBRIEFS



Members of Vidyut Karmachari Sangathan Morcha staging a protest at Shakti Bhawan on Tuesday

Pioneer

MOVIE SCREENING

Prithvi Innovations, in collaboration with Amity University, will screen a movie and have an open house session on Wednesday. Anuradha Gupta from Prithvi Innovations said that global showings of 'Stories from the Clean Room' are an important way to raise awareness about a chemically intensive industry and advance key chemical safety and human rights issues. "A key chemical safety issue in electronics production is workplace right to know. This programme is a part of an international campaign that works for a toxic-free future," she said. The programme is expected to be attended by more than 250 students. "Mobile phones, computers and TVs are blockbuster consumer products but their manufacture relies on and uses more than a thousand chemicals and other materials. This causes harm in production, exposes consumers to toxic

chemicals during use, and releases toxic chemicals when products become electronic waste. Occupational exposure forms the basis of knowledge about harms to human health from chemicals but is largely neglected as a campaign and policy topic," Gupta explained. "Companies routinely claim trade secrets to conceal links between worker diseases and working environment and to prevent its sick workers from receiving compensation due to which the issue of toxic electronics has remained largely invisible," she added.

views. In one-and-a-half years of its inception, CPC has conducted 10 job fairs involving 147 companies and more than 1,100 recruitments and internships have been provided to the students," she said.

APPOINTMENT

On the directive of Housing commissioner AK Chauhan, nine persons were given appointment letters on compensatory grounds in UP Awas Vikas Parishad.

MEETING

The quarterly meeting of Rajbhasha Committee was organised in RDSO and headed by DG Virendra Kumar, who reviewed the progress of the official language and progress of the work done in Hindi in the quarter which ended on September 30. He requested all officers to mention about their findings regarding Hindi during their inspections.

JOB FAIR

The Counseling and Placement Cell of Lucknow University organised the 10th Job Fair in the Business Administration building. As many as 111 jobs were offered to candidates selected by 11 companies, CPC director Madhurima said. "In the job fair, 182 candidates faced inter-

SCHOOLSCAN



Annual Mothers' Day and Grandparents' Day

CELEBRATIONS

City Montessori School (Aliganj Campus II) organised Annual Mothers' Day and Grandparents' Day celebrations on Tuesday. The students presented several educational-cultural items and sensitised people about human rights. An all-religion and world peace prayer marked the beginning of the celebrations. Special educational-cultural items on human and fundamental rights were also presented.

two-and-a-half billion children of the world, disseminating the message of world unity, peace and love across the globe. In a debate contest, the participants impressed the judges with their creative thoughts and also displayed their skills in other contests. Earlier, the day began with a speech by CMS founder Jagdish Gandhi.

CHRISTMAS

Students of Amity International School (Gomti Nagar) organised a special Christmas assembly which began with a song, followed by

a short narration and a video presentation on the birth of Jesus Christ. The students enacted a skit showing the birth of Jesus even as the stage glittered with shimmering dresses and light effects. The students looked delightful as fairies, Mother Mary, Joseph and shepherds. Traditional Christmas carols were also presented on the occasion. The students and staff collected woolen cloths and other stuff and donated the same to Roti-Kapda Foundation to help the underprivileged children.

EUREKA INTERNATIONAL

On the 3rd day of the 4-day international educational-cultural festival 'Eureka International-2018', organised by City Montessori School, Anand Nagar campus, the participants from India and abroad showcased an amalgamation of creative thinking, artistic abilities and intellectual talents and also became the voice of

Base of cultural centre to be laid at Awadh Vihar Yojana on Dec 25

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The foundation stone of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Cultural Centre will be laid at Awadh Vihar Yojana on Shaheed Path on December 25. The centre is dedicated to the late Prime Minister and his contributions to the country.

The cultural centre is said to be of international standards and the purpose is to promote tourism and culture of different regions of the state. It will be a joint venture of UP Awas Vikas Parishad and department of Culture and Tourism. The centre was ideated by Cultural and Tourism department. The first cultural centre in the state exclusively for cul-

tural activities, it is said to be a dream project of the state government.

Awadh Vihar Yojana incharge Sunil Chowdhary said a team of government officials recently inspected the site and selected the land between Awadh Shilp Gram and Barauli village on Sultanpur Road under Sarojini Nagar tehsil.

He said the cultural centre would have an auditorium with a total seating capacity of 5,000. Presently, the Ambedkar auditorium of Ram Manohar Lohia Law College is the biggest as it is spacious enough to accommodate 3,000 persons. There will also an open air theatre with a capacity of 1,500.

The project is said to be funded jointly by the state government and

Centre. It will likely be completed within 15 months once the construction work begins.

Chowdhary said Housing commissioner AK Chauhan directed him in the first week of December to help the Cultural department in selecting an ideal site in Awadh Vihar Yojana complex for the project at the earliest. He said he consulted a district administration official, Chandan Patel, regarding the ideal site and the latter suggested the site which was finalised.

The estimated cost of the project has not been calculated as yet. The project will be designed by noted developers of the country and private partners will be invited for their participation.

DM inspects Charbagh railway station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma inspected Charbagh railway station on Tuesday. Accompanied by Municipal Commissioner Indramani Tripathi, SSP Kalanidhi Naithani and DRM (NR) Satish Kumar, the DM

Charbagh station a 'no vending' zone and shift the vendors to some other place nearby. He also issued directions for removal of the hoardings from in front of the station and advertisement frames near Ravindrayala. He told the officials to install lights on the foot overbridge and ensure its cleanliness.



Proposal for renaming museum gets Gov nod

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

Governor Ram Naik has given his nod to the proposal for rechristening Allahabad Museum as Prayagraj Museum. Presiding over a meeting of the Allahabad Museum Committee and Executive Committee held at Raj Bhavan, the Governor stressed the need for making the museum of international level. For this he had also approved a budget of ₹40 crore. During the meeting, the Governor said that with the cooperation of the Central and state governments a big change was taking place in Prayagraj. All the Kumbh Mela-related preparations will be completed ahead of the first major bathing festival falling on January 14/15.

During the Kumbh fair the time for opening the museum will be increased from 10

am to 8 pm. At the time of Kumbh the museum should be opened for seven days, the Governor said and added that the Kumbh Mela Special ticket should be issued for entry in the museum, which would be accepted at any time during the Kumbh Fair. He said that the help of research scholars, university students, volunteers and retired people of the department would be taken as service guides. In the meeting the approval was also given for the construction of the Azad Gallery (Vithika) in the museum. In this gallery special photographs, artifacts, records, papers and documents etc will be displayed especially those related to revolutionaries from the struggle for country's independence i.e. from 1857 till 1947. He said that its digital form would also be displayed during Kumbh.

On the occasion of Kumbh

Mela the museum will modernise the gallery and ensure release of the book related to Allahabad besides a replica of antique artifacts will be exhibited and sold together. During the Kumbh Fair an exhibition related to its history will also be held in the exhibition hall of Allahabad Museum.

JAL NIGAM MAKES ELABORATE ARRANGEMENTS

In order to provide better facilities to the devotees and pilgrims, the Jal Nigam has made extensive arrangements for supplying water during the 49-day-long Kumbh Mela beginning from January. It has decided to arrange 12 crore litres of water on every major bathing day. In general 50 million litres of water will be consumed in the mela area every day.

The Jal Nigam has made

different schemes for all the major bathing days and normal days for snan in Kumbh. For this over 67 temporary tubewells had been installed for supplying water. The work for laying 950-km-long pipeline had been started.

The chief engineer of Jal Nigam, GC Dubey, said that about three crore devotees were likely to turn up for the holy dip on every major bathing festival in Kumbh. During normal days an average of 50 lakh pilgrims would take a holy dip in the Sangam every day. Apart from them 1.5 lakh officers/employees, more than 30 lakhs Kalpvasis, tirthpurohit and members of several organisations would be staying here. Adequate arrangements for water had been made keeping in mind the large number of people visiting the fair, Dubey added.

Enmity over plot of land claims a life

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

In a sensational incident, a former BDC member was killed by slitting his throat and his body was dumped on a road in Lokapur village under the Mauaima police station here. On receipt of information, the police reached the spot, took the body of the victim into its custody and sent it to the mortuary for the post-mortem examination.

As per the reports, Gyan Chandra Yadav, son of the late Vishwas Yadav, was a former BDC member.

It was reported that his

body was found dumped on a road with his throat slit in Lokapur village under the aforesaid police station. The locals spotted it on Tuesday and informed the police about it. If sources are to be believed, old enmity over a plot of land could have led to the murder of the former BDC member. However, the police had picked some suspects for interrogation in this connection and raids were being conducted to trace the whereabouts of the culprits involved in this gruesome murder.

In another incident a 30-



year-old miscreant identified as Dinesh Patel was done to death when he was caught by the people red-handed while sneaking into a house with the intention to a commit theft there. The incident took place in an area

under the Koraon police station late on Monday night.

According to police, the deceased, Dinesh Patel was also an accused in a murder and was at large. The police said that the miscreant sneaked into the house of Raghuraj, a resident of an area under the Koraon police station with the intention of committing a theft late on Monday night. However, the family member raised an alarm on seeing him stealing something from the almirah. On hearing their screams their neighbours also gathered there and beat him to death.

उप कायपारेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा सिस्टिम विस्तार सुचना इस कार्यालय की ई-निविदा संख्या 136-वि.पा. मंत्राल. / 2018-19 जो कि दिनांक 18.12.2018 को खोली जानी थी, अब किन्हीं अपरिहार्य कारणों से दिनांक 04.01.2019 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 05.01.2019 को 14.30 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पराेशन मण्डल-प्रथम, उ० प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि०, कक्षा सं० 111 सं० 114, भूतल, पराेशन भवन, विमुक्ति खण्ड 11, गौमती नगर, लखनऊ। पत्रांक-2522, दिनांक 18.12.2018, "संक्षुप्त हित में बिजली बचाये"

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD.- 'B' THERMAL POWER STATION, OBRA -SONEBHADRA NOTICE INVITING e-Bid Re (e-Tender) No. T-10/O&MC-III/EMD-I/BTPS/2018-19 Online e-Bids are invited for the "O.H. of 400 / 220kV Switchyard air compressors model 15T2, BTPS, Obra, e-tender has been uploaded on 14.12.2018 on UP Govt. e-tender portal <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Technical Bid (Part-I) will be opened on 24.12.2018 at 17.00 Hrs. Estimated Cost of work will be approximately Rs. 2.50 Lacs only. The E.M.D. and Tender cost for e-bid submission is Rs. 5000.00 and Rs. 296.00 respectively. Total Quantity of work, tender specification and other terms & condition is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. It may please be noted that this is online bid and shall be accepted online only on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Information related to extension in due dates and corrigendum, if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves update. The last date of e-bid submission is 22.12.2018 up to 18:00 Hrs. S.E., O&MC-III, BTPS, Obra, Sonebhadra. No. - 316, Date - 15.12.2018, "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTREST OF NATION"

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD. OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION OBRA SONEBHADRA - 231219. CORRIGENDUM/ TENDER No. T-01/SE-I/BTPS/BMD-I/2018-19, Tender ID : 2018_RVUNL_246024_1 The opening date of Part-I (Technical bid) of online e-bid tender No. T-01/SE-I/BTPS/BMD-I/2018-19 for the work of "Annual running break down maintenance work of Air Pre Heater of unit no 9 10 and 11 of 3X200MW BTPS Obra" is hereby extended due to not participated sufficient bidders on due date and shall be opened on website <https://etender.up.nic.in> as stated below : Online submission end date and time of e-Bid : 26-12-2018 at 18:00 Hrs., Submission date and time of hard copy of EMD, Tender Cost and Annex.: 27-12-2018 at 17:00 Hrs., Online opening date & time of Part-I (Technical Bid) : 28-12-2018 at 16:00 Hrs. All other terms and conditions will be same, Information or corrigendum if any shall be uploaded only on the above website, bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves update. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER-I, No. - 315, Date - 14.12.2018, "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTREST OF NATION"

Office of the Cantonment Board

64, Subhash Chandra Bose Marg, Cantt Kanpur -208004

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Dated : 18.12.2018

Online tender for two years are invited through two bid system from eligible Contractors/Agency for Supply of Manpower for Cantt. Board Kanpur through the Government e-procurement portal <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> by the Cantonment Board Kanpur. The detail of work is given below.

Sl. No.	NIT NO.	Name of work and location	Estimated cost of tender (Rs.) Per Year
1	CBK/CEO/K-2282/1	Supply of Manpower (Two Year) (Assistant Teacher, Music Teacher, Dance Teacher, Sports Teacher, MTS, Nonformal Teacher etc.)	3,00,00,000/-

The CEO/Board reserves the right to increase/decrease the estimated cost of works and to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning reasons thereof.

Tender document can be downloaded from www.eprocure.gov.in from 20.12.2018. 12.00 PM onwards. Online tenders can be uploaded till 10.01.2019 upto 05.00 PM. For any clarification contact Cantonment Board Kanpur at 0512-2381285 on any working day during office hours. The bidder is advised to examine carefully all instructions, conditions of contract, contract data, forms, terms, technical specifications, bill of quantity etc. in the bid document. Tenders will be accepted via online mode only.

(Harendra Singh)
Chief Executive Officer,
Kanpur Cantt.

Rafale, Cauvery issues rock both Houses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Both the houses of Parliament witnessed pandemonium on Tuesday amidst stand-off between the Government and the Congress over the Rafale fighter jet deal issue. For their part, while Tamil Nadu parties AIADMK and DMK raised slogans over the Cauvery dam issue, the TDP demanded special status for Andhra.

The Government said it was ready for a discussion on the Rafale issue and charged the Congress with running away from the debate after the Supreme Court verdict last week. Congress said in the Lok Sabha it was ready for discussion, but demanded formation of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to probe the Rafale deal. Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said constitution of JPC was not under her purview.

In the Rajya Sabha, Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad said the privilege motion moved by the Congress should be taken up alleging the Government misled the Supreme Court and Parliament on the Rafale issue. He also said the Government has no right to continue and “should go.” Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, however, said that the Chair should be allowed to take a view.



Rajya Sabha Chairperson M Venkaiah Naidu looks on as Opposition members protest in the Rajya Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

Countering Azad, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Vijay Goel said the Government was ready to discuss all issues, including Rafale. He demanded that the Congress apologise in the wake of the apex court's refusal to order an SIT probe in Rafale deal and Saijan Kumar's conviction by the Delhi High Court in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case.

Appeals by the Lok Sabha Speaker to allow the House to function went unheeded as Congress members displayed placards and trooped into the Well demanding JPC probe. In the din, the National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill, 2018 was introduced in the

House. The Bill seeks to declare the various NIDs as institutions of national importance.

In the Rajya Sabha too, Naidu urged the members to allow the House to function as various notices on urgent matters, ranging from cyclones affecting lives in some states to price rise to agriculture crisis, have been admitted for discussion.

His appeal was of no avail as soon after the papers were laid by the Ministers when the proceedings for the day commenced, AIADMK and DMK came into the well carrying placards and shouting slogans on the Cauvery issue. Some members from Andhra Pradesh were also seen dis-

playing placards demanding special status for the State. Naidu initially adjourned the House till 2 PM at 11.10 am and as the din continued when the proceedings began again, he adjourned the House for the day. In the lower house, upset with the disruption, Mahajan said the members were well aware that this was an important session as everyone will face elections after this. She said the Government was ready for discussion, but the ruckus continued. Proceedings barely lasted for five minutes and it was initially adjourned till noon.

As the ruckus continued, only one query related to production of garlic was taken up

during the Question Hour.

The BJP members raised slogans demanding an apology from Congress president Rahul Gandhi. Later, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the Supreme Court verdict has made things clear, indicating that there was no need for a JPC on the controversial issue.

Unhappy with the response, Congress members again started raising slogans, following which the House was adjourned for the day.

When the Upper House resumed in the afternoon, Naidu proposed to discuss a calling attention on the situation arising due to devastation caused by cyclones Gaja and Titli in some States and the action taken by the Government in this regard.

However, senior Congress leader Anand Sharma raised a point of order claiming that Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs had referred to Rahul Gandhi and it is against the rule to demand his apology because he is member of other House. Soon after, the ruling party member again started raising slogans and demanded apology from Gandhi while some of the AIADMK and DMK members trooped into the well to protest over Cauvery issue. The Chair adjourned the House for the day.

Irregular expenditure in KVs: Panel says ₹59.67 crore due for recovery

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There have been irregular expenditures in setting up and running of new Kendriya Vidyalayas for children of those working in PSUs and Government-run institutions with ₹59.67 crore due for recovery, a Parliamentary Committee pointed out on Tuesday.

The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan sets up schools on request from PSUs and institutes like IIMs and IITs on their campus for children of employees working there. According to norms, the Public Sector Undertakings or the institutes are supposed to reimburse the cost of setting up and running the schools.

However, a report tabled in

Parliament Tuesday has pointed out that as on March 31, 2016 an amount of ₹59.67 crore was due for 81 such schools. Of this, 34 has been already been shut due to various reasons, making the possibility of recovery as remote.

“The committee notes that KVS, an autonomous body under the HRD Ministry, establishes and manages KV and the scheme of KV has been extended to children of the employees of PSUs and government owned Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL) on the condition that all recurring and non recurring expenditure on running these schools would be provided by the sponsoring agencies.

“The sponsoring authorities of some existing or functioning and closed project

Vidyalayas defaulted in payment of dues resulting in recoverable amount of ₹24.57 crore in the year 2003,” the panel report said.

The committee said that along with the key concern of recovery of dues which have been long pending, the matter needs to be looked at in the larger perspective of the importance of Kendriya Vidyalayas in providing education.

The Parliamentary panel has recommended that after asking the sponsoring authority to transfer the infrastructural assets to KVs, the state governments and corporate entities in the area may be requested to contribute towards running of such schools under their corporate social responsibility initiatives.

MHA approves new tourist and trekking routes in Ladakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to give fillip to the tourism sector and enhance economic activities in Ladakh, the Home Ministry has approved new tourist and trekking routes in the ‘Land of High Passes’.

The move likely to boost adventure tourism also

The Home Ministry, in a statement, said the decision has been taken buoyed by the success of many tourism initiatives announced under the Prime Minister's Development Package-2015.

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has taken yet another leap by proposing to open up more tourist and trekking routes in Ladakh with the aim of recapturing the glory, rich culture and beauty of the region, it said. The move will give a big boost to adventure tourism too.

The proposed new tourist routes are Merak-Lema Bend, Chushul-Kartsangla-Mahe, Durbuk-Shahikul-Tharuk-Sato, Kargyam-Parma-Erath-Chusul and Loma-Hanley. Korzok-Nurbo-Sumdo-Parangla-Kazaand and Agyam-Shayok-Durbuk are the two other tourist routes.

The proposed new trekking routes include Phyang-Dokla-HunderDok-Hunder, Basgo-Ney-HunderDok-Hunder, Temisgam-Largap-Panchathang-Skuru and Saspol-Saspochey-Rakurala-Skuru.

Odisha has also declared drought during Kharif 2018 but the State Government has not submitted any memorandum so far. As per IMD, 250 of the 681 districts across the country have faced deficient rainfall this year.

In a reply to Bhagwanth Khuba, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said that 26 districts of Maharashtra, 24 of Karnataka, 18 of Jharkhand, 11 of Gujarat, 9 of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan each have faced drought this year and sought drought relief package of ₹16,773 crore. Memorandums to this effect have been submitted to the Ministry. Taking note of their memorandum, the Ministry has set up inter-ministerial high level committee to assess the damage and recommend the financial assistance from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

Drought in six States: Relief of ₹16,773 cr sought from Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 1.95 crore hectare of land in 97 districts of six States-Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Rajasthan are facing drought



this year.

According to Ministry of Agriculture, these six States have sought relief of ₹16,773 crore from the Centre to tackle drought situation. But Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have not sought relief from the centre due to tedious process to get relief from the centre, officials said.

the minister informed that after implementation of the PMFBY since April, 2016, enrolment of non-loanee farmers for whom the scheme is voluntary, has increased from 27.81 lakh in 2015-16 under erstwhile schemes, to 136.66 lakh in 2016-17 and to 138.47 lakh in 2017-18, indicating acceptance of the scheme.

On the Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY),

al measures to increase institutional credit flow and bringing down the interest rate on farm loans. Further, with a view to provide better insurance coverage to crops for all stages, the Government has launched crop insurance scheme under which ₹16,967.92 crore claims was settled during Kharif 2017, he added.

The Minister also men-

Modi said, while speaking at the Republic TV summit.

Meanwhile, Union Health Minister JP Nadda spoke to Fadnavis while Labour & Employment Minister Santosh Gangwar rushed to Mumbai.

The Maharashtra government announced an ex-gratia of ₹10 lakh to the families of those killed, ₹2 lakh to those seriously injured and ₹1 lakh to those who suffered with minor injuries.

Till Monday night, six persons had been killed and 147 others injured late on Monday afternoon after a major fire broke out in the state government-run Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Kamghar Hospital at Andheri (East) in north-west Mumbai.

The fire had been noticed at around 4 pm on Monday, near the operation theatre of the hospital located at Marol locality of Andheri (East). Before long, the fire spread to other floors stranding more 150 people in the fire-engulfed building.

As the fire spread in the building, a few patients panicked

ness has been in place.

Due to steps taken by the Government, despite climate risks, the overall crop production in the country is on the increasing trend, he said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Singh.

To reduce the dependence of farmers on private money lenders, Singh said that the Government has taken sever-

forces for “target killings.”

Senior separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq defied police restrictions on his mansion in Nigeen area of Srinagar outskirts and led a group of his supporters to march towards the cantonment area. However, he was intercepted by a large contingent of police, mostly masked personnel, who took him into brief custody after a bout of slogan-shouting. Before being whisked to police station, Mirwaiz was allowed to address his supporters. He blamed the state authorities for unleashing a reign of terror by killing what he called innocent civilians.

“After indiscriminate killings, civilians are branded as over ground workers and terrorists which is preposterous in itself, but what is worse is that this propaganda is used as a means of endorsing and justifying the civilian killings by armed forces. Delhi has overplayed the terrorist, Pak proxy and instigators card and no one is buying this narrative except some people in India at whom it is aimed for electoral gains,”

Mirwaiz said adding the world sees for itself the ever-growing graph of atrocities and massacres of Kashmiris who are seeking peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

Another separatist leader and JKLF chairman Yasin Malik also detained by police after he tried to march towards Badami Bagh cantonment in Srinagar. Reports said Malik along-with his supporters including several women assembled at Gaw Kadal locality to begin their march.

Eyewitnesses said as soon as Malik reached near Budshah bridge a police party swung into action and detained him. Police fired tear gas smoke shells to disperse the crowd.

The authorities had ordered restrictions on public movement under Sec 144 CrPc in various parts of Srinagar district in view of Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) call for protest march towards Army's XV Corps Headquarters. The authorities ordered imposition of restrictions within the territorial jurisdiction of Khanyar, Rainawari, Nowhatta,

ESIS hospital fire: Death toll reaches to 8, probe ordered

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The toll in Mumbai's ESIS hospital fire mounted to eight on Tuesday, even as the Maharashtra Government orders an inquiry into the alleged negligence and lapses leading to the mishap.

While two more injured persons succumbed to burn wounds, the condition of at least 25 of the total 147 injured persons admitted to various hospitals in the city was described as "critical". Many of the injured persons were discharged from various hospital after treatment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was on a day-long visit to Maharashtra, extended his condolences to the families of those killed in the mishap and made anxious enquiries about those injuries in the mishap.

“I have discussed the incident with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. All help is being extended to the families of those killed and also to the persons injured in the mishap,”

Agriculture-schemes not disjointed but linked at various stages: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's agricultural schemes are “not disjointed” but linked at various stages of the farm sector. Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh informed the Parliament that Indian agriculture is confronted with high price volatility and climate risk for which adequate prepared-

PM releases book ‘Timeless Laxman’

I am happy to be part of Laxman's timeless journey, says Modi

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Releasing a coffee table book “Timeless Laxman” based on the life and times of renowned cartoonist RK Laxman, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday that he was happy to be a part of the timeless journey of the late cartoonist.

“I am very happy to be part of Laxman's timeless journey. I am happy that we can now get an insight into the vast treasure of Laxman's work. Studying Laxman's works through the decades is a nice way to understand sociology, and the socio-economic milieu of the times,” the Prime Minister said.

“This effort is not just for Laxman or his memory. A small part of Laxman lives within the minds of crores of people. Laxman's common man is timeless and pan-Indian. All Indians, and all generations of people identify with him, Modi said.

The coffee table book has been penned by his daughter-in-law, Usha Srinivas Laxman.

It may be recalled that Laxman — best known for his creation The Common Man for his daily cartoon strip, “You Said it” in The Times of India which started in 1951—passed away at a Pune hospital on January 26, 2015.

Meanwhile, a delegation representing the film and entertainment industry, called on Prime Minister Modi in Mumbai today. The delegation comprised producers and CEOs of companies in the entertainment industry.

The delegation, comprising



among others actors Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgan, filmmaker Rakesh Roshan, lyricist Prasoon Joshi, producers Karan Johar and Siddhartha Roy Kapur, rooted for lower and uniform rates of GST, for the entertainment industry in India.

The delegation also expressed its strong support of the Prime Minister's vision for making India a five trillion dollar economy in the near future. They gave an overview of the vast growth potential of the media and entertainment industry in India, and said that this sector is poised to contribute in a significant way towards this goal.

Members of the delegation strongly made a strong case for developing Mumbai as the global entertainment capital, through various initiatives and proactive approaches.

On his part, Modi said that the Indian entertainment industry enjoyed immense popularity across the world and it was one of the key elements of India's rising soft power status, globally.

All-women political party launched, to contest LS polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Inspired by the decades old National Women's Party in the United States, a 36-year-old doctor and social activist launched a woman's only party on Tuesday to fight for issues like reservation for women in Parliament and harassment of women at workplace.

The newly formed National Women's Party (NWP) is being headed by Swetha Shetty, who said the party's goal was to represent “women” particularly the underprivileged who “have suffered at the hands of system. Those who have run from office to office in expectation of some help to make their lives better and got nothing” and those who suffered from domestic abuse or are struggling against the social establishment”.

“The actual ground work for National Women Party began in 2012. The motive behind formation of National Women Party is to get 50 per cent reservation for women candidates in Lok Sabha Election.



Even in 2018 women rights are avoided easily and there is so much crime against women and no significant reformations are being considered so far hence she felt the need for women party,” Shetty said.

“The political world in India has been majorly male dominated and women have always felt excluded. The party will attempt to eradicate the present challenges as there is need for women participants who understand the subject more delicately. Women empowerment will be a fair play to persistent paradoxes of our times,” she said.

Shetty said while she was working with an NGO in Telangana, she worked upon the idea of starting a mass movement. “I wanted to make a national movement. To serve the original purpose women need higher commitment from the governing body. We need higher participation in the parliament to amend the laws for women welfare and progress,” she said.

While Shetty urged more and more women to join the party to be able to collectively rake up the issues, she did not elaborate on any plans of contesting any elections.

No pre-poll tie-up with Cong: TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There is no plan for any alliance with the Congress before the Lok Sabha elections, Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress leadership said on Tuesday.

When asked to comment on whether the TMC would for once consider any electoral alliance with the Congress in 2018 general elections senior TMC leader and State Minister Subroto Mukherjee said "there is no question of any alliance at least before the elections. There will be no pre-poll alliance. Whatever tie-up that may be taken up for consideration will be after the elections."

All parties had their separate views and strategies about the elections and the TMC too had its. But on the question of defeating the BJP all the opposition parties were thinking in one direction "that is this party has to be defeated," and the TMC was of the view that "the party which is strong in a particular region should be supported by the other parties against the BJP"

Incidentally Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had already made it clear that her party would contest all the 42 Lok Sabha seats of the State alone. Reacting to the issue State Opposition Leader and

INCIDENTALLY CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE HAS ALREADY MADE IT CLEAR THAT HER PARTY WILL CONTEST ALL THE 42 LOK SABHA SEATS OF WEST BENGAL

Congress veteran Abdul Mannan said "question of alliance has not come up because no one from the Congress has approached them (Trinamool) with an alliance proposal. In fact we have already given our decision for a solo fight from a recent rally in Kolkata."

On the BJP's proposed Rath Yatra for which the State Government had denied permission on grounds of communal harmony, the senior Minister said, "permission was denied in order to maintain peace," wondering, "how the BJP will be able to manage so many people required for a Yatra of the magnitude they are planning."

Incidentally the Calcutta High Court on Tuesday asked

the State BJP for three tentative dates for the proposed Rath Yatra.

The Court of Justice Tapabrata Chakrabarty also asked the State Advocate General to submit before it the video recording of the meeting held under the Court's direction between the State officials and the BJP leadership in which the saffron outfit reportedly claimed that the Yatra had no religious undertones and that it was purely a political programme.

"The State was categorically told by our leaders that it is a political and not religious Yatra but still they are not giving permission for it," BJP leader JP Majumdar said. The next hearing for the matter will be held on Wednesday.

Modi takes dig at Cong on Rafale

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Flagging the issue of corruption, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday took an indirect swipe at the Opposition Congress over its allegations of corruption made by against him in the Rafale scam, saying that the Supreme Court – through its clean chit to his Government — had given a "befitting reply" to the litigants who had approached the court over the alleged irregularities in the fighter jets purchase deal.

Without actually naming the Rafale deal, Modi broke his silence for the first time over the Supreme Court's verdict in the much-discussed fighter aircraft purchase case, Modi said: "Hamare yaha ek psychology rahi hai ki jab sarkar ke khilaf aarop lagate koi adalat me jata hai, to mana jaata hai ki sarkar ghalat hogi aur aarop lagane wala sahi hoga. Yeh aamtaur pe manyata hai, ghotale ho, bhrashtachar ka aarop ho, ye mansik-ta hamare man me ghar kar gayi hai. Kyuki humne yahi dekha hai pehle" (It has been our psychology that whenever some goes to court with allegations of corruption, we presume that the Government is in the wrong and the people making allegations are right. That's we have to come tom accept. That's what has been our mindset when it comes to scams or allegations of corruption. Because, we have seen these things in the past".

"Lekin ye pehli bar hua hai jab kuchh, sarkar par bhrashtachar ka aarop lagate hue desh



ki sab se badi adalat gaye aur adalat ne unhe do took jawab mila hai ki jo kaam hua hai, woh paardarshita se hua hai, imaandari se hua hai. Humare desh me aisa bhi hoga, char sah pehle kisi ne nahi socha tha (It has happened for the first time that some people moved the country's highest court with allegations of corruption against the Government and the court gave a befitting reply to the litigants concerned that whatever work that took place happened in a most transparent and honest manner. No one would have imagined four years ago that such a thing can happen in this country)", the Prime Minister said.

Modi also took an indirect pot shot at the Nehru Gandhi family on the issues of the issues of extradition of Christian Michel, the alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland chopper scam from Dubai and the life sentence handed to Congress leader Sajjan Kumar sentenced to life in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case by Delhi High Court.

airports and heliports in the country. We are completing the projects which had remained pending for the past 30 to 40 years," the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister said that four years ago, no one would have imagined that India would be surging towards becoming a five trillion dollar economy and rising up the ranks in the ease of doing business from 142 in 2014 to 77 in 2018. "We are moving fast to get into the under 50 bracket in the world in terms of ease of doing business," he said.

Referring to the rapid pace of infrastructure development taking place in the country, Modi said that his Government had – through reviews undertaken at the monthly PRAGATI meetings which he chaired – had reviewed projects worth Rs 12 lakh crore which had been pending for years on end and was speeding up these works.

"Go to any part of the country, we can get to see sign boards mentioning 'Work in Progress'. The importance of these sign boards is indicative of the fact that "India in Progress". We are not just constructing highways, flyovers, metros etc. But, what is happening is building of a new India. The city (Mumbai) that I am in today is often described as a 'city that never stops'.Speaking from this city, I would like to say that 'India is a country that never stops'. India has made up its mind that neither would it stop nor would it slow down," the Prime Minister said.

Tej Pratap meets Lalu, claims father asked him to take RJD forward

PTI ■ RANCHI

Two days after resuming political activities, Tej Pratap Yadav, the elder son of jailed RJD chief Lalu Prasad, Tuesday met his father and claimed that he was advised to "take the party forward" by him.

The over two-hour meeting between Tej Pratap and his father took place at the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, where the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief is undergoing treatment for various ailments after being convicted in fodder scam cases.

The former Bihar health minister had been keeping a low profile for several months on account of differences with younger brother Tejashwi Yadav and estrangement with his wife of six months.

It was a long time since I met my father. I became emotional. I love him. My father is my God---Krishna, Vishnu and Mahadev, Yadav told reporters.

He further claimed that the RJD chief had asked him "to take the party forward", reiterating that he saw Tejashwi as "Arjuna" and vowed to play the role of Lord Krishna who was the warrior prince's charioteer in the epic Mahabharata.

Asked about his divorce petition, Tej Pratap refused to divulge the details, saying the matter was in court.

‘Despite promises, Modi Govt has been unable to create job opportunities’

India ranks 158/195 nations on the Human Capital Index: TMC leader

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday alleged that despite promises made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his Government has not been able to create job opportunities for the youth.

Addressing a press briefing, the Trinamool's parliamentary party leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien said that the Government was using data selectively.

"Shifting time series, and the selective use of data deflects attention from the quality of jobs that are being created and whether they are in fact 'new jobs'..PM Modi promised in 2015 that he will turn

India into the 'human resource Capital of the world'. In 2018, India ranks 158/195 nations on the Human Capital Index, just behind Sudan," O'Brien said.

He said wages in India continue to be well below the Seventh Pay Commission and when adjusted for inflation, wage rates have grown in most sectors at three per cent per annum.

"31 million Indians are without a job...10 per cent increase in GDP results in less than one per cent increase in employment," he said. The TMC protested outside parliament over lack of jobs for the youths.

He said that according to Labour Ministry data, over the past year, the National Career Service portal witnessed a 29 per cent decline in the number of advertised vacancies but a 56 per cent increase in job seekers.

Ram temple issue echoes in BJP Parl party meeting

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The politically sensitive temple issue figured in the BJP's Parliamentary Party meeting on Tuesday with some of the members wanting to know the timeline for its construction at the disputed site at Ayodhya. The meet also discussed Triple talaq and Rafale deal.

The meeting was held in the absence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party president Amit Shah. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh addressed the meet, the second of the current Winter Session.

BJP's MPs from UP, Ravindra Kushwaha and Hari Narayan Rajbhar, raised the temple issue which is part of party's manifesto, and were backed by other MPs when Rajnath was addressing the party MPs.

The Home Minister was quoted by sources as telling party MPs that it was everybody's wish to see a Ram temple in Ayodhya and that MPs should be

patient.

RSS head Mohan Bhagwat had recently called for the construction of Ram temple saying that its fulfillment would remove one of the main constraints in way of Hindu-Muslim rapprochement. RSS has advocated a law to facilitate the construction of the temple.

Though the BJP has agreed with the sentiments of these organisations, it has so far not officially spoken on the subject.

Supreme court which is hearing the title suit for in the Ram-temple-Babri Masjid dispute is expected to fix time-table for the hearing of the trail early next year when Lok Sabha poll are also due.

In the meeting Rajnath spoke about the high popularity of Modi and claimed that none in the Opposition could match it. "We are far ahead of the Opposition. Circumstances are very good for us," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Narendra Singh Tomar Singh quoted.

Rajnath asked MPs to work

hard to repeat the success of the BJP in the 2019 hustings.

The issue of BJP's defeat in Assembly polls — Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh — was, understandably, not deliberated in the gathering. The poll set back in the Hindi heartland has come when the crucial Lok Sabha polls are only few months away and pose a big challenge to the leadership of Modi and Shah. The grand alliance of the Opposition which is yet to take shape, seeks to have state-to-state tie up against the BJP in the Lok Sabha poll.

Tomar also told newperson s that the passage of the triple talaq bill, which stipulates jail term for Muslim spouses accused of giving instant divorce to their wives, in Parliament is a top priority for the Government. The Opposition has opposed to the non-bailable warrants against husbands. The Government has brought some changes in the bill stipulating bail to Muslim husbands by the court if consented by the affected wives.

₹1,000 cr take hawala route to terrorists: ED

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Enforcement Directorate while investigating into illegal hawala deals in Kolkata has bumped into transactions that have terror links, sources said.

ED sleuths who conducted a series of raids throughout Kolkata a few days ago have reportedly found strong terror links of the hawala deals prompting the National Investigating Agency to jump into the case. The NIA will soon take up the matter for finding out its terror angle, sources said.

According to officials the cash collected from Kolkata and perhaps other parts of Bengal were routed to countries like Singapore, Dubai, Bangladesh and Nepal from where they were sent to the various terror outfits for carrying out militant activities in India, sources said adding about Rs 1,000 crore have been siphoned out of Kolkata through hawala route.

A part of the hawala money had gone into the hands of dreaded terror outfits like Jamaat Mujahideen Bangladesh, sources said adding other terror outfits have also received money from such transactions.

The hawala money was being transferred out of Kolkata for the past six months or so, sources maintained

CBI books two Army officers for graft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked two Army officers for allegedly taking bribes of over ₹82 lakh from a civilian contractor engaged in supply of rations for troops posted in Nagaland.

The action has been taken on a complaint from Brigadier Rajiv Gautam posted at the headquarters of the Army's 3 Corps headquartered in the Northeast.

Lt Col Amit Sharma and Lt Col Sutikshan Rana, officers of the Army Service Corps, received bribes worth ₹82 lakh between 2012 and 2016 from a supplier of ration, according to the complaint.

Sharma was Commanding Officer of the ASC at Dimapur from July 27, 2012, to October 15, 2014, while Rana held the position from October 16, 2014, to September 10, 2016. The Army had carried out a Court of Inquiry during which it was found that ₹82 lakh were allegedly paid to these two officers by the contractor Jai Prakash Singh, the complaint alleged.

During a seven-month-long Preliminary Enquiry, the CBI managed to establish alleged payments of ₹10 lakh and ₹3.40 lakh from Singh to Sharma and Rana, respectively, the officials said.

The payments were made through bank deposits of third parties known or close to the family members of Sharma and Rana, the officials said.

IAF sets new records, airlifts 463 tonnes of load in one go

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The IAF on Tuesday created a record of sorts by airlifting nearly 500 tons of load from Chandigarh in a single wave to airfields and drop zones in the Ladakh region as part of winter stocking. The region remains cut off from the rest of the country through land route due to snow and the IAF plays a crucial role in maintaining operational readiness of the army deployed on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China through round the year logistical maintenance.

The feat was accomplished by a fleet of 16 fixed wing aircraft comprising C-17 Globemaster, the IL-76 and AN-32. "All aircraft were loaded and took off from Chandigarh airbase early in the morning. The entire wave was accomplished in little less than six hours," IAF said.

This was a demonstration of the 'rapid airlift capability' of the IAF for quick response both during times of war and natural disasters and the Western Air Command (WAC) airlifted a record 463 tonnes.

The WAC is entrusted with the air maintenance of the entire northern region of the country and under normal operating circumstances airlifts close to 3,000 tonnes of load

per month.

Air Marshall NJS Dhillon, Senior Air Staff Officer (SASO) of Western Air Command under whose direction the effort was undertaken observed that rapid air mobility is a key component of modern warfare. "This assumes greater significance in short and intense wars. This is very true in India's context, especially when related to air mobility to airfields in the Ladakh region," he said.

Airlift of approximately 500 tonnes, in the achieved time frame, in a single wave, happens to be a record which enhances the assessment of the Commands' capability towards rapid and heavy airlift, the IAF statement added.

Given the strategic importance of Ladakh region, the IAF in the last few years has built airfields in the inaccessible areas to ensure uninterrupted supply of weapons, equipment and food to the troops posted on the LAC. They have to march for three to four days from the nearest road head to reach some of posts on the front.

Moreover, construction of airfields and advanced landing grounds(ALG) in the Ladakh region is a tough call given the terrain and climate where building activity is restricted only five to six summer months before snow blocks everything.



Indian Space Research Organisation's GSAT-7A onboard GSLV-F11 being taken to the launch pad during the countdown for its launch, at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Tuesday. The rocket will be launched from the launch pad 2 at 4:10 pm on Wednesday

PTI

₹1K cr flows via hawala to terrorists: ED

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Enforcement Directorate while investigating into illegal hawala deals in Kolkata has bumped into transactions that have terror links, sources said.

ED sleuths who conducted a series of raids throughout Kolkata a few days ago have reportedly found strong terror links of the hawala deals prompting the National Investigating Agency to jump into the case. The NIA will soon take up the matter for finding out its terror angle, sources said.

According to officials the cash collected from Kolkata and perhaps other parts of Bengal were routed to countries like Singapore, Dubai, Bangladesh and Nepal from where they were sent to the various terror outfits for carrying out militant activities in India, sources said adding about Rs 1,000 crore have been siphoned out of Kolkata through hawala route.

A part of the hawala money had gone into the hands of dreaded terror outfits like Jamaat Mujahideen Bangladesh, sources said adding other terror outfits have also received money from such transactions.

The hawala money was being transferred out of Kolkata for the past six months or so, sources maintained adding whether more money was sent before that period was being looked into.

The Tuesday's report came in the wake of Bongaon sessions court awarding death penalty to a Lashkar e Toiba terrorist Sk Naeem a resident of Aurangabad in Maharashtra. Naeem was arrested by the BSF at the Bangladesh border in 2007 along with three accomplices. He was involved in a train blast in Mumbai.

That parts of Bengal were being used by the terror outfits like JMB came to light way back on October 2, 2014 when a blast killed two militants who were manufacturing explosive devices at a house at Khagragarh in Burdwan district.

Subsequent investigations conducted by the NIA into the case took the lid off an elaborate terror network that was active in border districts of Nadia, Birbhum, Malda and North 24 Parganas. A number of undercover JMB militants and moles were arrested then. The JMB militants were working on a plot to assassinate some key leaders in Bangladesh, it was alleged.

Govt didn't seek Urjit's resignation, says Jaitley

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Tuesday said the Government did not seek resignation of Urjit Patel as RBI Governor over differences on some issues, and went on to cite how central bank heads were made to resign under prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi and when Yashwant Sinha was finance minister. Defending his Government's demands from the Reserve Bank to address certain issues including liquidity or fund problem in certain sectors, he said that there is no threat to the autonomy of the central bank. Patel, who was brought in by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-Government in 2016 after a second term was denied to outspoken former IMF chief economist Raghuram Rajan, in a surprise move resigned as RBI Governor on December 11.

Many blamed the pressure brought by the Government on the central bank to ease lending restrictions and release more of its capital to bolster the economy for Patel's resignation.

"Sarkar ki unse koi istife ki apeksha nahi thi (The Government did not seek Patel's resignation)," Jaitley said when asked about Patel's resignation at Agenda Aaj Tak programme here. The Government had cited the never-used-before provision of the RBI Act that gives it powers to issue directions to the Governor, to get the central



bank to discuss its areas of concerns. Two board meetings after that were "cordial" and decisions were taken on three-four issues while there were also some on which no decision was taken, he said, adding the issue of paring of some of RBI's over ₹9 lakh crore reserves after deciding on an appropriate size of buffer was decided to be referred to an expert committee. While the committee was decided to be formed in the RBI board meeting held on November 19, a consensus on the composition eluded till Patel resigned.

Jaitley said the expert committee would be announced in few days time. "So if you are saying that raising these issues is an infringement on autonomy, this is wrong," he said. He then went on to cite past RBI governors who had resigned. "The first governor to resign (was in) 1955 when (Prime Minister) Pt Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Governor B Rama Rau (that) economic policy is to be framed by Government of India (and) monetary policy is to be framed by you. But your other policies like credit policies have to be in support of the Government's

economic policies. And if are suggesting you would resign, 'I am unable to advise you to the contrary.' So he resigned," he said.

"Yashwant Sinha, who became the high priest of RBI autonomy, during the Chandra Shekhar Government called (RBI) Governor RN Malhotra and said I want your resignation," he added. Former finance minister P Chidambaram, Jaitley said, was "not on speaking terms with two Governors during his tenure."

Many central banks around the world maintain 8 per cent of gross assets as reserves while conservative ones maintain at 13-14 per cent. RBI maintains it at 28 per cent, Jaitley said.

"In 2013 they said that you have ₹1.46 lakh crore in excess you give. Then no one said that it is raiding the Reserve Bank," he said, adding reserves released can be used for infusing capital in public sector banks as well as for schemes for the benefit of poor. "I don't need these funds for funding fiscal deficit, or government expenditure for this year till the month of May. I don't need even one rupee," he said and cited a letter written by Rajan as the chief economic advisor of the Government in 2013 to RBI asking how much capital did it require. "My Government has the best fiscal record and even this year we will maintain the fiscal deficit. And therefore to maintain fiscal deficit I don't need that kind of money," he said.

SSB sets up 15 outposts along Bhutan borders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Post-Doklam, the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has ramped up its defences along the Indo-Bhutan border. It has set up 15 Border Outposts along the Arunachal Pradesh border and three outposts along Sikkim border besides deploying manpower to man these posts.

The SSB is a designated border guarding force and Lead Intelligence Agency for the Bhutan frontier besides the Nepal border.

The BOPs and the related deployments have been made on Indo-Bhutan frontier in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, close to the Indo-China border. The BOPs have been constructed close to the treacherous terrains of valleys like Dibang, Doo-Delai and Lohit opposite the Tibetan plateau in China, officials said, adding all the 18 BOPs have been operationalised.

SSB Director General Surjeet Singh Deswal said, "Three new BOPs in Sikkim and 15 in Arunachal Pradesh were established and they have started functioning this year to provide better security and patrolling in the areas bordering Bhutan. The three new BOPs are in Western Sikkim which touches Bhutan border."

Addressing a Press conference ahead of the force's 55th Raising Day, Deswal, however, clarified that his force has nothing to do with the operations

along India-China Border or the Doklam issue which was being looked after by sister agencies.

The 18 new BOPs are among the 72 such posts that have been made operational this year, he further said.

The strengthening of the Indo-Bhutan frontier comes months after the troops of India and China were locked in a 73-day standoff at Doklam on the tri-junction of India-Bhutan-China--from June 16, 2017. The standoff began after the Indian side stopped road construction by China's People's Liberation Army in the area that belonged to Bhutan. The standoff ended on August 28 last year.

Presently, 53 battalions of SSB are deployed on the 699 km Indo-Bhutan and 1,751 km India-Nepal borders. The SSB secures the frontiers through a network of 708 BOPs along the two countries.

As many as 176 BOPs are operational along the India-Bhutan border that runs along the states of Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam while 533 are along India-Nepal border that runs across the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim.

The SSB has also begun the process of transferring around 1,800 non-combat personnel of the SSB to the Intelligence Bureau and the exercise will be completed in the next one month, Deswal said.

₹ logs best day in over 5 years, vaults 112 paise



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee on Tuesday rallied by a whopping 112 paise, its best single-day gains in over five years, to settle at 70.44 against the US dollar as softening crude oil prices eased concerns over India's current account deficit expansion.

Besides, sustained selling of the American currency by exporters and banks as well as the greenback's weakness against its key rivals globally ahead of the US Fed policy decision Wednesday also helped the domestic unit scale further heights. The Brent crude, an international benchmark, was trading 2.26 per cent lower at \$58.26 per barrel, a 14-month low.

At the Interbank Foreign Exchange (forex) market, the rupee opened on a firm note at 71.34 from. It gained further ground to hit a high of 70.44, a massive climb of 112 paise over its previous closing.

The Indian currency had gained 34 paise to close at 71.56 against the US dollar Monday.

The Tuesday's 112 paise ascent marked the best day for the rupee since September 19, 2013, when it had surged by 161 paise against the US dollar.

Forex dealers said a drop in bond yields easing liquidity concerns in the market and bullish trend in equities trading also supported the rupee in maintaining its upward movement. The benchmark Sensex Tuesday wiped off early losses to end 77 points higher at 36,347 on Tuesday, the sixth consecutive session of gains. The broader NSE Nifty edged higher by over 20 points to end above the 10,900-mark. The Financial Benchmark India Private Ltd (FBIL) set the reference rate for the rupee/dollar at 71.1940 and for rupee/euro at 80.7554. The reference rate for rupee/British pound was fixed at 89.8829 and for rupee/100 Japanese yen at 63.21.

My books speak volume: Manmohan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday silenced his critics who often called him a "silent PM" by stating that he was not a Prime Minister who was afraid of talking to the press. "I was a silent Prime Minister. My books speak for themselves. I wasn't the PM who was afraid of talking to the Press. I met Press regularly and on every foreign tour that I undertook, I had a Press conference on return in the plane," Singh said on the sidelines of launch his authored book titled 'Changing India'.

The book penned by the

Manmohan Singh encapsulates his life as an economist and a policymaker, and sheds light on the 10 years that he led the Congress led UPA Governments.

On the economic front, the former prime minister said that India is destined to be a major powerhouse of the global economy. Singh, who is also a renowned economist, said that India has witnessed an average growth rate of about 7 per cent since 1991. "Despite all hiccups, hurdles, India will get its action right... India is destined to be a major powerhouse of global economy," he said.

Talking about the tussle between the RBI and the Centre, Singh said the rela-

tionship between the two (RBI and Government) is like husband and wife where differences must be harmonised so they can work in harmony.

A set of five volumes, Changing India gives the former PM's perspectives on a wide range of economic, social and political issues as they evolved through his political career. Singh also writes about his time in academia during the 1950s, and his tenure as the prime minister from 2004-2014.

Singh, who has been a vocal critic of the Narendra Modi-led NDA government's policies, has written extensively about the country's economic evolution in the last decade.

DSC prize winner to be declared at Kolkata literary meet

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The winners of the eight US \$25,000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature will be declared at a special Award Ceremony at the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet (Kalam) that will take place from 22nd to 27th January, 2019 in Kolkata, India.

This partnership is in line with the peripatetic nature of the prize, where true to its South Asian essence, the winner is announced in different South Asian countries by rotation.

The DSC Prize, 2016 was awarded to Anuradha Roy at the Galle Literary Festival in Sri Lanka. Last year, prize was awarded to Anuk Arudpragasam at the Dhaka Lit Fest in Bangladesh/

This year, the winner will be announced at the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet in Kolkata on January 25. .

Instituted by Surina Narula and Manhad Narula in 2010, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature has emerged as a leading international literary prize specifically focused on South Asian fiction writing. Its key vision is to showcase and reward the best literary writing talent from this region and present it to a global audience.

The prize is committed to extend the conversation on

South Asian writing and reaches out to various audiences through exciting and creative partnerships. The partnership with the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet will provide a significant impetus to the literature of this region as both the prize and the festival are strongly focused to further the cause of South Asian writing. The five member international jury panel which is adjudicating the books as well as the shortlisted authors would be invited to attend the Award Ceremony.

Speaking about the partnership, Surina Narula, founder of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature said, "We are delighted to partner with the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet to announce the winner of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2018 at this prestigious festival in January. We see a lot of positive synergies in this partnership as we both share a common vision to promote and highlight South Asian writing to more people across geographies through the forum of literature and the arts. In continuation of our tradition of announcing the winner in different South Asian countries by rotation, we are now happy to announce the DSC Prize 2018 winner at the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet in Kolkata, India."

From Page 1

An aide of Kumar said he does not want the party to face any embarrassment and that is why decided to resign from the primary membership of the Congress soon after the Delhi High Court pronounced its judgment in the case.

The aide clarified the 73-year-old three-time MP does not have a Twitter account and comments attributed to him in the social media platform were not made by him.

Cable TV to...

From Page 1

The channels include in this pack are Zee Anmol, Zee Action, Sony PAL, Sony WAH, Rishtey, Movies OK, Star Utsav, Star Utsav Movies, Discovery Jeet, Zee Action and Big Magic. The basic pack will also have sports channels, including Star Sports First, Star Sports 3 and DD Sport, all of which are priced in the range of ₹1-4 per month.

The second category is a premium plan, which will be priced at ₹300-350 for the standard definition version and ₹450-550 per month for the HD version. This premium package will have channel such as Star Plus, Zee, Zee Cinema, Colors, Sony, &TV, SET Max, Star Movies, History TV18, Star World and &Fix.

The local cable TV operators are not happy with the new tariff regime and they have wrote to TRAI in this regard.

BJP writes off...

From Page 1

"There will be interest relief scheme of up to four per cent for farmers. There will be interest relief from the State Government so that farmers get crop loan at zero interest from next financial year," Patowary said adding that around 19 lakh farmers across the State are expected to take the benefit of it.

Meanwhile, the BJP-led Government in Gujarat announced on Tuesday it will waive electricity bills of connection holders in rural areas to the tune of ₹650 crore.

"Total 6.22 lakh connection holders in rural areas across the State will be benefited with this waiver to the tune of ₹650 crore pending electricity bills,"

Gujarat's Energy Minister Saurabh Patel said.

The Minister said these connections were cut off due to power theft and non-payment of bills. "These are domestic, agricultural as well as commercial connections," Patel said.

The Congress and Patidar quota agitation leader Hardik Patel have been demanding loan waiver for farmers in Prime Minister Modi's home State for some time now, cornering the Vijay Rupani-led Government in Gujarat.

The agrarian distress led to the BJP's worse performance in over decades when it barely managed to win 99 seats in the 182-member Assembly in State elections last year.

3 Asiatic lions mowed...

From Page 1

Sources said that forest staff had been tackling the rest three members of the lion pride to ensure that they do not come near the tracks in search of the missing three sub-adults.

According to the 2015 census, Gir has 523 lions, including 109 male, 201 female, 73 sub-adults, and 140 cubs. Since September, 35 lions have died: Some due to natural cause, many others fell prey to CDV and Protozoa infections and during territorial fights.

Gir (east) forest division falls under Junagadh wildlife circle. Boarala is a village located in Savarkundla taluka of Amreli district. It is adjacent to Chandgad and Liliya where Asiatic lions have settled in reserve forest and thickets in private revenue land.

The railway tracks on which the accident took place connect Pipava port on sea coast in Rajula taluka of Amreli district to Surendranagar junction. The busy broad-gauge railway tracks are owned by Pipavav



Railway Corporation Limited (PRCL), a joint venture between Indian Railways and Gujarat Pipavav Port Limited, a private firm which owns and operate the Pipava port.

The Pipavav port is one of the biggest ports of Gujarat in terms of handling containerised cargo. The railway line has the capacity to handle 21 trains every day.

Around six Asiatic lions died after being hit by moving goods train in Rajula range of Amreli social forestry division

and Savarkundla range between 2014 and 2015. After the fatalities, the forest department had erected chain-linked fencing on either side of the track over a stretch of around 10-km from near the Pipavav port onward to Rajula town. However, fencing is not there in Borala where the latest incident took place, said the officials.

Asiatic lions are an endangered species and their only wild population in the world is surviving in Gir forest and other protected areas spread across Junagadh, Gir Somnath, Amreli and Bhavnagar districts in Saurashtra region of Gujarat State. Their population was estimated to be 523 during the lion census conducted in 2015. Of this, 174 was recorded in Amreli district alone. The carnivores have settled in Liliya and Krakach area of Amreli district for the last 15 years as their population grew in protected forest areas. Being territorial animals, the big cats looked for abodes outside.

Will trim...

From Page 1

"If your travel from Kargil to Kanyakumar or Kutchh to Kamrup, you will realise the speed at which development works are underway. Whatever is happening is because of the Government's commitment, the aspirations of the local people, farmers, labourers, professionals," Modi averred.

"We are concentrating on integration of next generation infrastructure and transport from villages to cities today. With this aim, the Centre and the Maharashtra Government are strengthening the infrastructure in the State," the Prime Minister said.

Describing the Hinjewadi-Shivajinagar Metro corridor as a "special" project, the Prime Minister said it is the first project approved under the Government's new Metro Rail Policy for the country. "The Metro Rail Policy is 'reform oriented' by ensuring the metro trains are linked with feeders, buses, new walkways, pathways developed simultaneously," Modi said.

Won't let Modi...

From Page 1

Rahul said Modi has been at helms of affairs as PM for last 4.5 years, but has not waived a single rupee of farmers' loans but promised that Congress and other Opposition parties would join hands to end the farmer's miseries. He said if the Modi Government does not waive farm loans, Congress guarantees to waive the same if voted to power in 2019. He said a united Opposition will exert "such pressure on Modi that not a single farmer will be left out".

When asked about Government's claim on the "typo" in the affidavit given to the Supreme Court on the Rafale issue, Rahul quipped there will be many more typos coming now from the Government side.

"A number of typo errors will come out now. This is just a beginning of typo errors, now one after the other typo errors

will come, on JPC issue, on Rafale issue, on farmers, on demonetisation, you will start seeing typo errors. Basically, what is happening is that money of people of India is being stolen, of farmers, of small shopkeepers. I consider demonetisation as the biggest scam of the world. The purpose of note ban was to snatch money of the poor and give to the friends of Narendra Modi..." Rahul claimed.

Referring to Rahul addressing the issue of farmer distress and saying that the Congress and other Opposition parties will ensure that all farm loans are waived, Prasad declared it was just drama. The Congress, he said, had been in power for about 60 of the last 70 years. "What have they done for farmers? They are doing just drama now," he said.

During the Congress and its chief to show "courage" and discuss the fighter jet deal "eye to eye" in the House, Prasad said, "Don't run away from the debate." He added that the Congress was fleeing a debate on the issue because it had many skeletons from defence deals in its cupboard.

Winged guests take rain...

From Page 1

"The revival of wetland is required if we want to see winged guests in Delhi and National Capital Region," he said.

Meanwhile, against all odds, there is some good news for Delhiites as rare species of migratory birds — Red Pochard beak has been spotted in Yamuna biodiversity park.

Dr Faiyaz Khudsar, Scientist in the Environment department, Delhi University, said December month has recorded good number of migratory birds. "We have recorded 1,000 birds of ten different species of migratory birds such as Northern Shoveler, Common Pochard," Dr Khudsar added.

It is important to mention here that in a recent bird counts in Delhi recorded 251 species

of birds in Delhi-NCR. These species were found in Najafgarh, Sultanpur, Bhindawas, Dighal, Okhla Bird Sanctuary and Yamuna floodplains.

As per the findings, this year 15 birds were spotted which were missing last year, however, 21 species were not spotted which was spotted last year.

Najafgarh Jheel is a favorable wetland where bird watchers may spot hundreds of species of birds, including large flocks of greater flamingo, common shelduck, osprey, pelican, duck and goose.

Importantly, Stoliczka's buschat, listed in the vulnerable category by International conservation of Nature (IUCN), has been spotted only at a few places in the past, including Hisar and some areas of Rajasthan and Kutch.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Justice at last

Sajjan Kumar's life sentence may bring some closure to Sikhs hit by 1984 but the court has asked questions of other killings as well



The Congress probably had not bargained for a bad day at the courts so soon after managing some respectable foothold on the electoral ground in the latest round of state polls. But its past ghosts came to haunt it swiftly, dim its newly-minted relevance and remind it that victories remain pyrrhic and there's still a long way to convince people why they should trust it ever again. While its poor homework led to the Supreme Court's dismissal of the Rafale petitions as baseless and without concrete evidence of wrongdoing, the Delhi High Court had a mountain of evidence with which to nail it over the carnage of Sikhs in 1984 after Indira Gandhi's assassination. It reversed earlier judgments and rightfully sentenced one of the pogrom leaders, Sajjan Kumar, to life imprisonment for what it classified as a crime against humanity, which needed closure despite the time lapse of 34 years. Justice delayed may be justice denied but for the generations of the 2,700 Sikh families that have borne the burden of pain, loss and utter humiliation viscerally, having seen their loved ones killed brutally, this is both vindication and reconciliation. Somewhat. It is also a reclamation of their identity that at one time was bracketed under terrorism against the state. The court also listed precedents to justify why delayed justice is necessary to prove that there is no getting away and restore faith in democracy as the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong even if the law and order system itself is held hostage by the perpetrators, in this case even enjoying political patronage as members of the ruling party. The court cited the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, which took up an appeal against the acquittal of the accused of mass killings of Bangladeshi citizens in 1971 by sympathisers of the Pakistani Army. The trial began in 2009, 38 years after the incident, and concluded in 2013. A Nazi war criminal was convicted after 56 years. As the court articulated, "no amount of time can be 'too long' to satisfy the needs for truth and some measure of accountability, nor can come arbitrary legal time limit be set. The argument that some wounds are too old to be exposed has little moral integrity... the wounds are still there for all to see." And in this case, it is that of a community that has contributed constructively to our national life.

The bigger problem for the Congress is that unlike Sajjan Kumar, who resigned after the verdict, bigger leaders like Jagdish Tytler and the newly-elected Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Kamal Nath, will now be facing the heat of inquiry. And though Nath claims the Nanavati Commission had found no ground to implicate him, petitioners of the Sajjan Kumar case say they will pursue a case against Nath as he was present at the spot as is documented. The BJP, seeing a ray of light post the Rafale ruling, is amping up its offensive and building up an emotive narrative for 2019, zeroing in on its nemesis in Madhya Pradesh. But the Congress sustenance is not likely to be affected much considering it sits pretty in Punjab and can sacrifice senior leaders if they are convicted. In such a situation, Rahul Gandhi can even cleanse the seniors to usher in the young and appear he is genuinely concerned about undoing past evil. But can the BJP itself rest easy? The Delhi High Court, after all, even listed the Gujarat riots of 2002 as one of the many genocidal crimes that needed redress as the accused evaded prosecution and punishment by using their political clout and manipulating the police. The court, therefore, called for a strong legal framework that would make the guilty answerable and not immune in real time. There's no doubt that the BJP has more than a few skeletons that can tumble out if the Congress counteracts with a similar "nail them" narrative. In the end, no political party in a democracy should go scot free or feel free to tweak the system with impunity just because it is in command.

Cricket's bad boy

We should all cut Virat Kohli and his behaviour on the pitch some slack



If there is a truism about India, it is that everyone over here seems to have an opinion about politics and cricket. So, one should really treat actor Naseeruddin Shah's comments on cricketer Virat Kohli's behaviour as just another Indian cricket fan expressing his/her opinion on sport. Just like the thousands, who shared their opinions on who should form India's opening pair for the Melbourne Test starting next week, others, mainly Australians, have been commenting on Kohli's aggressive, take no prisoners captaincy style. The irony that those who have been watching cricket for a few years feel about the new 'woke' Australian cricket team is palpable. Australian teams defined the aggressive and nasty cricketers on the field between the eras of Allan Border to Steve Smith. It appears after they were caught cheating in South Africa and with Smith and David Warner banished to the wilderness at least temporarily, this new Australian side is on a public relations spree to be likeable. But let us be honest, Kohli doesn't need to go on a PR campaign, he lets his bat and captaincy do the talking. While he is a bit lippy on the field, he is a perfectly decent bloke off the field and doesn't need Anushka Sharma's certificate for that — anyone who has interacted with him will testify to his politeness off the field. And that was the same about most Australian cricketers of the past. Steve Waugh, who was never short of a snarky comment on the field, is a humanitarian for example.

That said, while we should be proud that Virat Kohli wears his heart on his sleeve and has the Indian flag in his heart when playing for the country, he should not forget that as the Captain of the Indian men's cricket team, he is possibly the most influential individual in the nation. There are millions of impressionable young children looking up to him and they might not have the degree of self-control that Kohli has to keep his on-field and off-field personae separate. And in an age of multiple cameras and powerful microphones, it might not be a bad idea to control his aggression. But if it is his aggressive nature on the field and pitch that will help us finally conquer Indian cricket's 'final frontier' (to borrow the term from Waugh) and win a test series down under, it is worth it. Let's be honest, despite their performance in the recently concluded Test in Perth, this is the weakest Australian cricket team for three decades and India has never had such an opportunity. Let us not lose sight of the big picture and take a cricket fan's opinion too seriously.

opinion08

A missed opportunity

Despite all the calibrated contradictions between India and Pakistan, Imran Khan's wish for talks will be fulfilled after the 2019 elections. Terror and talks will go together



ASHOK K MEHTA

For those who are intrepid optimists, giving Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan a chance to prove he can do more to better India-Pakistan relations is a fair bet. After all, he has been handpicked by the Army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) played no small role in installing him as the Prime Minister. Khan claimed that Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa and he are on the same page. The Kartarpur corridor confidence building measure (CBM) is an Army-approved Khan's first step awaiting an Indian response which will be followed by Khan's promised additional steps, whatever those might be. Prime Minister Narendra Modi compared Kartarpur with the fall of the Berlin wall, adding: "Kartarpur will not be a corridor but a reason to bring people together." The two Sikh Ministers he sent were equally euphoric, especially Union Minister for Food Processing, Harsimrat Kaur, who said that Kartarpur was a perfect way to start a "new beginning." But spoilers are on both sides. Union External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj was quick to guillotine hope with her famous one-liner: "Terror and talks cannot go together." Similarly, Swaraj killed an earlier agreed meeting on the sidelines of UNGA of a conversation between Indian and Pakistan Foreign Ministers in reaction to media outrage over beheading of a soldier and Line of Control violations. Both incidents were missed opportunities to test Khan's strategic autonomy under Bajwa's watch.

Linked to the resumption of bilateral dialogue is Islamabad's yearning to hold the 19th Saarc summit, which was postponed in 2016 following the Uri attack, and rejected by Swaraj citing lack of conducive environment (read Pakistan's backing for terrorists). The killing of 19 soldiers in the Uri attack was not due to any ingenious or suicidal terrorist action but was accidental, caused by the careless storage of gas cylinders which engulfed the tent in which they were sleeping. During the Vajpayee-led NDA Government, even after a major terrorist attack on Parliament in December 2001 — which led to Operation Parakram — Vajpayee did not skip the 11th Saarc summit in Kathmandu in January 2002, where the then Pakistan Prime Minister Pervez Musharraf shook hands even as India's armed forces were on full-scale deployment, ready for war. India's attempts to isolate and punish Pakistan have seen the re-energising of sub-regional groupings, like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec), which includes Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan. According to a World Bank report, 'Glass Half Full: The Problem of Regional Trade in South Asia' (by Sanjay Kathuria), the formal trade between India and Pakistan could be \$37 billion but is only \$2 million due to a variety of surmountable barriers. South Asia, as a region, is locked down by India-Pakistan tensions and an upswing in relations between the two nations would benefit other Saarc countries too.



In conformity with Modi's muscular policy — surgical strikes *et al* — his Government has become the first one to not engage in official dialogue with Pakistan since it started in 1996. Except for the likes of Mani Shankar Aiyar of uninterrupted and uninteruptible dialogue fame and Sudheendra Kulkarni, who have suffered repeated indignities at the hands of Hindu goons, the majority of soldiers, diplomats and intellectuals are on the side of no dialogue with Pakistan as it attracts the law of diminishing returns, coupled with doses of despair and frustration. Still, there are those who hang around in fatigued Track II simply because the official track is closed. The 26/11 Mumbai attacks, whose perpetrators have gone unpunished and are being mainstreamed, marked the turning point in the dialogue process, especially after India and Pakistan came breathlessly close to agreeing on the four or five point Kashmir formula during the single-window Musharraf regime, which turned out to be a flash in the pan. Ten and six years of Generals Musharraf and Ashfaq Parvez Kayan had upset the collegium of Corps Commanders, disturbing the channel of promotions. The Generals agreed to replace the era of direct with proxy rule, thereby obviating international and domestic costs. This mechanism gave rise to new terminologies — elected Government and establishment (deep state). While the last two elected Governments completed their

“WHY SHOULD GEN BAJWA AND IMRAN KHAN WANT AN ON-AND-OFF DIALOGUE WITH INDIA WHEN STATUS QUO IS SUITABLE? REASON: TO KEEP UP THE OPTICS OF GOOD NEIGHBOURLY BEHAVIOUR, ENHANCE AND BENEFIT TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMY”

term, their Prime Ministers were prevented from doing so by showing them as corrupt and incompetent, to establish the indispensability of the Army as the ultimate custodian of Pakistan's core values and national interest. The established democratic tenet of civilian-political control of the military was reversed to military (judicial and NAB) control of the political class, which the recent elections have commendably demonstrated with the Army's choice of Prime Minister.

In and outside Pakistan, the question that is inevitably asked is about altering the behaviour of the military: Who will do it and how will it be done? This is considered un-doable. At one time, the Americans were the only ones who could have achieved this but the Army was their strategic ally. After plastering Pakistan with abuse and freezing military aid, US President Donald Trump has been forced into seeking help from the Generals for the peace process in Afghanistan. The Chinese are best placed to influence behavioural change but will not oblige. Neither the US nor China will mess around with a nuclear-armed Pakistan, umbilically tied with terrorist proxies, making Pakistan the most dangerous state. Cross-border *jihad* and terrorism will pose a perennial threat to India — while keeping alive the Kashmir dispute which even a 100 surgical strikes (not feasible without escalation) will be unable to counter.

For Pakistan, India is an existential threat, even more so after

the then Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval threatened a counter *jihad* and evaporation of Balochistan if there was another Mumbai. Pakistan's military is the defender of faith and bulwark against Indian machinations of its further break-up following the creation of Bangladesh. Cross-border terrorism is Pakistan's low-cost high-gain revenge against India's splitting of Pakistan.

So, why should Gen Bajwa and Imran Khan want an on-and-off dialogue with India when *status quo* is suitable? Reason: To keep up the optics of good neighbourliness, enhance and benefit trade relations with the fastest growing economy, resume conversations on Kashmir without necessarily aiming to find a solution (of a mothballed Kashmir) and even seeking India's help in Afghanistan. In short, without diluting the threat from India, which dilutes its primacy in civil-military relations, cherry-pick items for talks which benefit Pakistan. Regulating the tap of terrorism as Musharraf did is the price Rawalpindi is willing to pay. Despite these calibrated contradictions, Khan's wish for talks with India will be consummated mid-2019 after the elections. Terror and talks will then go together.

(The writer is a retired Major General of the Indian Army and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the revamped Integrated Defence Staff)

SOUNDBITE

India would be happy to associate with Zambia in any area, including training of officials in the institutional or technical human resource development.

Vice President
—Venkaiah Naidu



India will never forgive Hafiz Saeed for his role in 26/11 Mumbai attacks. You can be certain, sometime or the other, justice will be met.

UN representative
—Syed Akbaruddin



I get disturbed when the media exaggerates. If radical, violent groups are not given attention, then maybe this world would be a better place to live in.

Actor
—Sunny Leone



Cartoons do not hurt but have a healing power. Cartoonists are 'closer to God' as they can minutely observe different characteristics of various human beings.

Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Failed policy

Sir — This refers to the article, "No salvation in shooting the reformist" (December 18) by Bindu Dalmia. In the just-concluded Assembly elections to five States, the BJP got one out of 40 seats in Mizoram, one out of 119 seats in Telangana, 15 out of 90 seats in Chhattisgarh, 73 out of 199 seats in Rajasthan and 109 out of 230 seats in Madhya Pradesh. Barring Madhya Pradesh, the BJP could not come anywhere near the halfway mark in the five State Assemblies.

These election results clearly indicate that the people did not like the BJP's bottom-tight-top-loose kind of policy to undertake reformation.

While measures, like demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax, took the water away for small fishes, big crocodiles happily survived on the land without water, with help of plastic money. On the other hand, soft-dealing with macro bank loan defaulters and the hard approach on farm loans did not go down well with the farmers.

Sujit De
Kolkata

Ban loan waivers altogether

This refers to the article, "Resurrect Indian economy" (December 18) by Shivaji Sarkar. There must be a complete ban on promises such as subsidies and loan-waivers that routinely make up poll manifestos of political parties. The ultimate sufferer of such promises is the mute category of the middle-class taxpayer, who bears the brunt of additional taxes and cost inflation due to a deficit in the economy.

Even the subsidy system should be abolished in a gradual manner. Agricultural incomes over a certain limit should be taxed because it's not the farmers, but ultra-rich personalities, including famous celebrity icons and politicians, who benefit from such tax-free income. They misuse the provision by declaring their unaccounted income from land use as agricultural income.

A loan waiver to farmers is a big election gimmick and, in fact, makes them more dependent on middlemen because banks, compelled to write off grants, refuse to finance them

Better hopes

Sir — This refers to the article, "GST, unaddressed Hindu concerns blighted BJP" (December 16) by Swapan Dasgupta. With regards to Telangana and Mizoram, where both the BJP and Congress lost badly, regional considerations played a major role over there. As for the other Hindi

heartland States anti-incumbency led to the BJP's defeat.

In Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan's impartiality, strictness and adherence to rules annoyed the people of the State and even his near and dear ones. As for Chhattisgarh, Naxals, being afraid of the BJP's aggressiveness, threatened that the electorate could not vote for the party. This had a questionable effect. In

Rajasthan, people were more dissatisfied with Vasundhara Raje than Prime Minister Modi.

While the Congress can now rejoice over its victories, people will soon get disenchanted with it. Prime Minister Modi's policies, particularly in the sectors of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Home are remarkably fine. The Government needs more time to clean up the mess created by the



Madhu Agrawal
Delhi

in the future. Also, such loan waivers are limited only to previous years during which many farmers have already repaid their loans. But political gimmickry means that even those who can repay are kept out.

UPA Government. We must hope for the better.

LR Gupta
Lucknow

Bleak chances

Sir — DMK President MK Stalin's call to the Opposition to rally around Rahul Gandhi is no doubt a big boost for the Congress president but it is too early to say whether the entire Opposition would stand united and endorse Rahul as their prime ministerial candidate.

Electoral victories in the three crucial northern States have infused confidence in the Congress and bolstered the image of Rahul as a leader with a potential to take Modi head-on in the Lok Sabha battle. But given its organisational weakness in electorally significant States like West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, the Congress has no option than to ally with regional heavyweights to improve its electoral prospects.

M Jeyaram
Chennai

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Congress has to tread carefully

The Grand Old Party must not get carried away with new-found victories. It must first anchor Opposition unity and keep watch on BJP moves



KALYANI SHANKAR

For a party that appeared to be in an existential crisis, the Congress has much to cheer about following its win in three big States — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh — this month. Success in elections is always heartening and it becomes even better given the fact that the Congress has been in a political wilderness since 2014. Though it seemed the BJP had all the momentum since 2004, the saffron space has shrunk a little after December 11, 2018. The challenge now for the Congress leadership is to take the momentum forward until the 2019 Lok Sabha election in which stakes are very high for both the Congress-led UPA and the BJP-led NDA. After all, momentum does matter in politics. A diminished BJP is not going to sit quiet and allow the Congress to have a free run in the 2019 poll. It might even redouble its efforts to win the general election. Narendra Modi is an assertive Prime Minister and might re-package himself and reintroduce 'brand Modi' in a different mould. In all probability, alternative politics might gain momentum if Congress chief Rahul Gandhi goes the right way and projects a new narrative for himself and his party as going by the poll results, people are willing to give him a chance.

Gandhi's priority should be to set his organisation, which has shrunk electorally, and redouble efforts for Opposition unity. The Congress is now at number four position in States such as West Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. It also finished at the third or fourth place in other States as well. Many sections, like the Dalits, tribals, upper castes and even Muslims have drifted away. The BJP's strength is that it is a cadre-based organisation; it has unlimited resources, best communication skills and a wonderful propaganda machine. Internally, the young Gandhi has chosen to go with the old guard. The message became clearer with his choice of Chief Ministers in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. He more or less told the youth that younger leaders will be allowed to build their profiles, even if that means they have to wait a bit longer for leadership roles.

Second, he must focus on building alliances. Even with the wind in its sails, the Congress is faced with challenges. The Opposition parties have inherent contradictions but Gandhi has been showing some boldness. He walked with Jignesh Mewani and Hardik Patel in Gujarat, which helped the party reduce the BJP's numbers in the State. Similarly, the decision to support the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka earlier this year, to stop the BJP from forming the Government, also showed his political adventurism. Besides, the party has tied up with alliance partners in different States like Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Jharkhand. Further, it is in the process of aligning with the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh. The Grand Old Party has to keep the UPA flock together and also expand wherever necessary. As a bigger party, the Congress has to be flexible in sharing seats with other regional parties.

Third, he has to build a new narrative. It may not be enough to indulge just in Modi-bashing and negative campaigning. Gandhi successfully tapped political resentment of the farmers against the BJP Government as also discontent among the unemployed. These are the two major issues that helped him win the three States. Negative sentiments circling demonetisation and GST, too, helped. The caste factor played its role for the grand old party.

The fourth option is to stitch Opposition unity. The success in Assembly polls has given Gandhi a new image and he must now be able to reach out to senior leaders and regional Opposition parties and ensure that the Congress is able to anchor the coalition. Following the Karnataka polls, the Opposition showed interest in forming a 'grand alliance' which fell apart with the BSP and SP moving away. It is now clear that the prime ministerial face of the Opposition will be decided only in a post-poll scenario. These parties can do the trick if they come together and make sure that Opposition votes are undivided. In fact, Modi's strength lies in Opposition disunity. The road to success in 2019 is challenging but Rahul Gandhi has made a good start. Despite setbacks, the BJP remains a formidable opponent and must not be taken lightly. As Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley pointed out, the BJP won the same three States in December 2003 but lost the 2004 general election. Hence, the Congress should not be carried away by the present success. It has won the battle but not the war as yet. Time is very short and Opposition parties must decide their course of action now itself.

(The writer is a senior political commentator)

WE (CONGRESS) WILL NOT RETRACT A SINGLE INCH. WE WILL NOT LET THEM SLEEP AT NIGHT TILL FARMER LOANS ARE WAIVED.
—CONGRESS PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



NOTHING BETTER CAN BE EXPECTED FROM GANDHI. HIS PARTY ENSURED THAT INDIANS DID NOT SLEEP DURING ITS 60 YEARS OF RULE DUE TO RAMPANT CORRUPTION.
—BJP LEADER RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

Small businesses, big contribution

The viability of small and medium-sized firms is greater than that of large firms. Not only do they bring prosperity to the people but also play a fundamental role in driving the economy



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Small businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs are some of the most important influencers of economic growth because, in any economy, they represent more than 90 per cent of all employers and create 60 to 80 per cent of all new jobs, annually. In 2018, there were 30.2 million small businesses in the US, which represented 99.9 per cent of all businesses in the country, employing about 58.9 million people. Out of the total small business, 39 per cent were owned by women, who contributed to eight per cent of employment and generated 4.2 per cent of the revenues. According to a survey by Randstad Workmonitor, entrepreneurial ambition was the highest in India with 83 per cent of the Indian workforce wanting to be entrepreneurs. This is even higher than the global standard of 53 per cent. According to the survey, 58 per cent of the respondents were willing to leave their current job to start their own venture. This is important because although big businesses may dominate the stock market, it's the small businesses and startups that keep the economy moving.

Small businesses create job opportunities and drive the country's economic growth in smaller geographic areas. They make the market more competitive. A local farmer, for example, may be able to offer cheaper products because he doesn't have to spend money on shipping. Similarly, an agile start-up may be able to innovate new technology faster than a bulky bureaucratic counterpart, thereby forcing changes in thinking and behaviour.

Second, small businesses also operate locally. This gives them a strong preference for hiring local people. Big corporations often move into new territories with a team already in place. This can improve a city's population but nothing drives new job growth in a region as small businesses do.

Third, small firms have more flexibility. Anyone can start a new business. This makes them more diverse in form, function, culture and increases their potential as against large corporations. Greater the diversity in an economy, easier it is for the country to withstand tough conditions.

There are many reasons why men and women are turning to entrepreneurship and starting their own businesses. Decreasing wages, demands for more family and personal time are a few reasons that propel one towards entrepreneurship. Generally, it is seen that wages have not kept pace with the increased cost of living. What used to take the average income of only one worker to support a family today can take almost two-and-a-half. In contrast, entrepreneurs have the potential to earn more as business owners than as employees. Because entrepreneurs are working in small businesses for themselves. As their own boss, they have the flexibility to arrange their hours around their family schedules.

Moreover, salary raises of the employees, too, have become fewer. Companies generally tend to give performance bonuses so as to keep fixed costs low. And often, managers have to adhere to strict guidelines for standard operations procedures, or their bonuses are unlikely. An electronic chain corporation not only demands its managers to work six days a week but it also sends inspectors into the stores, unannounced, to deduct points for

“SMALL BUSINESS IS AMONG THE MOST POWERFUL SYMBOLS OF MODERN CAPITALISM AND ITS OWNERS ARE FREQUENTLY DESCRIBED AS VIRTUOUS, SELF-RELIANT AND INDEPENDENT. STARTING A VENTURE IS THE EASY PART BUT STAYING IN BUSINESS IS THE HARDEST TASK. THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF SMALL AND HOME-BASED BUSINESSES, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT CAN BE SUMMED UP IN THREE DS — DESIRE, DISCIPLINE AND DETERMINATION



minor infractions.

On the other hand, small business owners start as owners of their own company. Although they have responsibilities that go with being a business owner, they can take their businesses in whatever direction they choose. They also have the ability to strive and provide benefits to their employees and families as well. Additionally, economies world over are witnessing unprecedented changes — the job scenario is changing rapidly. Many jobs have discontinued, others may not return. So, unemployed workers have to find new jobs, often at much lower pay, or undertake training and education as a new career option.

Unstable economic conditions are inducing people to start ventures to secure their financial future. This makes entrepreneurship and small business ownership a viable career option. Although many companies now offer their employees flexible hours to handle family needs, there are times when employees, especially women — who are still the primary care-givers of family members — face scheduling conflicts while handling everyday personal concerns. Therefore, many entrepreneurs opt to work from home so that they can be with their families, attend their children's school events, or even run errands.

Lastly, having a small business is a definite way to escape from a job that one dislikes or no longer finds challenging or fulfilling. A recent study found that nearly 25 per cent of the people detest their jobs but remain trapped due to financial commitments like loans, rents, payments and living expenses.

Therefore, if they cannot afford to quit a full-time job to start a business, entrepreneurs can start a small business on the side until their business profits enable them to quit. According to the Small Business Administration (SBA), US, the number of part-time business-

es steadily increased since the mid-1980s and is expected to increase by about 10 per cent each year.

Once the employees leave to set up their own venture, there are several reasons why these owners of small, home-based and micro-businesses stay in such businesses to survive. First, small business owners network well within their industry, communities and beyond by encouraging and sharing with one another. Successful entrepreneurs will find mentors or themselves be the mentor to new business owners.

Second, many people, who are in their 50s, want to try their hand at entrepreneurship. Not only do such people bring a vast array of experience to their ventures, they also have a more mature approach. They are more likely to care about their employees or respect them. This can foster repeat business.

Third, entrepreneurs are not afraid to fail. Statistics reveal that it takes an average of three business start-ups for an entrepreneur to achieve a successful enterprise. Entrepreneurs constantly learn from mistakes and persist until one or more of their ventures succeed. They can respond to challenges and quickly change to stay competitive in the market and satisfy their customers.

Fourth, time management issues, family responsibilities and the desire for more money are just a few reasons why men and women tend to start a small-scale venture. Because their ventures are small, owners can pay attention to details that promote positive image.

Many business owners have gone on to expand their small ventures into multi-million enterprises, especially as venture-capital investment resources became available. Others chose to stay small so that they could serve specialised and niche markets. Thus, starting smaller and growing slowly decreases the likelihood of making

hasty and costly decisions that can lead to failures. Surveys also show that small business owners generally care more about the quality of their product and services than bigger companies. They believe this is the best way for them to compete with large companies that have access to more resources but are less personal.

Owners of small businesses strive to keep their customers satisfied to encourage repeat business. Small businesses can respond flexibly to problems and challenges as there is little hierarchy or chain of command. Large businesses may have set ways of operating and establish procedures that are hard to change. Small businesses are often far more flexible. They can also reach a quick decision on whether or not they can do what is required. Also, small businesses are well-positioned to introduce and develop new ideas. This is due to their owners not having to report or seek approval from anyone else. For example, when Anita Roddick set up The Body Shop, she developed a range of environment-friendly cosmetics in unsophisticated packaging. This would have been frowned upon in a conventional cosmetics company.

Due to the small scale of operation, small businesses have lower overhead costs. They operate in small premises with low heating and lighting costs, limited rent and rates to pay. Low costs result in lower prices for consumers. Small business is among the most powerful symbols of modern capitalism and its owners are frequently described as virtuous, self-reliant and independent. Starting a venture is the easy part but staying in business is the hardest task. There are many reasons for the success of small and home-based businesses but the most important can be summed up in three Ds — desire, discipline and determination.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)

India's power sector paradox

Problems surrounding India's energy sector are so complex and voluminous that the immediate need is for a policy environment that can push the country ahead on the innovation curve. Hopefully, this can help the nation seize leadership of an industry segment in the future, says SAURABH BISWAS

The energy sector, electricity in particular, is undergoing a phase of rapid change. Provisional data from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) showed that up to October 2018, electricity supply deficit was only 0.6 per cent of the total energy demand and deficit at peak was only 0.8 per cent. This in itself is suggestive of the fact that our country has come a long way since a decade. In fact, for the entire financial year of 2018-19, CEA's Load Generation Balance Report anticipated 4.6 per cent overall energy surplus and 2.5 per cent surplus at peak demand. However, below the surface, there is a long list of challenges already being faced and even bigger ones looming ahead.

India's electricity demand is projected to more than quadruple by 2035-36. Its demand grows concomitant with economic development, which is aided by increased penetration of necessary and discretionary goods powered by electricity, rise of disposable income and

access to credit. One particular item, air-conditioners, is of special interest. It has already led to a temporal shift in demand patterns. The situation will only get heightened in the future due to increased market penetration of the product and growing demand for cooling, given the rising temperatures.

A further spurt in demand is expected due to the electrification of the transport sector that is now almost inevitable. Even the Saubhagya scheme is expected to unlock latent demand by bringing electricity connection to a multitude of homes. Planning to meet the shifting demand is of essence. We are in a situation where we are constrained about our choice of electricity generation because of the conditions set by global climate change. Quite rightly, therefore, the Government has declared its intention to increase the share of renewable energy to 40 per cent by 2030.

Efforts to incentivise renewables are also palpable in the National Tariff Policy 2016 and the proposed

amendments to the Electricity Act. Most industry watchers have expressed hope in meeting the 175GW renewable target. However, certain things demand attention. The intermittency of renewables and challenges of grid integration underscore heightened risk of curtailment, both of technical nature and misalignment with demand-supply forecast. These problems will keep exacerbating as the quantum of renewable power available for grid injection increases as planned.

At this point, technical challenges of renewable power evacuation are compounded by flexible operations requirement of base power plants. Immediate focus is needed on storage that can smoothen out intermittence of renewables and longer-term network infrastructure planning.

Notably, conventional power sources, particularly thermal, is now at 64.1 per cent of the installed capacity (CEA: October 2018 provisional figures) that is predominantly coal-fed. Discussions are

already rife about the financial debacle lurking in many of these assets as their cost-competitiveness vis-à-vis renewables has eroded and policy thrust is shifting away. This needs attention since there is no prudence in thinking that a collapse of investments made in this sector will not have collateral damage for investor sentiment in renewable sector.

Overall, the power sector needs to demonstrate policy reliability due to long-time horizon of investments. Therefore, a carefully managed decrease in share of thermal power needs to be staged, including looking at technologies, that can reduce negative impact of these power plants and, therefore, provide cushion for managing the transition.

Well none of the challenges in generation can be compared to what is brewing on the distribution side. The Ujjwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) continues to be in a perilous economic condition. Their tottering health emanates from both revenue reali-

sation deficit as well as aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses, which is about 19 per cent. As rural electrification becomes more pervasive due to policy prerogatives, there is a growth of subsidised customers entering the fray and ultimately deepening the ongoing crisis.

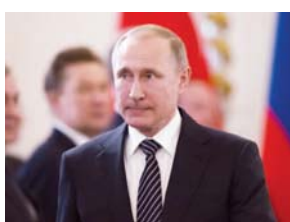
There is also a lingering threat from the prospect of rooftop solar and net-metering as this increases the chance of net revenue from paying customer base falling rapidly. Though Uday has provided a pathway for shifting the burden of losses, it hasn't really come up with a roadmap to reduce the burden.

Overall, India can benefit from foresight in planning the transition to a sustainable generation paradigm. Planning should have place for technology discovery, upgradation of transmission and distribution networks to handle load patterns of a new era and solutions for plugging revenue leakages. Immediate focus on research and development (R&D) in areas of local

importance, like dust sustaining solar panels, storage solutions that work in extreme weather while hopefully being less dependent on import-oriented minerals, economically meaningful solutions for dramatic reduction in emissions from thermal power plants, and smart metering will help alleviate the financial stress on DISCOMS.

That the Government isn't oblivious to boosting a local ecosystem is evident in its efforts to support local manufacturing in solar industry. The approach, however, has been reliant on erecting trade barriers which remains a contentious and politically thorny strategy. One often thinks whether such policy decisions focus on attracting investments in R&D. Ultimately, what is needed is a policy environment that will push the country ahead on the innovation curve and hopefully help the nation seize leadership of an industry segment in the future.

(The writer is Practice Lead, Climate, Environment and Sustainability, Chase India)



RUSSIA'S CULTURE OF CONTROL

Though older generations everywhere get worked up over radical developments in art, music and cultural forms — recall how American parents reacted to Elvis Presley, the Beatles, hippies and beat poets — the arts have a powerful history as a political force in Russia and the Soviet Union. Putin's "lead and direct" suggested that authoritarian delusions die hard. (The New York Times editorial)

H1B FOR STUDENTS

US education facilitates easy access to H1B visa, says DR TP SETHUMADHAVAN

The recent proposal of the United States' Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to give priority to advanced degree holders from the US Universities for H1B visa will benefit Indian students. During 2018, out of 65,000 H1B visa sanctioned, 74 per cent applicants were from India.

The H1B is a visa in the United States under the Immigration and Nationality Act, section 101(a) (15) (H) that allows US employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in specialty occupations. A specialty occupation requires the application of specialised knowledge and a bachelor's degree or the equivalent of work experience. Laws limit the number of H-1B visas that are issued each year.

The H1B visa is the job visa for students from countries other than United States. Visa

holder will get all benefits, including better pay and allowances. Moreover, they will get the opportunity to progress towards green card and citizenship in future as the case may be.

Under H1B visa, technocrats, scientists, doctors, account-

Success in getting admission to US universities depends on environment, effort and direction. If the student has a keen interest, good aptitude, attitude and a set goal, it is easy to get admission. The right choice and involvement coupled with appropriate decision-making process facilitates success in US education

tants, engineers, veterinarians and teachers can work in the US. Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, nursing and management are some of the prospective sectors which gain more H1B visas.

Recently, more and more Indian students have started pursuing overseas education especially in United States. South Indian students rank more in US when compared to students from North Indian States in the country.

ADVANCED DEGREES FROM US

Internationally, our graduate programmes are undergraduate programmes and our post graduate programmes will come under graduate programmes. Under advanced degree from US Universities, it can be graduate, honours, higher degree, post graduate or doctoral programmes. Compared to other Asian countries, more Indian students are pursuing advanced degree programmes in United States.



Proposed rule will facilitate for advanced degree holders from the US Universities to get priority in getting H1B visa up to first 20,000 level. DHS published the draft rule on December 3 and will be finalised by December 31, 2018. It will come into effect from 2019 onwards.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Students interested in the US education after graduation from India require one-year homework for the admission process. They can start the preparation from final year onwards. Preparation of bio-data in two pages and applying for passport are the preliminary steps for pursuing education abroad.

The US universities offer courses during winter (January to February) and falls (September to October) semesters. Indian students can pursue for admission during fall semester. Students are required to clear Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with better test scores.

Review of bio-data will create impression about the student among the US universities. So, they need to prepare the bio data in an attractive manner with a font size of 11 in Times New Roman. Filled-in application requires a statement of purpose from the students and two recommendation letters from referees. Referees can be senior faculty members who can judge about the abilities and skill of the students.

Initially, a student can apply for four to five universities. Project works, internships, work experience, extra-curricular activities and publications will

get additional scores during the admission process. Two or three universities will offer admission based on test scores.

Again, pursue them for funding options like fellowship, scholarship or assistantship. Students can do part time work up to 20 hours per week to support their studies. Students aspiring for US education will get more information from United States India Education Foundation (USIEF).

Prometric India is conducting GRE and TOEFL/ IELTS tests. Test preparation requires minimum three months period. Students can take the examination date three months ahead and start preparation. Since the examination fee is high, it is preferable to appear for the examination on the prefixed dates. Postponement of examination requires additional minimum 40 dollars.

Various textbooks, apps, online coaching and software's facilitate the students for examination preparation. Test prep platform Kaplan offers excellent text book series. For more details visit, www.prometricindia.com, www.gre.org and www.toefl.org.

Success in getting admission to US universities depends on environment, effort and direction. If the student has a keen interest, aptitude, attitude and goal, it is easy to get admission. The right choice and involvement coupled with appropriate decision-making process to facilitate success in US education.

The writer is education & career consultant, director, UL education.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If Education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world and encyclopedias are the Rishis
— Swami Vivekananda

PINNACLE MBA

The JK LakshmiPat University has announced admissions for Pinnacle MBA for the year 2019. Pinnacle MBA is a two-year full-time, residential, post-graduate degree programme, recognised by UGC, Government of India. The programme is led by Dr Pramath Raj Sinha, founding Dean, ISB Hyderabad, and Prof Asheesh Gupta, former director, McKinsey Knowledge Centre; MBA, IIM Calcutta. Pinnacle MBA is focused on the holistic development of future professional with experiential and project based learning.

Candidates aspiring for the admission may apply online at http://jklu.edu.in/mba_landingpage/

Eligibility criteria: A three-year bachelor's degree (10 +2 + 3) or equivalent degree in any discipline from any recognised University with at least 50 per cent marks (45 per cent for SC/ST candidates) or equivalent CGPA.

Students appearing in the final examinations of bachelor's degree can also apply. The candidate must have appeared in CAT, MAT, ATMA, XAT, CMAT or any other national level entrance test.

Selection procedure: Candidates will be first short-listed after consideration of their merit on the basis of score in CAT/MAT/ CMAT/XAT/ ATMA, their previous academic records and preliminary interactions with the admissions team at JKLU. Shortlisted candidates will go through two rounds of interviews with senior leaders at JKLU. Candidates will be finally selected through overall evaluation of merit and the quality of interactions during the personal interviews.

Important dates: March 15, 2019.

PHD PROGRAMME

The IIHMR University, Jaipur invites application for three-year PhD programme in different areas of research. Some of them includes public health, pharmaceutical management, health and hospital management, nursing management, population and development, health economics and finance, rural and urban health, health communication and



behavioural change, information technology in the health sector, food security and nutrition and rural development.

The programme has a total intake of 30 students (part-time as well as full-time). The registration in PhD depends on the subject to passing qualifying examination which will be based on the course work in the first year of the programme.

Eligibility criteria: The candidates should have a master's degree or MPhil degree by the corresponding statutory regulatory body, with at least 55 per cent marks in aggregate or its equivalent grade 'B' in the UGC 7-point scale (or an equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed). Or an equivalent degree from a foreign educational Institution accredited by an Assessment & Accreditation Agency which is approved, recognised by an authority, established or incorporated under a law in its home country.

Selection process: The admission process will include three steps— screening of applications, IIHMR Research Aptitude Test (IRAT) and personal interview. The IIHMR University will conduct a qualifying test after the screening of applications and short-listing candidates. IRAT will be a written test consisting of multiple choice questions from English language proficiency, reasoning, basic quantitative analysis and research aptitude.

UGC CSIR qualified JRF & NET, SLET, GATE and Teacher Fellowship holder and have passed MPhil programme in relevant subjects are categories which will be exempted from writing the IRAT. A personal interview will be conducted on the day of IRAT or next day after IRAT at the IIHMR University, Jaipur.

Important dates: Last date to apply is January 25, 2019. IRAT and personal interview is on February 1 and 2, 2019

For more information, log on to www.iihmr.edu.in.

Conference on green energy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The SRM University-AP, in association with Amara Raja Batteries, is hosting an International Conference on Green Energy Technologies for Smart Cities (GETSC-2018) at its Amaravati campus from December 19 to 21, 2018. Dr VK Saraswat, member, NITI Aayog, (National Institution for transforming India) will be inaugurating the conference.

A series of presentations and panel discussions will cover basic and advanced fields of research — materials & computational sciences, biotechnology, environmental science and engineering, health education and environment. Equal emphasis will be placed on practical technologies and applications for smart cities such as smart grids, storage solutions (hydrogen production, batteries & energy storage technologies) fuel cells & sensor technologies, carbon footprint as well as smart waste management systems.

The conference will be chaired by SRM AP pro VC Prof D Narayana Rao; director of Texas Materials Institute, UT-Austin, USA Dr Arumugam Manthiram, and CTO, Amara Raja Batteries, India M Jagadish. Over 45 international delegates from over 10 countries and 150 delegates from across India will be attending.

These include distinguished academics, researchers and higher education leaders in the field of material science, renewable energy and green technologies.

“One of the main problems regarding the Smart City projects is the issue of energy access and the prohibitive costs thereof. We aim to prove through this conference that sustainable need not be expensive and we need to focus on solutions that are green and sustainable in our quest for energy solutions. We are bringing in global experts to share their work with us,” says Dr D Narayana Rao.

SRM APs conference aims at highlighting advancements in the principal sciences that sustain modern green cities, namely green energy, renewable energy, materials science, environmental science, and green technologies. The conference will work as a bridge between the academic community (faculty and research students), practitioners and policymakers.

The idea is to explore ways to promote the development and use of sustainable energy without disrupting the environmental and social fabric of smart cities. “Putting the focus on green technologies specifically designed for smart cities is the best investment for the future,” Dr Jatis Kumar Dash, Assistant Professor, Physics and the conference convener, says. For more details, log on to <http://www.greenenergy2018.com/>.

#MainBhiHero campaign

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Tech Mahindra Foundation, under its initiative Tech Mahindra Smart Academy for Healthcare, has launched a movement #MainBhiHero to create awareness around the role of paramedical and allied healthcare professionals in the healthcare sector. The movement aims at bridging the prevalent skill-gap in our healthcare sector by creating a pool of skilled and qualified healthcare professionals at the Smart Academy for Healthcare located in New Delhi, Mohali and Mumbai.

The #MainBhiHero movement lays emphasis on fostering Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) motivating the society to guide aspiring youths towards paramedical courses. With the #MainBhiHero movement and the Smart Academies for Healthcare, Tech Mahindra Foundation has strengthened its alignment to the WHO vision of “Health for All” and various UN Sustainable Development Goals ranging from quality education, gender equality and decent work & economic growth.

CP Gurnani, MD & CEO, Tech Mahindra, said: “The #MainBhiHero movement, not only encourages us to further the ISR initiative and Rise for Good, but also addresses the issue of skill gap faced by the industry today. I urge one and all to contribute towards this initiative that aims at creating a pool of skilled and qualified healthcare professionals.”

Speaking about the initiative, Dr Loveleen Kacker, CEO, Tech Mahindra Foundation, says: “At the Tech Mahindra SMART Academies for Healthcare, we are trying to change the definition of the word Hero. The youth come here as students and leaves as healthcare professionals with lifelong skills, employment, and a feeling to serve and improve the healthcare services of our country. Now that's exactly like a Hero.”

Life Skill Olympiad

The Skillizen Learning Foundation, a Singapore headquartered global socio-educational company, has launched “International Life Skills Olympiad (ILSO)” for 2018-19. This is the world's first Olympiad that tests young citizens on life skills and will be held online on January 27, 2019.

Aimed at school children from Class III to XII, ILSO is a global online test that will be based on the Skillizen Curriculum, the world's first Critical Life Skills Curriculum. This curriculum follows a unique method that transfers the most practical life skills in such a manner, that even an eight-year-old can playfully master those skills.

The registration lines for ISLO is live, with a nominal registration fee of ₹490. This is the first Olympiad in which, besides schools, parents can also directly enroll their children online. Home schooled children can also participate.

Launching the Life Skills Olympiad, Sidharth Tripathy, founder & CEO, Skillizen Olympiad Foundation, says: “The children of the 21st century need a whole range of critical life skills to engage, manage and lead the world. When children grow-up and join the workforce, we often find organisations complaining that Indian students might be bright, having passed through one of the toughest educational curriculums in the world, but they are mostly not

employable. Critical Life Skills are extremely essential to convert the children into responsible citizens and successful individuals.”

This unique life skills test will focus on assessing skills and competencies that are essential for young children of the 21st century to lead their personal and professional lives. The questions of ILSO 2018-19 will be based on real life scenarios that will test the young students on their application of critical life skills like leadership, ethics, teamwork, communications, empathy, goal setting and many more. The main prizes for the winners of ILSO would include free tickets to visit Harvard University in USA, mini iPads and Kindles. Besides the top prizes, there are assured prizes for all participants.

“Life skills are a set of skills that enable us to lead our life to its fullest potential; skills that we all need to effectively manage the challenges of everyday life, be it at school, at work or in our personal lives. Our objective is not to prepare the children for the next educational level but for the real world. School children are always comparing themselves against their classmates or at best with other children in their own school. While preparing for this test, young minds from Class III-XII will be able to acquire new life skills and compare their skill levels against the smartest children across 100 plus countries,” Tripathy adds.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CL Educate Limited (CL), India's leading education and knowledge services provider, signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with EvueMe Selection Bot.

As per the MoU, CL Educate Ltd will be launching a new mock interview product named iGuru in strategic partnership with EvueMe Selection Bot. This aims at helping students and professionals prepare for various kinds of interviews for getting jobs or admission to study higher education courses.

CL Educate Ltd and EvueMe Selection Bot will work in collaboration to use cutting-edge technology to simplify the entire interview preparation process, enabling stu-

iGuru launched

dents and professionals to take mock interviews from the comfort of their premises using their own devices, at their own convenient time, with an “Interviewer on Demand”. This makes the interviewing process simple, user-friendly and utilitarian. Further, EvueMe Selection Bot will extend its expertise in developing question banks relevant to every segment of the target audience.

Talking about the initiative, Gopalakrishnan Rengan, president, marketing & Alliances at Career Launcher, said: “In these days of mobility and constant up-skilling, it is important for all of us profession-

als to be ahead of the curve. However, being skilled alone doesn't prepare candidates for the various angles from which recruiters evaluate prospects. Hence, the soft skill of presenting oneself as the ideal candidate for the course or job becomes so very important. Through our strategic partnership with EvueMe, we intend to offer career support to students and professionals, so that they can confidently present their candidature. Even if there are any gaps in their knowledge or presentation skills, they can use our industry-expert panel members to iron out the same and achieve their career dreams!”

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Schneider Electric India Foundation (SEIF) — the social commitment of Schneider Electric India — is set to facilitate the 12th edition of ‘Green Championship’ under its ‘Conserve My Planet’ programme. ‘Conserve My Planet’ is an educational programme conceptualised to address the crucial energy crisis that the world is facing and to educate school children about the importance of conserving energy along with protecting the environment.

In this edition, the Conserve My Planet programme would be conducted in specific schools of India spread across 10 cities namely Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad,

Converse My Planet programme

Jaipur, Delhi, Chandigarh Mumbai, Pune, Goa and Kolkata. All participating schools are meticulously selected for the programme and stand together as a proud community called the ‘Green Republic’ and are termed ‘Green Ambassadors’.

Speaking about the initiative, Venkat Garimella, VP corporate strategy and CSR, Schneider Electric India, said: “Conserve my energy programme enables students to design and develop working models on efficient energy management. In the process, they get acquainted with the energy

conservation techniques and also share their learnings with their families. This programme helps us share the message of energy conservation amongst a large audience.”

Schneider Electric India Foundation trains the Green Ambassadors to undertake energy audits, evaluate energy consumption at homes, and conduct green certification of schools while building energy-conscious communities around them. This helps them to receive industry exposure and contribute to hands-on projects, while participating in numerous contests

and team activities such as presentations, group discussions and preparation of energy audit reports of their campuses via interactive classroom sessions and unique outdoor activities.

Some of the schools hosting the Green Championship this year include Ambience Public School, Delhi; Malviya Convent School, Jaipur; The Pupil Saveetha Eco School, Chennai; Harvest International School, Bangalore; St Wilfred College, Mumbai; Vikhe Patil School, Pune; St Peter's Residential School, Hyderabad and Calcutta Public School, Kolkata.



There are several ways by which one can finance ideas. But the best way forward to market a start-up is to begin with a modest budget to encourage innovation, says PRADEEP SHUKLA

Boostapping builds character. There are endless ways to finance your ideas, but there's nothing like marketing a startup with a modest budget to encourage innovation. Limited funds give you an excuse to flex your creative muscle and truly share your vision with the world. Being an entrepreneur is risky business.

We've all read stories of start-up companies that spent too much money getting off the ground and crash upon takeoff. Managing your money when you have very little coming in the door is tricky but it's not impossible.

Don't rely on the same old banner ads and Google reviews. Instead, try these eight marketing strategies to place the spotlight on your business. Below are strategies for getting the most bang for your buck as an entrepreneur.

Go to startup events. These events are frequented by those who have similar interests, and most of these people are operat-

ing on shoestring budgets, too. Many of them are happy to introduce you to someone who can help your startup; others will be willing to develop a *quid pro quo* relationship with you to get both of your businesses off the ground. Either situation is a cost-effective win-win.

Take advantage of free offers. Many people shy away from free stuff; they're afraid that taking advantage of it implies that they don't have money. Instead, look at it this way: When a company is offering something for free, they believe the item has value. They want you to experience it so badly that they're willing to give you a taste at no cost. Take them up on it. You're helping a fellow businessman out, and you're saving cash on your end.

Access an incubator and use other business resources. Incubators can provide you with a lot of the structure that your entrepreneurial endeavour is missing, but without any of the



TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER WHO YOU ARE, WHO YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE, WHAT YOU WANT YOUR BRAND TO REPRESENT AND WHAT YOUR MESSAGE SHOULD BE. THEN STICK TO IT

interference that a partner company might entail. They have amazing free resources; these can include everything from office space to snacks. Search for one on Google, or try lists of ranked start-up accelerators to find a good fit.

Track your finances. From the start, you should be carefully watching how much you spend. Cash flow is one of the easiest areas for start-ups to get ahead of themselves you need to turn a profit at some point, but you'll never know where that point is if you don't track your money.

Make smart hiring decisions. It's important to build the best team possible. Your startup is your baby. Find people who are all in, and you'll get the most from them with each of their paychecks.

Avoid burnout. Many entrepreneurs get so caught up in saving money that they find it hard to balance rewarding themselves with pumping money into the company. If you want to be suc-

cessful with your startup, then you should enjoy what you're doing. Your reward will be the excitement you reap from your success. That means that most of your money should go into your startup but not all of it. Set aside time (and money) to travel, visit friends and relax. If you forget to do these things, it won't matter how much money your startup has — it won't have an effective leader.

Every entrepreneur goes through ups and downs; it's the nature of the beast. But struggling to make ends meet doesn't have to be one of your problems. Find the balance between fueling your jet and pulling back on the throttle. You don't want your start-up — or you — to crash upon takeoff. Take time to really consider who you are, who your customers are, what you want your brand to represent, and what your message should be. Consider this a very simple marketing roadmap. Then stick to it.

The writer is Co-founder, OOFFRR App

SNAP 2018 ANALYSIS

The SNAP exam conducted on December 16 in the computer-based test format went glitch-free. ANKUR JAIN gives a low down

The Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP) exam conducted on 16th Dec 2018 in the computer-based-test format went glitch-free. The overall difficulty level of the exam was lower as compared to last year's. Since there were no sectional cut-offs, it made the job of the students a lot easier — they could focus on maximising their overall score instead of perforce trying to improve their sectional performances in tougher sections.

SECTION WISE ANALYSIS

■ **General English:** The section had a total of 35 questions. There were 30 normal questions of 1 mark each. There were 5 special questions (non-MCQ or Input box types where the answer had to be entered on the screen) of 2 marks each.

The RC area had two passages with five questions each. The passages were lengthy in nature with around 750-850 words.

Passage 1: A lengthy passage on 'Google tracks your movement whether you like it or not' or 'privacy taken from CBS News'. The questions included 1 title, 1 specific detail, 3 contextual reference (of a phrase)/inference based questions.

Passage 2: Another lengthy passage on 'Tired of globalisation — Trade and Poverty' taken from *The Economist*. There were four specific detail questions and 1 vocab-based question.

Around 22-24 can be considered to be a good number of attempts in this section.

■ **Quantitative Ability, Data Interpretation and Data Sufficiency:** The section was relatively easier compared to the last year. There were 30 questions of 1 mark each (normal MCQ type). There were 5 special questions of 2 marks each (non-MCQ type). The section had more doable questions and perhaps for the first time, Data Interpretation questions were completely missing. Continuing the tradition, there were no Data Sufficiency questions in this section but the same were asked in the Logical Reasoning section. The weightage of questions from algebra was on the higher side.

One question appeared to not have the correct answer options (h, c and v of a cone). A good student could have attempted a net of 22-24 out of 35 ques-



Ankur Jain
Chief Knowledge Expert, TIME Delhi

tions in this section by spending around 35-40 minutes. However, this called for a judicious selection of the questions.

■ **Analytical & Logical Reasoning:** The section had a reasonable number of easy and moderate questions.

There were 30 questions of 1 mark each (normal MCQ type). There were 5 special questions of 2 marks each (non-MCQ type). Unlike last year, apart from the standalone ones, there were 7 questions based on a caselet. Added to this, there were also some tough ones to crack. The level of the section could be pegged at a moderate level of difficulty. Out of 35 questions in this section, 19 to 21 would be a good number of attempts.

■ **General Awareness:** The section had 25 questions. As the name of the section suggested, there were no static GK questions. Most of these questions were not difficult especially for those who read newspapers regularly. Most of the questions were pertaining to events which took place in the last few months.

Around 12 to 14 attempts in the section in around 10-15 minutes would have been good for this section.

An overall score of 74-76 or above should be a good score for SIBM, 70-73 for SCMHRD, and 62-65 for SIBM Bangalore and SIIB.

A great design is meant to influence, it is meant to astonish, and it is meant to astound. Saul Bass, a virtual designer, rightfully said: Design is thinking made visual. It is to imbibe values, personality, creativity, and character into an innate object. A true design transforms prose into beautiful poetry.

Today, India with a phenomenal growth rate of 23 to 25 per cent annually is the rising star among the design superpowers all across the globe. There are various aspects of designing and all of them hold astounding importance in the fundamentals of our culture and lives. Many designers like Sabyasachi, Ritu Beri, Manish Arora and many others have set a

benchmark that has put India on the map of rising stars in the design industry.

The four most prominent of them have been discussed below.

■ **Jewellery designing:** India has traditionally been called the land of gems and jewellery. Contributing to around seven per cent of the country's GDP and 15.7 per cent of the total exports in the country, it is one of the fastest growing sectors, employing over four million professionals. India today not only competes but completely dominates the sector of jewellery design globally and can already claim to be a superpower in the sector exporting 75 per cent of the world's polished diamonds.

With an industry worth billions, our

MINDIT

nation is right at the pinnacle among other fashion capitals of the world featuring top of the line designs in jewelry.

■ **Communication designing:** Today India ranks among the top global giants in communication designing. From acquiring luxury automobile brands like Jaguar and Land Rover by Indian companies to creating global standards in industrial design, our nation is not far behind.

■ **Interior designing:** India today, ranks not only among the top design capitals in the world but also competes among the best in

the business of innovation. Interior design in India has taken a huge leap within a very short span and is consistently rising in demand.

The work of an interior designer is relatively complex as the profession involves not only making precise geometric calculations but also attempt beautification within a limited space requiring ingenuity in both architectural sense and creative, illustrative and durable designing which the owner can call home.

The unique thing about India in interior

designing is that how our designers can innovate in a space as small as a few hundred square feet and achieve brilliant results in the process.

■ **Fashion designing:** Every beautiful piece of love in your closet that you adore so much and dutifully save for those special occasions began its journey from the tip of a pen held by a passionate fashion designer. It is widely stated by fashion eccentric persons that a fashion designer weaves dreams with their fingers, not clothes and nothing can be far from the truth.

Designing something that is both aesthetically pleasing and also functional at the same time requires a lot of insight blended with skill, a sharp eye, and a creative

mind as well. This is the space where the Indian fashion designers are gradually tapping in, owing to which the fashion design industry of India has already begun to make global headlines. The Indian textile industry is estimated to be at around 108 billion dollars and expected to reach 223 billion dollars by 2021. More than just adopting western trends, India seems to be a step ahead in creating a perfect blend of fusion clothing that other fashion capitals are struggling to keep up with. India is currently generating a growth of 9.5 percent per annum whipping up a storm in the global design world.

The writer is Dr Kulneet Suri, Senior Director at Institute of Management Studies Noida



The University of Sheffield, UK is offering an award of up to £3000 for overseas undergraduate students. The scholarships of up to £3000 will be awarded as a one-off payment in recognition of academic excellence to students starting an undergraduate degree in September 2019 in one of the following departments —

Aerospace Engineering, Automatic Control & Systems Engineering, Bioengineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil & Structural Engineering, Electronic & Electrical Engineering, Materials Science & Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, MEng Engineering.

Eligibility: Make The University of Sheffield your first (firm) choice in the UCAS application process for 2019 entry. Apply to study a full-time undergraduate programme in the relevant department, Be classed as an international student for tuition fee purposes, Be taking all prerequisite subjects for your selected degree, Not have studied at the University of Sheffield International College.

The university will offer the scholarship in the form of a cash bursary at the start of your course should you be eligible. The scholarship amount

depended on your academic achievement please email the Undergraduate Admissions Team for your chosen Department.

For details visit: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/faculty/engineering/study/scholarships>.

Applications are invited from students for a **scholarship in advance training in Hindustani Music**. The value of the scholarship is ₹7,500 per month — April 2019 to March 2020). Send in your application to ncpascholarships@gmail.com or in an envelope marked — Citi-NCPA Scholarship for Young Musicians to the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021. The shortlisted candidates will be informed via email or telephone and be required to appear for an audition in Mumbai. The decision of selection committee is final.

Eligibility: Age Limit: *khayal/taala/pakhawaj* — 18 to 30 years of age (March 1, 2019); For *dhruwad*: 18 to 35 years of age (March 1, 2019). Students who are beneficiaries of other scholarship/grant in the field of music during April 2019-20, are not eligible to apply. Professional musicians including those with 'A' grade from AIR are not eligible to apply. Only Indian citizens are eligible to apply.

Application deadline: It is December 31, 2018.

STUDY CENTRES

Many of us familiar with the term Internet of Things (IoT) but may not know what it means and that one can make a career in this sector. The IoT can connect devices in various systems to the Internet. For example: IoT can be could be a person with a heart monitor. To work in this field one must have the basics knowledge of electronics. One can work as an: IoT Product Manager, IoT Architect, IoT Developer and Robot Coordinator and IoT Cloud Engineer. The good part is that an IoT professional is paid than IT professionals. Beginners can earn between ₹6-₹10 lakh or even more per annum depending on their industry and location. A few institutes where one can study are:

- **Collabera TACT**, Vadodara. **Course:** IoT Training
- **Graspskills Pvt Ltd**, Bengaluru. **Course:** IoT Training
- **Birla Institute of Technology and Science** (BITS Pilani), Pilani. **Course:** PG Diploma in Internet of Things
- **National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology** (NIELIT), Kozhikode and New Delhi. **Course:** PG Diploma in Internet of Things



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT IMAGINE MARKETING

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16786
Application deadline: December 27, 2018

HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) AT PEARSON INDIA EDUCATION SERVICES

Location: Noida
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16787
Application deadline: December 25, 2018

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT NESTAWAY TECHNOLOGIES

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16788
Application deadline: December 27, 2018

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANCY (CA) AT MAHINDRA COMVIVA

Location: Gurugram
Stipend: ₹15,000-₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16789
Application deadline: December 31, 2018

CONTENT WRITING AT MERITNATION

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16790
Application deadline: December 25, 2018

OPERATIONS AT INCRAFT FASHION VENTURES

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16791
Application deadline: December 27, 2018

WEB DEVELOPMENT AT TRAVEL TUTOR

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/16792
Application deadline: December 28, 2018



IN BRIEF

IIT-M PARTNERS WITH DIGITAL FIRM THALES

Indian Institute of Technology Madras has partnered with Thales to design a Shakti RISC-V processor compatible with the highest safety critical standards. The collaboration will result in defining and prototyping a processor suitable for mix-criticality applications, including safety critical applications.

A fault-tolerant framework will be developed and will undergo evaluation by the world's top

experts in safety critical standards. Pursuant to their approval, it can be used in sensitive equipment used in defence, aerospace, space, and transportation sectors.

The processors are targeted for mobile computing devices, embedded low power wireless systems and networking systems besides reducing reliance on imported microprocessors in communications and defence sectors. The microprocessor can be used by others as it is on par with international standards.

MOBILE APP FOR SEAMLESS LOGIN

Shine.com has introduced face recognition and touch ID capabilities in its mobile application. The technological milestone marks the first time that any Indian online jobs portal has integrated features designed

around hardware-based tech in its mobile app.

When a user of the portal signs up on or logs into the mobile app for the first time, they are prompted to create a face/touch ID for future sessions. One user session on

the application lasts for a month, after which users need to log in again.

This has ensured that users can seamlessly log back into the app without any hassle, even if they forget their passwords.

SKILL-O-FEST FOR CHILDREN AT KIIT

The KIIT World School Junior organised a Skill-O-Fest for the children of ages two to 10. The fest was organised to showcase a variety of skills like dance, theatre, art, culinary, gardening, scientific language, and mathematical ability. The students mesmerised the audience with a great cultural how with their beautiful performances. Science-Magica brought them a unique science show. They made glow jars, wishing bottles, fancy soaps and slime play. Pottery and gardening were a big attraction and

they had fun making pots and planting saplings.

The KIIT mentor Neelima Kamrah said: "It is important to develop skill in young children. Parents need to encourage children in participating more in physical activities. Physical skills are equally important for children for their proper development."

Rashmi Srivastava, principal KIIT made special efforts to include the underprivileged girls of Kasturba India Vision School and gave them the stage to perform too.

COUNSELLORS CONCLAVE

The Indian School of Hospitality's (ISH), newest venture and a newcomer in the hospitality education space hosted its first international counsellor summit — the Counsellors' Retreat 2018. It was inaugurated by VC of the Gurugram University Dr Markanday Ahuja. The summit saw a gathering of school counsellors representing some of the most prominent schools from across the entire country and neighbouring regions, including world leaders in hospitality education École hôtelière de Lausanne.

The retreat was called with the mission and aim to introduce school counsellors to the diverse range of professional opportunities and career paths in the world of travel, tourism, hospitality, culinary arts and other new age industries for their students.

DIGITAL CONFERENCE

A two-day FORE International Conference on digital innovation was inaugurated on December 14, 2018 and included academic speakers from the British Academy UK, King's College London, Swansea University UK, IIM Kozhikode, IMT Ghaziabad, IIT Delhi, Faculty of Management Studies, BITS Pilani, ICAFI and FORE School of Management. The objective was to provide a collaborative platform for researchers and experts in which discussions about the impact of digital technologies in creating safer cities in India could be held.

There was a special address by Dr Vinayshil Gautam, founder-director, IIM Kozhikode & Member Executive Board, FORE School of Management, New Delhi.

Govt says all geared up for ‘24x7 Power for All’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Confident of meeting ‘24X7 Power for All’ target by March, the government wants to take forward its reform agenda for the power sector in 2019 including by providing consumers options to change their service provider even as the industry wants immediate steps to ease the “pains” relating to coal shortage, financial stress and high pricing.

After 100 per cent household electrification under the government’s ambitious ‘Saubhagya’ scheme, the next big policy move for the sector could be the proposed electricity amendment bill that provides for separation of carriage and content business. This would help service providers for electricity supply, just like they do for the telecom and other services.

Under the ₹16,320 crore Saubhagya scheme, the government has already provided electricity connections to 2.2 crore families and expects to complete the task of connecting the remaining 78 lakh households latest by February 2019. “The last one year has been momentous for power sector in the country. Electricity reached every village this April and we are on the verge of electrifying every household. The whole

world is looking at India’s electrification journey with admiration,” Power Minister R K Singh told PTI.

“Now we have set ourselves on the path of ‘24X7 Power for All’ by March 31, 2019 and the government is committed to take every step to achieve this through expansion and strengthening of infrastructure for power generation, transmission & distribution as also putting in place a robust regulatory framework in terms of amendments to Electricity Act and ‘Tariff Policy,’” he said.

The industry players, however, also wants an urgent attention on possible measures from the government side on tackling various stress points for the sector, including those regarding their financial viability. Association of Power Producers (APP) Director General Ashok Khurana said 2018 has been a painful year with some positives for the power sector.

He said rise in power demand across states due to accelerated household electrification under the Saubhagya scheme and a pick-up in economic activity augurs well for the stranded and under-utilised power assets. Despite many infirmities, the new coal allocation framework, ‘Shakti’, has helped 9 GW of operational capacity having power purchase

agreement access coal, he added.

A High-Level Empowered Committee (HLEC) has recommended review of certain flawed provisions of Shakti, he said, while hoping that the government would act fast on the recommendations and make coal allocation framework more equitable and ownership-neutral. According to the APP, whose members include Adani Power, Essar, Tata Power, PTC India and Vedanta, power plants have experienced huge coal shortages, necessitating imports and purchase from auction platforms, thus increasing the price of power despite rise in coal production. The industry body pointed out that adequate availability of coal is a must to achieve the “reliable and quality power supply to all” round the clock.

It suggested opening the coal mining sector to competition and appointing a coal regulator to bring in transparency and commercial discipline. On financial stress of the sector, Khurana said: “RBI’s ill-conceived circular of February 12, prescribing stringent definition of default and impractical timelines without taking into account the sector-specific genuine difficulties and that its application in present form will neither help banks nor sector at large”.

Saudi Arabia, RIL in talks for refinery, petrochem project

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World’s largest oil exporter Saudi Arabia and richest Indian Mukesh Ambani-run Reliance Industries are discussing joint investment in petrochemicals and refinery projects, the Saudi Oil Minister Khalid al-Falih said.

Al-Falih, who has known Ambani for over a decade now, travelled to Udaipur earlier this month to attend the pre-wedding festivities of Ambani’s daughter Isha’s marriage with Ajay Piramal’s son Anand.

During that visit, he also held talks with Ambani but choose to tweet about those discussions only this week.

In an Arabic tweet, which was translated using online tools, Al-Falih said he was delighted to meet Ambani.

At the meeting “we discussed opportunities for joint investments and cooperation in petrochemical, refining and communications projects”.

He also tweeted a picture of the meeting where Ambani is dressed in a business suit, a sharp contrast to other pictures of his in traditional attire during the pre-wedding festivities held on December 8 and 9. No details of the meeting were available from Reliance.

Reliance operates two refineries at Jamnagar with a total capacity of 68.2 million tonnes per annum.

Reliance plans to expand its only-exports SEZ refining capacity to just over 41 million tonnes from current 35.2 million tonnes but does not have any plans to set up a new refinery in the country.

It is presently focused on expanding petrochemical and telecom business, industry sources said.

Crude oil is the basic raw material for the manufacturing of petrochemicals.

Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, is keen to get a foothold in the world’s fastest-growing fuel market so as to get a captive customer for crude oil it produces.

Saudi Aramco, the world’s biggest oil company, and its partner Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC) have picked up 50 per cent stake in a planned USD 44-billion refinery in Maharashtra but the project is facing problems in acquiring land due to protests from local politicians.

Aramco and ADNOC will together hold 50 per cent stake in the 60 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) refinery and adjacent 18 MTPA petrochemical complex planned to be built at Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra by 2025.

The two will supply half of the crude oil required for processing at the refinery.

Like other major producers, the two are looking to lock in customers in the world’s third-largest oil consumer through the investment. Kuwait too is looking to invest in projects in return for getting an assured offtake of their crude oil.

Saudi Aramco is also keen on retailing fuel in India. A refinery in India can also be a base for it to export fuel to deficit countries in Europe and the Americas. India has a refining capacity of 247.6 million tonnes, which exceeded the demand of 206.2 million tonnes.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), this demand is expected to reach 458 million tonnes by 2040.

BUSINESS CORNER

KAPIL CHOPRA UNVEILS NEW LUXURY HOTEL BRAND

New Delhi: Hospitality industry veteran Kapil Chopra Tuesday unveiled a new luxury hotel brand, The Postcard Hotel, and launched three new properties in Goa under the label. Chopra, who has earlier served as the president of Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, said seven more luxury hotels under the brand would come up at different locations like Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh over the next 12-18 months. “Work has already started on few of these seven properties. We are looking to have around 50 hotels in the next five years,” Chopra, CEO and founder of The Postcard Hotel told PTI. Three hotels, part of the proposed seven new properties, would come up in eastern and north eastern parts of the country in partnership with Ambuja Neotia group, he added. Elaborating on future plans, Chopra said he would first like to establish the brand in India and then venture out into international locations. “We plan to build a luxury hospitality company out of India. People are ready to pay but there are no properties which could offer intimate and personalised luxury experience. The entire segment needed a disruption,” he added. The new brand would focus on hotels with 8-50 rooms so that the guests could have a personalised experience, Chopra said. “What I wanted to do with The Postcard Hotel is make luxury hotels for the modern audience but bring back the romance and charm of sun kissed holidays,” as a strategy, we will either go to mountains, sea and wildlife sanctuaries,” he noted. The properties under the new brand would not have a check in or check out time, no mini bar or breakfast hours, Chopra said “We want travel to be experiential and transformative. We believe guests want to stay in a place where the hotel does the thinking for them, where they get the simple things right, yet offer fantastic spaces for them to relax, meet like minded people and experience local culture,” he added. On opening properties abroad, Chopra said the first hotels could come in countries like Sri Lanka and Bhutan. Chopra, who is also the chairman of the board of restaurant reservation application EazyDiner, said the company has received funding from Small Ventures, a venture capital firm based out of UAE. He added that the brand would prefer combination of strategic buy outs and long term leases for its upcoming properties. Headquartered in Delhi, The Postcard Hotel already has 300 employees on its rolls.

IL&FS GROUP COS CLIMB UP TO 10PC

New Delhi: Shares of IL&FS group companies surged up to 10 per cent on Tuesday as it announced its plan to sell equity stakes in its road assets to raise funds. IL&FS Investment Managers was trading 9.86 per cent higher at ₹ 7.02 at 1230 hours on BSE, IL&FS Transportation Networks Ltd (ITNL) rose 5 per cent to ₹11.55 and IL&FS Engineering and Construction advanced as much as 4.98 per cent to ₹14.13. However, the benchmark BSE Sensex was down 139 points at 36,137 during the same time. On Monday, Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) group, which sits on a debt pile of about ₹90,000 crore, said it will sell equity stakes in its road assets to raise funds.

NIFTY 50					
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	10850.90	10915.40	10819.10	10908.70	20.35
SUNPHARMA	401.90	434.90	418.85	432.75	11.80
BAFINANCE	2469.70	2538.20	2446.60	2533.00	58.60
JSWSTEEL	2910.10	306.70	298.10	306.70	6.85
VEDL	204.90	210.00	204.25	209.80	4.30
M&M	755.60	772.00	752.40	772.00	15.65
ASIANPAINT	1338.45	1361.00	1327.55	1360.40	24.55
IT	1405.00	1430.00	1405.00	1429.95	21.95
SBIN	287.25	294.00	287.60	293.90	4.40
POWERGRID	192.90	197.10	190.90	195.20	2.80
HCLTECH	969.95	988.80	959.40	985.80	13.35
IOC	143.70	145.00	143.00	144.75	1.85
HINDPETRO	231.20	232.25	228.10	231.20	2.75
KOTAKBANK	1214.90	1239.65	1214.00	1236.90	14.45
DREDDY	2601.80	2645.00	2582.15	2643.40	30.25
ICICIBANK	356.75	362.90	354.60	362.50	4.05
NTPC	146.00	148.40	145.25	147.75	1.65
GRASIM	845.70	857.60	832.65	855.00	8.70
BPLCL	353.10	357.60	348.70	353.40	3.05
BAJAJFINSV	6090.00	6165.00	6067.00	6138.50	50.70
ADANIPORTS	36.90	37.35	36.50	37.35	2.95
EIGHERMOT	23570.00	23900.00	23439.55	23861.50	163.70
RELIANCE	1123.30	1139.00	1120.50	1137.75	7.85
BHARTIARTL	314.20	320.70	311.60	317.25	2.05
TATASETEL	523.00	528.40	519.60	527.00	3.00
MARUTI	7710.00	7785.00	7655.00	7748.00	33.95
TATAMOTORS	174.00	177.60	173.10	174.70	0.75
INDUSINDBK	1627.90	1644.35	1609.00	1640.20	6.85
HDFCBANK	2124.00	2139.00	2102.00	2138.70	7.90
HEROMOTOCO	3275.05	3324.65	3240.00	3297.05	10.95
AXISBANK	617.65	621.80	613.85	618.80	1.65
HINDALCO	224.00	227.00	222.60	226.00	0.55
GAIL	353.00	357.20	349.70	354.00	0.85
INFRATEL	253.05	257.30	252.70	255.05	0.10
CPIA	524.00	527.00	520.05	523.60	-0.05
ULTRACEMCO	3999.00	4017.10	3978.00	4008.00	-1.30
COALINDIA	252.50	253.85	249.05	251.30	-0.15
BAJAJ-AUTO	2840.00	2873.80	2822.05	2835.80	-5.15
TITAN	992.50	998.75	990.80	992.95	-2.35
TCS	1931.90	2002.00	1976.40	1987.90	-6.40
HINDUNILVR	1848.90	1848.90	1833.00	1844.00	-6.70
IBULHSHGR	774.00	784.90	768.70	778.00	-3.45
ONGC	147.90	148.65	146.30	147.55	-0.70
ITC	279.05	280.90	277.00	278.50	-1.35
HDFC	1955.00	1957.90	1932.50	1949.05	-11.30
YESBANK	180.00	180.00	176.75	178.75	-2.25
WIPRO	335.25	338.40	332.55	335.00	-4.60
TECHM	715.00	716.55	704.20	708.60	-11.15
INFY	686.50	686.50	674.55	677.00	-17.40
UPL	762.00	774.10	741.00	744.50	-23.55
ZEEL	498.00	498.00	454.05	459.70	-42.15

NIFTY NEXT 50					
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	29778.20	28244.05	27966.65	28169.80	135.45
INDIGO	1070.00	1124.00	1066.00	1121.00	60.90
DMART	1619.00	1685.00	1616.50	1681.20	64.95
MOTHERSUMI	165.10	174.00	165.05	173.80	6.10
BHEL	67.65	70.15	67.30	70.00	2.30
GICRE	278.00	284.45	275.05	284.60	7.75
SUNTV	572.00	590.40	570.00	590.00	15.60
IDEA	36.40	37.70	36.05	37.35	0.95
MRF	6647.00	6798.95	6610.05	6799.75	1622.60
ICICI	900.00	925.00	898.00	917.00	19.80
SAIL	52.30	53.40	51.90	53.40	1.00
OFSS	3575.00	3657.00	3560.10	3646.95	64.95
HINDZINC	273.40	279.00	271.00	278.20	4.85
MCDOWELLN	639.00	647.70	627.25	646.00	10.85
SIEMENS	959.95	984.55	959.05	984.00	15.80
MARICO	376.00	383.95	374.55	382.60	5.75
SHEL	2133.75	2190.45	2131.20	2184.90	32.35
PRERECEM	1708.75	1717.40	1679.45	1715.00	22.40
BIOCON	64.00	64.00	63.80	64.70	6.90
BOSCHLTD	19663.00	19880.00	19503.05	19860.10	198.20
COPAL	130.00	1315.00	1290.25	1314.15	13.15
NMDC	93.80	95.95	93.80	95.90	0.85
AMBUJACEM	219.25	220.95	218.00	220.50	1.75
SRTANSFIN	1197.90	1208.00	1180.10	1204.00	7.75
BANDHANBNK	568.00	583.70	560.00	568.05	3.60
OIL	179.50	179.90	177.50	178.90	1.10
BRITANNIA	3157.00	3183.00	3130.00	3182.90	19.70
BEL	83.30	84.60	82.85	84.25	0.50
LICHSGFIN	460.20	466.55	458.75	464.75	2.65
BANKBARODA	111.10	113.00	110.00	112.35	0.55
ABCAPITAL	99.25	101.70	98.65	100.00	0.45
DABUR	440.00	444.95	438.00	444.30	1.90
NHPC	26.10	26.25	26.00	26.20	0.10
ACC	149.80	151.00	149.35	150.75	5.15
PGHL	989.00	997.20	982.00	989.00	-0.10
DLF	177.00	180.95	176.25	178.20	-0.10
GODREJCP	840.10	842.95	825.00	841.60	-1.35
LUPIN	86.35	848.50	836.80	847.70	-1.75
HDFCLIFE	392.05	394.90	395.00	391.60	-1.60
CONCOR	68.65	66.40	65.05	65.90	-3.00
L&TFH	146.25	149.90	146.60	146.70	-0.75
SBILFE	598.00	607.15	576.35	586.35	-3.45
PETRONET	223.95	227.50	223.00	223.50	-1.60
HAVELLS	703.85	703.85	693.25	710.00	-5.35
NIACL	197.35	198.95	194.00	195.20	-1.70
ASHOKLEY	105.40	105.80	104.00	104.75	-1.25
AUROPHARMA	740.00	741.50	729.40	735.00	-10.65
CADILAHAC	347.25	347.95	341.45	345.50	-5.50
PIDILITIND	1188.00	1189.80	1165.05	1165.10	-20.20
ICICIPRULI	320.95	323.45	314.20	314.75	-6.70
ABB	1398.95	1398.95	1321.15	1326.80	-72.85

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	SUNTV
ROOM	15.78	16.05	15.55	15.78	ITI
PCJEWELLER	81.40	88.55	81.15	85.95	MINDTREE
YESBANK	180.00	180.85	176.95	178.90	POWERGRID
SUZLON	5.26	5.47	5.25	5.37	ABB
JETAIRWAYS	244.00	249.00	240.10	245.55	ABCAPITAL
SUNPHARMA	421.00	434.90	419.25	433.10	HDFC
STRITECH	287.00	306.70	287.00	299.25	ZENSARTECH
ZEEL	500.00	500.00	454.40	462.60	COMUMINSIND
SPICEJET	75.95	81.50	75.50	80.90	JAIL
INFY	694.00	694.00	675.00	676.35	SKIL
SBIN	288.30	294.00	287.00	292.55	FORCEMOT
TATAMOTORS	174.00	177.60	173.20	174.40	AUROPHARMA
VENKYS	2488.00	2579.90	2470.00	2519.10	BIOCON
INFIBEAM	49.10	50.75	48.15	49.05	RNALVAL
PNB	72.60	75.80	72.15	74.30	M&MFIN
IOC	143.35	144.90	143.05	144.60	ICICIGI
BELM	849.00	863.55	838.00	854.95	WIPRO
RELIANCE	1122.00	1139.50	1120.80	1136.45	EQUITAS
BANDHANBNK	569.00	587.00	560.55	570.40	IDBI
JPASSOCIAT	7.13	7.34	7.00	7.14	AJANTPHARM
DELTAICORP	245.00	258.70	243.15	256.90	RAX
PCF	91.60	97.50	91.60	96.40	MCIN
ICICIBANK	358.00	362.75	354.55	362.35	NAUKRI
LT	1407.00	1430.00	1405.05	1428.40	KWALITY
DHFL	217.30	218.70	213.20	213.90	INDUSINDBK
TATASETEL	523.90	529.00	520.10	527.00	ITI
VEDL	205.90	210.00	204.30	208.90	ITP
UJIVAN	242.00	255.00	236.10	255.45	BAJAJ-AUTO
MARUTI	7715.00	7772.00	7654.00	7750.70	SKTRANSFIN
BANKINDIA	88.20	92.05	87.60	91.35	WELSPUNIND
ULHSGFIN	777.70	784.60	768.85	776.40	INDIA
KOTAKBANK	1214.80	1240.00	1214.15	1237.10	CANFINHOME
RELIANCE	1122.00	1139.50	1120.80	1136.45	MGL
GRAPHITE	875.00	877.70	849.00	855.55	VIPIND
REL CAPITAL	218.00	221.20	216.50	219.70	NCC
BHEL	67.90	70.15	67.30	69.85	TATAPOWER
BAFINANCE	2470.00	2538.60	2448.00	2530.30	PNBHOUSING
GNFC	340.00	371.00	338.95	366.90	JINDALSAW
UNIONBANK	77.80	81.50	77.35	80.50	GSFC

President Xi tells world: Don't dictate to China

PTI ■ BEIJING

China will not heed to any dictation by others on what it should do or what it should not, President Xi Jinping asserted Tuesday as the Communist giant celebrated the 40th anniversary of its reform and opening-up policies that have transformed it from an impoverished country into a global economic powerhouse. But Xi's speech lasting over 80 minutes did not offer any indication of relaxation of the ruling Communist Party's firm grip on political power or concrete policies to tackle China's complex economic problems like slower growth and an ongoing trade war with the United States.

President Donald Trump has demanded further reforms to the Chinese economy, including greater access for US companies and a clamp-down on intellectual property theft. Xi's speech comes during a 90-day truce between Washington and Beijing while the two sides try to reach a compromise.

At a grand ceremony held in Beijing's imposing Great Hall of the People, Xi praised the Chinese people's "hard work, wisdom and courage" and listed its achievements since late leader Deng Xiaoping launched the era of "Reform and Opening" in 1978.

China's economy will produce "miracles that will impress the world" in the coming years, the 65-year-old top leader said while noting that there is no textbook of golden rules to follow for reform and development in China, a country with over 5,000 years of civilisation and more than 1.3 billion people.

"No one is in a position to dictate to the Chinese people what should or should not be done," he asserted amidst growing pressure from the Trump administration on

Beijing on several fronts, including on trade and the Chinese military flexing its muscles in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.

"(We must) oppose the practices of imposing one's will upon others, interfering in others' internal affairs or the strong bullying the weak," he said. China is "increasingly approaching the centre of the world stage," he said and noted that the country pursues a defensive national defence policy. "China's development does not pose a threat to any country. No matter how far China develops, it will never seek hegemony," the Chinese president assured jittery neighbours who are worried over Beijing's growing economic clout.

The reform and opening-up is a great revolution in the history of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation, he said. "It is the great revolution that propelled a quantum leap forward in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics," Xi, also General Secretary of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, said. Xi is widely seen as China's most influential leader since Mao. In 2017, he cemented his power, enshrining his political views in the Constitution. China's economic reform was initiated by Deng in 1978 and the programme was ratified on 18 December that year.

The reform path turned the country away from the old style communism of 'Chairman' Mao Zedong when collectivisation had led to an impoverished and inefficient economy. The transformation focussed on agricultural reform, private sector liberalisation, industry modernisation and opening to international trade. Today, China holds about 10 per cent of global wealth. China now has 600

billionaires, a higher number than anywhere else in the world. Xi described the reforms pioneered by Deng and the ruling party as a "break from the shackles" of previous mistakes.

He noted that China has lifted 740 million people out of poverty in the 40 years. "The country has maintained its social stability over a long period, making it one of the countries that provide the greatest sense of safety in the world," Xi said. China has bid farewell to the problems that plagued its people for thousands of years, including hunger, shortage and poverty, he said.

China's development has effectively served the cause of world peace and development, Xi said.

The reform and opening-up in the past four decades has shown, a major country like China cannot afford any disruptive mistake on fundamental issues, he said. Xi's speech will have "disappointed" both international and local investors, said Tom Rafferty, a China expert at the Economist Intelligence Unit.

"There's a lot of anxiety about near-term economic growth and trade talks with the United States ... it was a bit of a missed opportunity for (Xi) to at least offer something in that direction," he was quoted as saying by CNN.

In his speech, Xi stressed on the leadership of the ruling Communist Party of China in all sectors.

The reform and opening-up in the past four decades has shown that leadership of the Party is the most essential attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the greatest strength of this system, Xi said.

Despite the economic reforms, the past decades have not brought change to China's rigid one-party system of communist rule.



Chinese President Xi Jinping prepares to present a medallion during a conference to commemorate the 40th anniversary of China's Reform and Opening Up policy at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday. AP

China will never seek hegemony

AP ■ BEIJING

China will never pursue hegemony, President Xi Jinping said Tuesday as global concerns persist over the country's growing economic influence. During a speech to mark 40 years of market reforms, Xi repeated China's commitment to a multilateral trading system and further opening of its economy. However, he did not announce any new initiatives to counter a slowing economy and trade frictions with the United States.

The Chinese leader said China would not develop "at the expense of other countries' interests." China's expanding footprint worldwide — from Asia-Pacific to Africa and beyond through a broad network of infrastructure projects called the Belt and Road Initiative — has led some nations to raise the alarm over what they call China's long arm of influence, which has been criticised for being political as well as economic. While Xi said China is "increasingly approaching the center of the world stage," he also noted



Children salute medallion recipients during a conference to commemorate the 40th anniversary of China's Reform and Opening Up policy at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday. AP

that the country pursues a defensive national defense policy. "China's development does not pose a threat to any country," Xi said. "No matter how far China develops, it will never seek hegemony." Xi chronicled at length the country's recent achievements, giving special credit to former leader Deng Xiaoping, whose reforms Xi said saved China from the brink of economic collapse

following the tumultuous Cultural Revolution.

Other celebrations of reform and opening up have been criticized by scholars for downplaying the role of Deng, widely considered the architect of the changes, in order to elevate Xi.

This time around, Xi spared no praise for Deng, as he began by remarking on the significance of 1978 — the

Rajapaksa now becomes Lanka's main opp leader

Colombo (PTI): Mahinda Rajapaksa on Tuesday became Sri Lanka's main opposition leader in Parliament, days after he resigned as prime minister after clinging on to power for nearly two months, amidst the unprecedented political turmoil in the country. Rajapaksa, 73, replaced veteran Tamil leader of the main Tamil party R Sampanthan who held the position from 2015.

His appointment was announced by Speaker Karu Jayasuriya in Parliament which met for the first time after the reinstatement of Ranil Wickremesinghe as prime minister that ended the 51-day political standoff in the country. M A Sumanthiran of Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and



Rauff Hakeem of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress raised objections against Rajapaksa's appointment.

They claimed that Rajapaksa has ceased to be a member of Parliament because he had joined another political party recently.

Pak releases Indian national Hamid from prison: Report

Islamabad (PTI): Indian national Hamid Nihal Ansari was released from a Pakistani jail on Tuesday to be repatriated to India, six years after he was detained by intelligence agencies for entering the country illegally reportedly to meet a girl he had befriended online.

Ansari was detained by Pakistan's intelligence agencies in 2012 after he entered the country from Afghanistan and subsequently sentenced to three years' imprisonment by a military court in 2015 for possessing a fake Pakistani identity card. The 33-year-old Mumbai resident was lodged in the Peshawar Central Jail after being sentenced by the military court on December 15, 2015. His three-year jail term ended on December 15, 2018 but he was not able to leave for India as his legal documents were not ready.

On Thursday, the Peshawar High Court gave the federal government a month deadline to complete his repatriation process. The Indian national was released from Mardan jail on Tuesday and was shifted to Islamabad for his onward journey to India, state-run Radio Pakistan reported.

Ansari, a software engineer, went missing after he was taken into custody by Pakistani intelligence agencies and local police in Kohat in 2012 and finally in reply to a habeas corpus petition filed by his mother, Fauzia Ansari, the high court was informed that he was in custody of the Pakistan Army and was being tried by a military court.

He entered Pakistan from Afghanistan, reportedly to meet a girl he had befriended online. Pakistan claims that Ansari was an "Indian spy who had illegally entered Pakistan and was involved in anti-state crimes and forging documents." A two-judge Peshawar High Court bench, comprising Justice Roohul Amin and Justice Qalandar Ali Khan, on Thursday heard an appeal filed by Ansari through his lawyer Qazi Muhammad Anwar.



In this photo taken on Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, whirling dervishes of the Mevlevi order perform during a Sheb-i Arus ceremony in Konya, central Turkey. Every December the Anatolian city hosts a series of events to commemorate the death of 13th century Islamic scholar, poet and Sufi mystic Jalaladdin Rumi. AP

Afghanistan appreciates US' flexibility towards exempting Chabahar port from Iran sanctions

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

Afghanistan has voiced appreciation for the "flexibility" shown by its "strategic partner" the US in exempting the Chabahar port project, being developed by India, from its tough sanctions against Iran.

Last month, the Trump administration exempted India from imposition of certain sanctions for the development of the strategically-located Chabahar Port in Iran, along with the construction of the railway line connecting it with Afghanistan.

The US had imposed "the toughest ever" sanctions on a defiant Iran aimed at altering the Iranian regime's "behaviour." The sanctions cover Iran's banking and energy sectors and reinstate penalties for



countries and companies in Europe, Asia and elsewhere that do not halt Iranian oil imports.

However, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had said that eight countries — India, China, Italy, Greece, Japan, South

Korea, Taiwan and Turkey — were temporarily allowed to continue buying Iranian oil as they showed "significant reduction" in oil purchase from the Persian Gulf country.

"The Chabahar Port remains an important gateway

for providing commercially viable access to the sea linking the Indian Ocean with Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond.

In this regard, we appreciate the collaboration and flexibility of our strategic partner, the United States to work with Afghanistan, Iran and India towards exempting the port from its Sanctions," Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Mahmoud Saikal said Monday at a Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan.

Saikal said since last year, Kabul has operationalised air-cargo corridors with India, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Europe, Russia, UAE, Saudi Arabia and China, leading to a substantial increase in export of Afghan products abroad.

Depression, anxiety may take same toll on health as smoking: Study

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

Anxiety and depression may significantly increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and arthritis, comparable to smoking and obesity, a study warns. Researchers from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) in the US looked at the health data of more than 15,000 older adults over a four-year period. The study, published in the journal Health Psychology, found that 16 per cent (2,225) suffered from high levels of anxiety and depression, 31 per cent (4,737) were obese and 14 per cent (2,125) were current smokers.

Participants with high levels of anxiety and depression were found to face 65 per cent increased odds for a heart condition, 64 per cent for stroke, 50 per cent for high blood pressure and 87 for arthritis, compared to those without anxiety and depression. "These increased odds are similar to those of participants who are smokers or are obese," said Aoife O'Donovan from UCSF. "However, for arthritis, high anxiety and depression seem to



confer higher risks than smoking and obesity," O'Donovan said. Unlike the other conditions investigated, the researchers found that high levels of depression and anxiety were not associated with cancer incidence.

This confirms results from previous studies, but contradicts a prevailing idea shared by many patients, researchers said. "Our findings are in line with a lot of other studies showing that psychological distress is not a strong predictor of many types of cancer," O'Donovan said.

Low self-control online puts you at risk of cyber attacks

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

People who have low self-control — indulging in impulse online shopping, downloading music and compulsive email use — are more likely to become easy targets of cyber attacks, a study warns. Scientists from the Michigan State University in the US examined the personality traits and behaviours — both obvious and subtle — that lead someone to fall victim to malware attacks.

"People who show signs of low self-control are the ones we found more susceptible to malware attacks," said Tomas Holt, lead author of the research. "An individual's characteristics are critical in studying how cyber-crime perseveres, particularly the person's impulsiveness and the activities that they engage in while online that have the greatest impact on their risk," Holt said.

Low self-control comes in many forms. This type of person shows signs of short-sightedness, negligence, physical versus verbal behavior and an inability to delay gratification, Holt said. "Self-control is an idea that's been looked at heav-



ily in criminology in terms of its connection to committing crimes," Holt said.

"But we find a correlation between low self-control and victimisation; people with this trait put themselves in situations where they are near others who are motivated to break the law," he said.

The research, published in Social Science Computer Review, assessed the self-control of nearly 6,000 survey participants, as well as their computers' behaviour that could indicate malware and infection.

To measure victimisation, researchers asked participants a series of questions about how they might react in certain situations. For computer behaviour, they asked about their

computer having slower processing, crashing, unexpected pop-ups and the homepage changing on their web browser. "The internet has omnipresent risks. In an online space, there is constant opportunity for people with low self-control to get what they want, whether that is pirated movies or deals on consumer goods," Holt said. Hackers and cyber-criminals know that people with low self-control are the ones who will be scouring the internet for what they want — or think they want — which is how they know what sites, files or methods to attack, researchers said.

Understanding the psychological side of self-control and the types of people whose computers become infected with malware — and who likely spread it to others — is critical in fighting cyber-crime, Holt said. What people do online matters, and the behavioural factors at play are entirely related to risks.

"There are human aspects of cybercrime that we don't touch because we focus on the technical side to fix it," Holt said.

GLOBE TROTTER Grant Gustin and LA Thoma are married

Los Angeles: "The Flash" star Grant Gustin has married his fiancée LA Thoma. Gustin, 28, and Thoma, 30, exchanged wedding vows last Saturday, reported E! online. The wedding reportedly took place at Valentine DTLA, a 9,000-square-foot venue erected in the 1920s. According to the publication, "Supergirl" stars Melissa Benoist and Chris Wood, Hamilton's Daveed Diggs and Taylor Trensch, along with Broadway actors Adam Kaplan, Jared Loftin, Ben Ross and Leela Rothenberg attended the ceremony. The couple is yet to comment on their nuptials, but Gustin's manager Robert Stein shared a photo of himself with the newlyweds on Instagram. "What heartfelt joy is was to watch Grant and LA, surrounded by their family and friends, come together for a loving union. "Wishing them both a Lifetime of Love and Happiness. They are so blessed to have one another to spend the rest of their lives together," he captioned the post. Gustin and Thoma, a physical therapist, announced their engagement in April 2017. They dated a little over a year before getting engaged.



Elgort to play lead in 'The Great Imposter'

Los Angeles: Actor Ansel Elgort is set to star in drama "The Great High School Imposter". The story is based on a Daniel Riley GQ Magazine article published this year about Artur Samarin, a young Ukrainian man who posed as a teenager so he could be adopted by a childless couple in a small Pennsylvania town and became the top student in his high school. Samarin was five years older than he claimed. His adopted parents turned him into the authorities. According to Deadline, Mike Makowsky is adapting the script for the project to be produced by Jeremy Steckler of Conde Nast Entertainment.



Vijay Mallya faces bankruptcy proceedings in UK High Court

AFP ■ LONDON

Embattled liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya's legal troubles continue to mount as he is set to face bankruptcy proceedings in the UK High Court next year, brought by a consortium of Indian banks in their attempt to recoup unpaid debt worth nearly 1.145 billion pounds.

TLT LLP, the UK-based law firm which had won a landmark case for the 13 banks led by State Bank of India (SBI) earlier this year, confirmed on Monday that their bankruptcy petition against the 62-year-old businessman has been transferred to the insolvency list in London's High Court of Justice for a hearing in the first half of 2019.

"We can confirm that we presented a bankruptcy petition against Dr Mallya on behalf of the banks on 11 September 2018," said Paul Gair, partner at TLT. "This was issued in Dr Mallya's local court, Northampton County Court, and has now been transferred to the insolvency list in the High Court of Justice in London for the hearing. The hearing is expected to take place in the Spring," he said.

In a ruling in May, a UK High Court judge had refused to overturn a worldwide order freezing Mallya's assets and upheld an Indian court's ruling that the consortium of 13 Indian banks were entitled to recover funds amounting to nearly 1.145 billion pounds. TLT LLP has been representing the banks in their efforts to recover their dues as part of the worldwide freezing order, with the bankruptcy petition aimed at seizing his assets to recover dues.

Besides SBI, the 13 Indian banks include Bank of Baroda, Corporation bank, Federal Bank Ltd, IDBI Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, Punjab National Bank,



State Bank of Mysore, UCO Bank, United Bank of India and JM Financial Asset Reconstruction Co Pvt Ltd.

They have secured follow-on High Court orders to recover some of the funds owed to them as a result of unpaid loans by Mallya's now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

Mallya, meanwhile, remains on bail after his extradition was recently ordered by Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, an order which now awaits a sign-off by UK home secretary Sajid Javid.

Chief Magistrate, Judge Emma Arbuthnot, had ruled last week that Mallya does have a case to answer in the Indian courts over substantial "misrepresentations" of his financial dealings, in a boost to India's efforts to bring back the businessman wanted for alleged bank fraud and money laundering charges amounting to an estimated Rs 9,000 crores.

"There is clear evidence of dispersal and misapplication of the loan funds and I find a prima facie case the Dr Mallya was involved in a conspiracy to launder money," the ruling noted. Mallya has indicated that he plans to appeal the verdict in the High Court.

"My legal team will review the judgment in detail, consider various options and then I will decide going forward. There is a process ahead," he told reporters.

UK mins meet to step up no-deal Brexit plans

AFP ■ LONDON

British ministers met on Tuesday to intensify plans for leaving the European Union without a deal — a prospect that is becoming more likely as Prime Minister Theresa May plays for time with just 101 days to go until Brexit. The opposition Labour Party meanwhile faced refusal over its request for a no-confidence motion in May and growing pressure to table a binding vote against the government. May on Monday said the government was preparing for a no-deal Brexit and "the cabinet will be discussing the next phase in ensuring we are ready for that scenario."

She will be refereeing between ministers who want the government to step up preparations for a no-deal scenario and those that want parliament to have a final say in a series of votes on potential options for Brexit. One option is the prime minister's own Brexit deal, but that is hanging by a thread after she was forced to pull a vote on it last week in the face of huge opposition from within her Conservative Party.

Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn on Monday tabled a non-binding no-confidence vote in May after she told MPs they will get another chance to vote on her deal in the week beginning January 14. "This house has no confidence in the prime minister due to her failure to allow the House of Commons to have a meaningful vote," Corbyn told lawmakers ahead of tabling the motion in parliament.

But Downing Street was reported on Tuesday to be blocking the motion from being debated. "We won't allow time for what is a stunt," Britain's Press Association quoted Downing Street as saying.

Labour had the option of tabling a binding motion but faced defeat after Conservative Brexit hardliners and the



A pro-Brexit demonstrator waves a placard with others outside the Houses of Parliament in London on Tuesday. AP

Democratic Unionist Party, which props up her government, both said they would back May. Leading eurosceptic Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg told BBC Radio 4's Today programme on Tuesday that he "will always support the Conservative government, I will not vote a Conservative government out of office." Rees-Mogg led a party confidence vote against May last week, which she survived, but only after a third of her parliamentary party voted to oust her.

Even a non-binding vote of no-confidence from a majority in the House of Commons could leave May's authority further weakened — and potentially prompt another vote in her entire government and a general election.

Britain is set to leave the European Union on March 29 next year, but after 18 months of tortuous negotiations appears no closer to formalising a divorce deal. If parliament fails to approve the text of her deal, Britain could crash out of the EU with no deal — a prospect that experts warn could lead to serious trade disruption and trigger a financial crisis. May insisted Monday that she was continuing to

seek "assurances" from the EU over elements of her plan, although EU officials said no meetings were planned.

The delay on the vote has angered members of her own party and Labour opposition politicians, who accused her of trying to "run down the clock" ahead of Britain's withdrawal to increase pressure on them to back the deal.

"The prime minister has cynically run down the clock, trying to manoeuvre parliament into a choice between two unacceptable outcomes" — her deal or no deal, Corbyn said.

May is also facing calls for a second referendum to resolve the impasse, with dozens of MPs from all sides now supporting another poll and reports that May's officials are considering the possibility. But the prime minister argued that this would betray the 2016 result and undermine public confidence in politics.

Let us not break faith with the British people by trying to stage another referendum," she told parliament on Monday. "Another vote... would do irreparable damage to the integrity of our politics," May said, adding that a second vote "would likely leave us no further forward".

Nearly 2,000 jailed for life since 2016 coup: Media

Ankara (AFP): Nearly 2,000 people have been sentenced to life in prison since the July 2016 attempted overthrow of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish state media reported Tuesday. State news agency Anadolu said some 1,934 suspects have been told by the courts that they will spend the rest of their life in jail. Of these, 978 people were jailed for life, Anadolu reported, while 956 were sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment, which has replaced the death penalty in Turkey and carries harsher conditions than normal life imprisonment convictions.

A total of 239 out of 289 cases opened after the failed coup have been closed. The remaining 50 include 18 in Ankara and nine in Istanbul, Anadolu added. Ankara accuses the US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen of ordering the 2016 coup attempt and refers to his movement as the "Fethullah Terrorist Organisation".

Gulen strenuously denies Turkey's claims and followers insist his movement promotes peace and secular education, ridiculing the description of themselves as a terror group.

More than 3,050 people in all have been convicted over links to Gulen, with 1,123 given different jail sentences ranging from over a year to 20 years in prison. In one trial, Gulen's nephew Selman Gulen was sentenced to seven years and six months in jail for being a "member of an armed terrorist organisation"; the agency reported Tuesday.

Kutbettin Gulen, brother of the preacher living in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania, was jailed for 10 years and six months on the same charge in October. In recent weeks, there have been multiple police raids across the country against individuals suspected of links to the Gulen movement, especially in the armed forces.

Ruling AL, opposition BNP unveil elections manifestos in B'desh

PTI ■ DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ruling Awami League and jailed ex-premier Khaleda Zia's BNP unveiled their manifestos ahead of the crucial December 30 polls on Tuesday, as the election commission ordered the deployment of the forces across Bangladesh to maintain law and order.

Unveiling the ruling Awami League's election manifesto, Prime Minister Hasina asked voters to take a lenient view for any mistakes committed by her government during its two consecutive terms since 2009. The 21-point charter promised to put Bangladesh on a "highway to development". "We do not want a politics of division, violence, arson, obstruction or unrest. We want a democratic environment for a free and fair election. We want to ensure the participation of all to reach a national consensus," the 80-page manifesto read.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir released the manifesto in the of absence Zia, who is serving a jail term for embezzlement of funds, and her "fugitive" elder son and acting party chief Tarique Rahman. The BNP manifesto promised to limit the term to two for an elected person to hold the office of the prime minister.

The manifesto promised to scrap "all black laws" including the Digital Security Act, Official Secrets Act and Special Power Acts to facilitate freedom of speech and expression.

"A single vote of yours will revitalize the life of our leader (Zia)," Alamgir said, adding that their votes would restore the image of Rahman, now staying in London. Rahman was given life imprisonment for masterminding a grenade attack on an Awami League rally in 2005 in which 24 peo-

ple were killed and several others, including the then opposition leader and now Prime Minister Hasina, injured.

Zia, 73, who is serving a 10-year jail sentence on corruption charges, has been barred from contesting the polls. The developments came as a single-judge High Court bench virtually sealed scopes for Zia to contest the polls being a convict rejecting her final plea to overturn the election commission decision to disqualify for the polls.

According to the election commission officials, around 100 million people are eligible to cast their votes in the general elections.

Meanwhile Commission on Tuesday ordered the deployment of the paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) throughout the country with "immediate effect" to maintain law and order.

"A total of 1,016 platoons of BGB troops have been deployed across Bangladesh to control the law and order situation," a commission spokesman said. On Monday, Bangladesh's main opposition alliance unveiled its poll manifesto, promising to safeguard the opinion and rights of people if it was voted to power.

The National Unity Front (NUF), a political alliance of opposition parties including Zia's BNP, promised to ensure "peoples' ownership". "When the people no longer have control of the government, it is taken over by vested interests and various domestic and foreign groups... you have felt this in your bones," NUF convener and eminent jurist Kamal Hossain said.

The NUF, in line with the constitutional principle, would not only ensure peoples' ownership over the government but also the stake of defeated parties in the governance process, he said. Though the BNP is part of the NUF alliance, it released its manifesto separately.

UN condemns North Korea rights violations and nuke spending

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The UN General Assembly on Monday condemned North Korea's "systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights" and its diversion of resources into pursuing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles over the welfare of its people. It noted "with concern" that over 10 million North Koreans are estimated to be undernourished and that there is "an unacceptably high prevalence of chronic and acute malnutrition" in the reclusive northeast Asian nation.

The resolution, sponsored by Japan and the European Union, was adopted by consensus, though countries including Russia, China, Cuba and Venezuela dissociated themselves from it. Many expressed opposition to assembly resolutions singling out specific countries and said the Geneva-based Human Rights Council should deal with rights issues.

North Korea's UN ambassador, Kim Song, said his country "categorically rejects" the resolution, calling it "a product of (a) political plot and hostile forces."

He accused Japan of "provoking confrontation" with North Korea "by going back against the main trend in (the) Korean peninsula" when delicate political negotiations are



underway.

Since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reached out to South Korea and the United States early this year, the two Korean leaders have met several times and Kim held a historic summit with President Donald Trump — with another one expected in the new year. But there has been no significant progress on Kim's commitment to nuclear disarmament, and as a result no lifting of UN or US sanctions against North Korea.

The resolution's approval followed the US failure to get enough votes to discuss North Korea's human rights record in the Security Council a week ago. It had succeeded for the last four years, and diplomats said the US is likely to try again in the new year when five new members join the council.

A statement released

Monday by North Korea's UN Mission noted opposition to the US move and asserted again that the Security Council "is neither a place for discussion on any human rights issue nor a platform where a human rights issue is politicized to flare up confrontation." Whatever the change in the Security Council's composition, North Korea said it shouldn't be used as a platform "where U.S.'s high-handedness and arbitrary practice would prevail." The General Assembly resolution adopted Monday expresses "very serious concern" at reports of torture, detention, rape, public executions, the imposition of the death penalty, the absence of the rule of law, and "collective punishments extending up to three generations." It also expressed concern at forced labor in North Korea and its

"extensive system of political prison camps where a vast number of persons are deprived of their liberty and subjected to deplorable conditions" as well as "all-pervasive and severe restrictions, both online and offline, on the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion or belief, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association."

The resolution condemns "the systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequence enforced disappearance of persons, including those from other countries, on a large scale."

It "acknowledges" the findings of the U.N. commission of inquiry on North Korea in 2014. The commission said testimony and information it gathered "provide reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pursuant to policies established at the highest level of the state for decades and by institutions under the effective control of its leadership."

The General Assembly strongly urged North Korea "to immediately put an end to the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights" by fully implementing UN resolutions and recommendations including closing prison camps and releasing all political prisoners.

Pope Francis warns against nationalism, xenophobia

AFP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis has warned politicians of the dangers of exploiting nationalism and fear of foreigners to undermine the trust essential to their task of binding societies together, not dividing them. Trust based on an "authentic political life, grounded in law and in frank and fair relations between individuals... is never easy to achieve," the pope said in a message released Tuesday which will be used to mark World Peace Day on January

1. This is because "human relations are complex, especially in our own times, marked by a climate of mistrust rooted in the fear of others or of strangers, or anxiety about one's personal security," he said.

"Sadly, it is also seen at the political level, in attitudes of rejection or forms of nationalism that call into question the fraternity of which our globalised world has such great need." Today more than ever, our societies need 'artisans of peace.' "Political addresses that

tend to blame every evil on migrants and to deprive the poor of hope are unacceptable," he added in the message entitled: "Good politics at the service of peace."

Pope Francis also warned against corruption and the pursuit of personal ambition at the expense of wider society, saying that when rulers look out only for themselves, the future is compromised, especially for the younger generations which become marginalised.



In this Saturday, Aug. 25, 2018 file photo Pope Francis passes by a banner of a protester as he leaves after visiting St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, in Dublin, Ireland. Pope Francis is on a two-day visit to Ireland. AP Photo/File

British Airways to resume flights to Pak after a decade

Islamabad (PTI): British Airways said on Tuesday that it will resume flights to Pakistan from June next year, a decade after suspending operations due to security fears.

"All of us at British Airways could not be more pleased to be coming back to Pakistan and we very much look forward to June next year, when our first flight will touch down at your spectacular new airport," the British carrier's head of sales for Asia Pacific and the Middle East, Robert Williams, said at a press conference here.

The British airline had suspended its flights to Pakistan in September 2008 after the deadly bombing on the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, which killed more than 50 people and triggered a major drawdown by embassies and international organisations over safety concerns. "We only fly somewhere when we know it's safe to do so," Williams said. Separately, British High Commissioner Thomas Drew in a video posted on Twitter said that the direct flight will start between London and Islamabad. "Direct flights from Heathrow to Islamabad's new airport to start in June... A further boost to links between the UK and Pakistan, especially on trade and investment," he said. A statement issued by the airline said that initially three-per-week service will be launched, operated on a three-class Boeing 787 Dreamliner, with return fares starting from 499 pounds.

Prime Minister's special assistant Zulfi Bukhari and Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile, and Industries, Abdul Razzaq Dawood, were also present during the press conference.

"British Airways coming back after a decade shows you where we were and how far we've come," Bukhari said, adding that it was big achievement of his government. The announcement to resume flights will boost effort of Prime Minister Imran Khan to bring in more investments as it showed the confidence of international community.

Aamir Khan denied permission by Chinese varsity to promote 'Thugs of Hindostan'

PTI ■ BEIJING

The venue of a fan meet of Bollywood actor Aamir Khan was shifted to a hotel after a Chinese university denied permission to use its campus to promote his latest movie "Thugs of Hindostan".

Khan is currently in China to promote "Thugs of Hindostan", which failed to register a strong performance in Bollywood and was panned by the critics. The movie, starring Amitabh Bachchan, Aamir and Katrina Kaif among others, was released on November 8



in India and is slated to release in the country next

week. The fan meet, which was scheduled in Guangdong

University of Finance and Economics (GUFE) in Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province, was cancelled by the university over the failure to seek prior permission to use the campus, the Global Times reported.

Around 350 people were supposed to attend the event. According to the Chinese media, the school did not know about the promotional event until Monday.

"The message was spread only among a small group of students through social

media. The school only knew about it when students talked about the event hours before it was about to take place," the report quoted an employee of the university as saying.

However, the Weibo account that promotes Khan's films announced the school had cancelled the event "unilaterally" as "the students were overly enthusiastic".

The post angered many students, who said the university did not know about the event at all before Monday. Many students said they waited outside the event

site for over an hour. "It is obviously the organiser's fault for not applying to the school to use an on-campus building," net user Swim Xinzhu, a student from GUFE, said.

"We have held similar events before and there would be no issue if the organiser had reported in advance," an employee of the varsity said.

The organiser's deputy manager, a Beijing-based film-promoting company, reported the Weibo post by Khan's film account, saying they were contacting the film

crew and the school to figure out what caused the poor communication.

The fan meet was soon relocated to a Four Seasons hotel not far from the campus and ended at around 11 PM on Monday night, the report said.

Khan is famous with his Dangal movie in China which was watched by President Xi Jinping.

His other movie Secret Super Star has also become very famous in China raking up record box office earnings.

UNCAPPED VARUN FETCH BIG MONEY AT IPL AUCTION, YUVRAJ FINDS A BUYER AT LAST

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Unheralded architect-turned-cricketer Varun Chakravarthy on Tuesday fetched a sensational bid of ₹8.4 crore, more than 40 times his base price, before veteran Yuvraj Singh finally found a buyer at the IPL players' auction that had an unmissable Caribbean flavour to it.

Chakravarthy, with a base price of ₹20 lakh, went to Kings XI Punjab after a bidding war that also involved Delhi Capitals, Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals.

KXIP, who had the maximum money going into the auction, also spent big on England all-rounder Sam Curran, buying him for ₹7.2 crore, the most for an overseas player on Tuesday.

Yuvraj fans must have also heaved a sigh of relief when the 37-year-old was bought by Mumbai Indians for his base price of ₹1 crore after going unsold initially.

"If you are wondering why this took time...We've just got back to senses! Welcome to Mumbai," tweeted Mumbai Indians.

Yuvraj secured a last minute deal but his IPL fortunes have been declining rapidly. In 2015, he fetched a record ₹16 crore deal with the Delhi franchise but was picked up by KXIP at his base of price of ₹2 crore last season before the team released him.

Both uncapped and capped Indians were in demand at the auction. Medium pacer Jaydev Unadkat became a millionaire once again with a ₹8.4 crore bid from Rajasthan Royals but the spotlight was firmly on Chakravarthy, the 27-year-old mystery spinner from Tamil Nadu who gave up a career as free-lance architect to pursue cricket.

"We had to wait and see how the bid was going (for Chakravarthy). He can bowl in the Powerplay and in the death and can also bat," said KXIP coach Mike Hesson.

Chakravarthy has risen to prominence owing to a strong showing in the Tamil Nadu Premier League. He has been widely credited for Madurai Panthers' maiden TNPL title win this year.

Unadkat, on the other hand, is back in the RR fold after being released at the end of the 2018 season. He had been bought for ₹11.5



crore by RR earlier this year. On Tuesday, the Royals lapped him up after a bidding battle with KXI, CSK and Delhi Capitals.

Besides Chakravarthy, the other uncapped players who attracted huge amounts were 16-year-old all-rounder Prayas Ray Barman from Bengal (₹1.5 cr to RCB), Punjab wicket-keeper Prab Simran Singh (₹4.8 cr to KXIP), Mumbai batsmen Shivam Dube (₹5 cr to RCB) and Uttar Pradesh batsman Akshdeep Singh (₹3.6 cr to RCB). Akshdeep was bought after he re-entered the auction pool.

With uncertainty over the availability of Australian and England players in a World Cup

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE PAID ₹4.2 CRORE FOR HETMYER. KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS, RAJASTHAN ROYALS AND DELHI CAPITALS ALSO BID FOR THE STYLISH WEST INDIAN BATSMAN, WHO HAD A BASE PRICE OF ₹50 LAKH. HIS TEAMMATE BRATHWAITE, THE STAR OF 2016 WORLD T20, WAS SOLD TO KKR

year, the teams went after the West Indians.

Out of the 20 overseas slots available, six were sealed by the Caribbean players including Shimron Hetmyer, Carlos Brathwaite, Nicholas Pooran, Oshane Thomas, Keemo Paul and Sherfane Rutherford.

Royal Challengers Bangalore paid ₹4.2 crore for Hetmyer. Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Capitals also bid for the stylish West Indian batsman, who had a base price of ₹50 lakh.

His teammate Brathwaite, the star of 2016 World T20, was sold to KKR for ₹5 crore after a bidding war between the Dinesh Karthik-led side and Kings XI Punjab.

The all-rounder had entered the auction with a base price of ₹75 lakh.

Another West Indian to get an attractive deal was wicketkeeper Nicholas Pooran. The 23-year-old, who came with a base price of ₹75 lakh, went for ₹4.20 crore to KXIP. He is a T20 find and is yet to play Test cricket. Delhi Capitals paid ₹2 crore and ₹50 for Rutherford and

Keemo Paul while Royals bought Thomas for ₹1.1 crore.

Amongst other Indians, spinner Axar Patel (₹ five crore), pacer Mohit Sharma (₹ five crore) and Mohammad Shami (₹4.8 crore) were the other names to fetch big bids.

Patel, who made his name at KXIP, was bought by Delhi Capitals after a bidding battle with the Punjab franchise.

Shami, who turned up for Delhi last season, was sold to KXIP while Mohit went back to Chennai Super Kings after a stint with KXIP.

Indian Test player Hanuma Vihari was sold to Delhi Capitals for ₹ two crore, four times his base price.

Pacer Ishant Sharma, who had a base price of ₹ 75 lakh, went to Delhi Capitals for ₹1.1 crore while wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha was bought back by Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹1.2 crore.

The high-profile unsold players were Cheteshwar Pujara, Brendon McCullum, Shaun Marsh, Chris Woakes and Dale Steyn.

TOP PICKS

DELHI CAPITALS

Player	Price
Hanuma Vihari	2 crores
Axar Patel	5 crores
Ishant Sharma	1.1 crores
Ankush Bains	20 lakhs
Nathu Singh	20 lakhs
Colin Ingram	6.4 crores
Sherfane Rutherford	2 crores
Keemo Paul	50 lakhs
Jalaj Saxena	20 lakhs
B Ayyappa	20 lakhs



ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

Shivam Dube	5 crores
Shimron Hetmyer	4 crore
Gurkeerat Mann	20 lakhs
Devdutt Padikkal	50 lakhs
Heinrich Klaassen	20 lakhs
Himmat Singh	65 lakhs
Milind Kumar	20 lakhs
Prayas Ray Barman	1.5 crore



SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Jonny Bairstow	2.2 crores
Wriddhiman Saha	1.2 crores
Martin Gupthill	1 crore



KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Carlos Brathwaite	5 crores
Lockie Ferguson	1.6 crores
Andrich Nortje	20 lakhs
Nikhil Naik	20 lakhs
Harry Gurney	75 lakhs
Prithvi Raj Varra	20 lakhs
Joe Denly	1 crore



CHENNAI SUPERKINGS

Mohit Sharma	5 crores
Ruturaj Gaikwad	20 lakhs



KINGS XI PUNJAB

Varun Chakravarthy	8.4 crores
Sam Curran	7.2 crores
Mohammed Shami	4.8 crores
Nicholas Pooran	4.2 crores
Moises Henriques	1 crore
Sarfraz Khan	25 lakhs
Hardus Viljoen	75 lakhs
Arshdeep Singh	20 lakhs
Darshan Nalkande	30 lakhs
Simran Singh	4.8 crores
Agnivesh Ayachi	20 lakhs
Harpreet Brar	20 lakhs
M Ashwin	20 lakhs



MUMBAI INDIANS

Barinder Sran	3.4 crore
Lasith Malinga	2 crores
Yuvraj Singh	1 crore
Anmolpreet Singh	80 lakhs
Pankaj Jaiswal	20 lakhs
Rasik Dhar	20 lakhs



RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Jaydev Unadkat	8.4 crores
Varun Aaron	2.4 crores
Oshane Thomas	1.1 crores
Shashank Singh	30 lakhs
Liam Livingstone	50 lakhs
Shubham Ranjane	20 lakh



LOCAL EVENTS

RAVIKANT SLAMS TON

Ravikant Shukla slammed aton to help Akhil Infra Club beat LDACC by 50 runs in a league match of the 15th BBD Cricket League at KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium on Tuesday. Batting first, Akhil Infra scored 201 runs for the loss of four wickets in 40 overs. Ravikant's ton came in 123 balls with the help of eight boundaries and two sixes. In reply, LDACC were bowled out for 151 runs in 36.4 overs.

In C division, Chauhan Sporting thrashed Trump Starlets by nine wickets while National Youngsters Club crushed Kalpana Sports by 81 runs. Meanwhile, Unity Club also registered an east seven-wicket win over Friend's Club.

CHESS TOURNAMENT

Lucknow District Chess Sports Association is organising the 1st Shivani State FIDE Rated Chess Tournament at Shivani Public School from December 23 to 25. The tournament carries a prizemoney of Rs 50,000. Interested may contact on 7459899385 or 8800823657.

TUSHAR, TANISHA ADVANCE



Sports Minister Chetan Chauhan with participants

Tushar Gagneja and Tanisha Singh advanced to the next round of the 43rd Yonex Sunrise Akhilesh Das Gupta Memorial Junior (Under-19) National Badminton Championship at UP Badminton Academy on Tuesday. Earlier, Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Chetan Chauhan inaugurated the championship.

The minister also honoured Samayra Panwar, who bagged the Under-13 national title recently, by giving him ₹21 thousand and a kit bag. Other UPites Abhyansh Singh and Samridhi Singh got the first round bye.



Kusal Mendis (right) and Angelo Mathews return to pavilion after batting entire Day four of first Test

ICC

Mendis, Mathews defy NZ

AFP ■ WELLINGTON

Angelo Mathews celebrated with push-ups on the pitch after joining Kusal Mendis in passing 100 on Tuesday as Sri Lanka batted the whole day without losing a wicket to give themselves hope of an unlikely first Test draw in Wellington.

Mendis was 116 not out at stumps on day four and Mathews 117, with their record-breaking unbroken 246-run partnership setting a Sri Lankan record against New Zealand.

It was also the first time in

New Zealand that a full day's play has been completed without a Test wicket falling and the first time anywhere since South Africa achieved the feat against Bangladesh in Chittagong in 2008.

The pair's epic vigil meant the tourists ended the day at 259 for three after starting in a seemingly hopeless position with three wickets down for just 20 in their second innings after conceding a first-innings deficit of 296 to New Zealand. Sri Lanka still need a further 37 to avoid an innings defeat but with a flat pitch offering nothing to New

Zealand's seam attack and rain threatening on the final day, a draw is now a real prospect.

"Even tough it's a belter of a wicket, the concentration and commitment they had was unbelievable," bowling coach Ramesh Ratnayake said.

"We couldn't have asked for anything more."

New Zealand had hoped to wrap up the match early on the fourth day after posting an imposing 578 in the first innings, anchored by Tom Latham's unbeaten 264 — which eclipsed former England captain Alastair

Cook's 244 as the highest score by an opener carrying their bat in Test history.

But the home bowlers grew increasingly frustrated by the stubborn rearguard action, resorting to a barrage of bouncers that failed to rattle the batsmen.

Spinner Ajaz Patel said the Black Caps had not played poorly and were still upbeat about claiming victory on the final day.

"The positive thing for us is that we are the only team in a position to win the game. That's great position for us to be in," he said.

Man Utd lose patience and sack Mourinho

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United have sacked manager Jose Mourinho after their worst start to a season in almost 30 years, the club announced on Tuesday.

The 55-year-old Portuguese's last match in charge was the 3-1 defeat by Premier League leaders Liverpool on Sunday which left them 19 points behind their opponents.

Mourinho's sacking comes just two-and-a-half years into his tenure and three years and a day since Chelsea sacked him just months after he had guided them to the title.

Former player Michael Carrick, now a member of the coaching staff, is expected to take charge in an interim role but United said a caretaker manager will be appointed until the end of the season.

The club's worst start in the league since 1990 means even Mourinho's ambition of reaching the top four and a Champions League qualification spot is in danger.

Despite United reaching the Champions League knockout stages — they face an intimidating last-16 tie with Paris Saint-Germain — a mix of the results, dressing-room discord and criticism of the



board's transfer policy proved potent factors in the decision to dismiss him.

A United source said that Mourinho had been supported in his efforts to sign players and described reports of player power at the club as being key to the sacking as wide of the mark.

According to British media reports, United will have to pay Mourinho 22.5 million (\$ 28 million) — as the club are still in the Champions League — to sever the ties.

"Manchester United announces

MANAGERIAL RECORD							
Team	From	To	P	W	D	L	Win %
Benfica	20 September 2000	5 December 2000	11	6	3	2	54.5
União de Leiria	July 2001	23 January 2002	20	9	7	4	45.0
Porto	23 January 2002	2 June 2004	127	91	21	15	71.7
Chelsea	2 June 2004	20 September 2007	185	124	40	21	67.0
Inter Milan	2 June 2008	28 May 2010	108	67	26	15	62.0
Real Madrid	31 May 2010	1 June 2013	178	128	28	22	71.9
Chelsea	3 June 2013	17 December 2015	136	80	29	27	58.8
Manchester United	27 May 2016	18 December 2018	144	84	32	28	58.3
TOTAL			909	589	186	134	64.8

that manager Jose Mourinho has left the club with immediate effect," a club statement said.

"The club would like to thank Jose for his work during his time at Manchester United and to wish him success in the future.

"A new caretaker manager will be appointed until the end of the current season, while the club conducts a thorough recruitment process for a new, full-time manager."

'OUTSTANDING CANDIDATE'

In the longer term former Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane has been linked to the club and Tottenham Hotspur manager

Mauricio Pochettino could also be a name in the frame.

One bookmaker makes Pochettino the early favourite and the 46-year-old Argentinian is also former Manchester United midfielder Gary Neville's favoured option.

"They need someone who meets the three key principles of that football club: the promotion of youth, entertaining football and to win football matches," Neville told Sky Sports News.

"People suggest he (Pochettino) hasn't won a trophy yet at Tottenham but with a net spend of minus 29 million or something over the last four years, I'm not sure he

could have done more.

"I do think he is the person who is the outstanding candidate."

Mourinho's reign had started well enough with the League Cup and the Europa League trophies but for a club that has been champions of England 20 times, neighbours Manchester City's dominance over them in the league has hurt.

The wound went even deeper for Mourinho as City are managed by Pep Guardiola, who got the better of him when he was in charge at Barcelona and Mourinho was at Real Madrid.

However, despite his protestations to the contrary the United board gave Mourinho plenty of

money to compete.

Top-quality players such as Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku — who he persuaded to come to United and not Chelsea for 75 million in 2017 — and Paul Pogba for a then world record fee of 89 million in 2016 have flourished under his authoritarian stewardship.

Indeed it was his deteriorating relationship with World Cup-winning midfielder Pogba — one of many to feel the lash of his tongue in public — that symbolised the decline at the club under him.

Mourinho questioned his attitude while the player hit back with open criticism of the tactics, culminating in him kicking his heels on the bench during the Liverpool debacle on Sunday.

The manager's overall EPL points haul of 176 since his appointment by United lagged behind City, Liverpool, Tottenham and Chelsea during the same period.

Andy Mitten, editor of fanzine United We Stand, told BBC Radio that neither the players nor the fans would miss Mourinho.

"We've been doing polls where 80 percent of fans wanted him to leave," said Mitten.

"He had a very good first season, an acceptable second season, but this season has been a disaster."

INDIA CRASH AT 140, AUSTRALIA DRAW LEVEL

Starting from overnight 112/5, India lose last five wickets for 28 runs to face humiliating defeat by 146 runs

PTI ■ PERTH

India crumbled in the face of Australia's remarkable metamorphosis and crashed to a 146-run defeat in the second Test here on Tuesday, surrendering a rare hard-earned ascendancy in a series Down Under.

The hosts levelled the four-match series 1-1 after India were bowled out for 140 runs in 56 overs in their second innings on the fifth and final day.

Starting from overnight 112 for five, India lost their last five wickets for 28 runs and it was all over within 65 minutes of play.

This was Australia's first Test win since the ball-tampering scandal broke out in South Africa earlier this year.

Having won the opening game by 31 runs to go in front, India had been talked up as a threat coming into the capital of Western Australia, but they wilted as the pace-spin duo of Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lyon worked in tandem at the Optus Stadium.

Starc (3-46) and Lyon (3-39) finished with three wickets apiece, while Josh Hazlewood (2-24) and Pat Cummins (2-25) took a brace each.

While Starc and his pace colleagues were expected to thrive on the lively track, it was off-spinner Lyon's exceptional outing that gave Australia the edge. He finished the match with eight wickets, including a five-for in the first innings and a deserving Man-of-the-Match award.

India surely missed a trick in not playing a specialist spinner, something that was admitted by one of their own at the end of fourth day's play.

Hanuma Vihari (28) and Rishabh Pant (30) had continued their overnight partnership, and batted out only six overs before the first wicket fell on this day. Overall, they added 21 runs for the sixth wicket.

Vihari was the first to go, lobbing a catch off Starc to short point. Pant then tried to play a few more attacking strokes, but he didn't comprehend the situation well and was confused whether to farm the strike at all.



Jasprit Bumrah walks off as Australian players celebrate winning the second Test between Australia and India in Perth on Tuesday

AP

INDIA'S WORST YEARS IN TESTS					
Year	P	W	L	D	
1959	9	1	7	1	
1983	18	—	7	11	
2018	13	6	7	—	
2014	10	1	6	3	

Faisel Features

INDIA'S UNSUCCESSFUL CHASES IN 2018			
Score (Target)	Opponent	Venue	
345 464	England	The Oval	
184 245	England	Southampton	
162 194	England	Birmingham	
151 287	South Africa	Centurion	
140 287	Australia	Perth	
135 208	South Africa	Cape Town	

Faisel Features



Jasprit Bumrah, third from left, celebrates after dismissing Pat Cummins

AP

Kohli defends four-pacers move

PTI ■ PERTH

Captain Virat Kohli on Tuesday firmly backed his decision to play four pacers in the second Test against Australia, rejecting criticism that India erred in not playing a spinner.

"We didn't have that control particularly in the first innings, not to the extent that we wanted. But in the second innings for sure, especially yesterday (day four) the first session, giving away only 56 odd runs without getting a wicket.

"I think it was outstanding bowling and obviously Mohammed Shami did what he did in the next session with the ball, which was again wonderful to see. I think they executed their plans to 95 per cent of what we expected. I think you definitely can be happy with that.

The India skipper added, "In the past when we have played four quicks, we definitely haven't been as consistent as we were in this game. So, I think they were pretty accurate, pretty consistent and we were convinced about going in with four fast bowlers looking at the conditions."

Kohli admitted that playing four fast bowlers weakened the tail and didn't provide as much control over Australia's scoring rate in the first innings. But at the same time, he added that they didn't comprehend picking a spinner at all despite a long tail.

"You obviously have two situations that you can think of. When you pick another fast bowler, obviously R Ashwin or Ravindra Jadeja have more ability with the bat, we all know that. It's a very tricky decision to make - what kind of a bowling option you want to go with or

Aus announce unchanged squad for remaining Tests

PERTH: Cricket Australia on Tuesday announced an unchanged 13-man squad for the remaining two Tests against India in Melbourne and Sydney.

The only noticeable change is that uncapped pacer Chris Tremain, who did not travel to Perth for the second Test either, has been released from the list.

The Australian team management feels that they have sufficient back-up in Mitchell Marsh and Peter Siddle should they need to bolster their four-man bowling attack for the remaining two Tests.

Squad: Tim Paine (capt), Aaron Finch, Peter Handscomb, Marcus Harris, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Nathan Lyon, Mitch Marsh, Shaun Marsh, Peter Siddle, Mitchell Starc.

PTI

you want to think that that guy can contribute with the bat as well.

"So eventually you come to one decision. We backed that decision and went ahead with it. Whether it comes off or not, that's a different thing but we were totally convinced in the team that that was our best combination to go with and the batsmen have to take responsibility."

"There are lots of variables that can happen during the course of a cricket match but before that, you need to have clarity as to what you want to do and as a side, we were totally clear that this was the combination we wanted to go with," he added.

Ishant and Jadeja argue on field

PTI ■ PERTH



Tension flared up between teammates Ishant Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja during a mid-game break on the fourth day of the second Test.

Ishant and Jadeja were engaged in a heated discussion before two other teammates, including Mohammed Shami, separated them.

Though it did not look like a friendly discussion, the

reason behind their argument was not clear.

"It does seem pretty animated," former Australia captain Ricky Ponting had said.

"There's lots of finger pointing. They were separated on a couple of occasions."

While Ishant played in the first two Tests, Jadeja has been limited to drinks duty and substitute fielding at the Optus Stadium.

Paine makes light of banter with Kohli

PTI ■ PERTH

Australia captain Tim Paine on Tuesday played down the verbal showdowns with Virat Kohli during the second Test here but insisted that he won't sit back and be "walked all over" if faced with a similar situation in the remaining matches.

The two skippers had quite a bit of banter in the middle, so much so that they almost made physical contact at one point. But Paine shrugged it off, saying that Australia will invite India for a beer in the change rooms as per their team tradition.

"I don't think we did touch to be honest. It got



Australian skipper Tim Paine shake hands with counterpart Virat Kohli after the end of second Test

cricket.com.au

pretty close. It was a highly competitive Test match from both teams. There's a lot on the line and both teams desperately want to win and sometimes that stuff happens" Paine said in the post-match press conference.

"I love it. I enjoy watching Kohli. I always have. I think he brings out the competitive spirit in a lot of people which is great, and I'm sure it was great to watch."

"I was really proud of the way our team conducted themselves on the field this week. We definitely will (the Indian team for a beer) after the series. That's always been the thing that has happened and will always be the case,"

he added.

But the wicketkeeper-batsman was quick to assert that he won't back down in the face of a showdown if it happens again.

"I think it's just one of those things, at times you have got to draw a line and start sticking up for yourself and sticking up for your teammates."

"...We are certainly not going to sit back and be walked all over. Sometimes those things happen and you have to get involved. Was it a decision as a captain to try and assert myself on the game? No. It was just two competitive cricketers trying to do their best to win the game," he said.

Virat, Shastri's roles must be assessed: Gavaskar



Lokesh Rahul is bowled by Mitchell Starc during fourth day of second Test at Perth

AP

PTI ■ PERTH

Utility of Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri as captain and coach must be assessed if India fail to win the next two Tests against Australia, suggested batting legend Sunil Gavaskar, who is baffled by the "selection blunders" committed by the team management.

Gavaskar was not impressed with the selection choices made by the team management.

"We have been seeing this — the selection blunders that have been committed since the tour of South Africa. It has cost the team because it has lost matches which could've been won if the

proper selection had been made," Gavaskar said.

"They have to look at the combination of their team, look at the hole that needs to be plugged and pick the men to. If they do that then they can certainly win the next two matches but if they don't, then the selectors need to think whether we are getting any benefit from this lot - the captain, coach and support staff," Gavaskar told *Aaj Tak*.

The former opener questioned the logic for picking a jumbo squad.

"I want to find out that who has authorised 19 players to go because the next question is why not three more? The BCCI is a very rich body, it can

afford to send even 40 people down there. However, I feel that an India cap, an Indian blazer has to be made a lot more valuable. ... By carrying players and taking 19 players, I do believe that the selection committee has not handled their responsibility well," he said.

"A lot of those players can come back and play domestic cricket which will not only embellish our domestic cricket, lift the standard of our domestic cricket but also give these guys, unlikely to be picked in the Test matches, an opportunity to regain form and make a case for getting back in the team," he added.

The first one on the flight back home from Perth should be India opener KL Rahul according to Gavaskar. "He (Rahul) has no chance of playing in the remaining two Tests unless of course there is an injury to any player. I think that he should be coming back and playing Ranji Trophy for Karnataka. It is not just that he is out of form, he is just not there and you can see that. He can prove me wrong and I will be very happy to be proven wrong as long as the Indian team benefits."

Meanwhile, Ricky Ponting reckons India's batting woes have outweighed their opponents after the visitors slumped to a massive 146 run defeat.

"I compared the two teams at the start of the series and I didn't think India could win here just because of the frailties of their batting and I think that's been highlighted this week," Ponting told *cricket.Com.Au*.

Kohli didn't boast, didn't belittle Paine: BCCI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian cricket board (BCCI) on Tuesday rubbished media reports in Australia which claimed that captain Virat Kohli bragged about being the best batsman in the world while ridiculing Tim Paine during the second Test in Perth.

The two captains were consistently involved in banter during the match but both insisted that no line was crossed. Reports in Australia claimed that the world's No 1 Test and ODI batsman boasted about being the best in the business during the showdowns.

The BCCI came out in support of Kohli, saying the statement attributed to Kohli was just hearsay and he never bragged about himself.

"It is assumed that Kohli said, 'I am the best player in the world and you are just a stand-in captain'. These claims were based on hearsay and the BCCI would like to bring into notice that no such words were spoken on the field by the Indian captain," BCCI said in a statement. "The BCCI got a clarification



Virat Kohli, centre, looks to the umpire ICC from the team management about the incident and would like to classify the reports as baseless."

With the banter reported by the media on the last two days of the match, Kohli faced questions on the issue but he said no one crossed the line.

"As long as there is no swearing on the field, and there's no personal attacks, the line doesn't get crossed. That's it! But look, in competitive spirit it stays on the field. I am not going to go into details but to be honest it's not of importance for me to speak on and it's something that's done," Kohli said after India lost the Test by 146 runs.

STARC (3-46) AND LYON (3-39) FINISHED WITH THREE WICKETS APIECE, WHILE JOSH HAZLEWOOD (2-24) AND PAT CUMMINS (2-25) TOOK A BRACE EACH

In doing so, he attacked Lyon and holed out to mid on, with Peter Handscomb taking a low diving catch. It hastened the end for India, with Umesh Yadav (2) returning a simple catch to Starc.

Ishant Sharma (0) was caught behind off Cummins, and Jasprit Bumrah (0) hit a skier for another return catch to the pacer as Australia sealed their first Test win since Durban before the ball-tampering scandal hit the headlines.

Australia had scored 326 runs in their first innings, and India replied with 283 runs, thus conceding a lead of 43 runs. The hosts scored 243 runs in their second innings to post a 287-run target.

'India erred by not including spinner'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar feels India made a mistake in not including a front-line spinner in the second Test that Australia won on Tuesday at Perth to square the four match series 1-1.

He said the team management should take the blame for selections which have "back-fired."

"(Australian spinner) Nathan Lyon is a great bowler, so we can't assume that a (Ravindra) Jadeja would have been as effective (as him)."

"But India, I think, made an error in going with four seamers, specially (with) Umesh Yadav and not Bhuvneshwar Kumar," Manjrekar, an expert with official broadcaster *Sony Pictures Networks*, said.

"If there was one spinner (in the team) there's always cracks and roughs, especially with left-handed batsmen in the opposition, to exploit. Jadeja could have been of more use than the fourth seamer," he said.

"So, it was a selection error that may have also contributed to India eventually losing the match," explained the 53-year-old batsman-turned-commentator.

As per experts, India had committed selection errors in



Hanuma Vihari bowls during 3rd Day AP

the past, following which the team lost.

"You don't lose because of one factor and you can't say that we lost because of poor selection. But you can say that there have been selections which have taken the world by surprise, not just a few people."

"These are selections which are unexpected and eventually have proved to be wrong selections. The team management will have to take responsibility for those selections that have back-fired," Manjrekar remarked.

He opined that India could go in with Mayank Agarwal and Murali Vijay as openers in the next Test at Melbourne.