

OPINION 8
HAMMER AND
TONGS APPROACH

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US PRESIDENT
CELEBRATES DIWALI

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RINGSIDE VIEW
OF DEEP-VEER
WEDDING
14 VIVACITY

Session from Dec 11, Govt to turn up heat

Ram temple,
triple talaq
on agenda;
Assembly poll
results to set
tone in Parl

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The month-long Winter Session of Parliament, the last of the 16th Lok Sabha, is set to commence on December 11 with the Modi Government wanting to give a final push to the passage of the controversial triple talaq Bill pending in the Rajya Sabha and score a "winner" before taking on the Opposition which is working on an anti-BJP alliance across the country. The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs (CCPA) on Tuesday night recommended convening of the Winter Session from December 11, 2018 to January 8, 2019.

The Ram temple issue is expected to echo in the Winter Session with the BJP and the Opposition launching attack against each other. The Opposition would go all out to accuse the ruling party of communalising the politics on the eve of Lok Sabha polls which are only months away.

BJP Rajya Sabha member Rakesh Sinha has said he may bring a private member Bill in the Upper House demanding the construction of the temple in Ayodhya. The BJP is hoping that the Bill may force the Opposition parties to take a stand on the sensitive issue. The Bill, if brought on the table, could also be put to vote.

The Winter Session will start on the day (December 11) when the counting of votes is to commence for five State



- The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs on Tuesday night recommended convening of the Winter Session from December 11 to January 8, 2019
- The Ram temple issue is expected to echo in the Winter Session with the BJP and the Opposition launching attack against each other
- Triple talaq, which has been made a penal offence by the Government by way of promulgating an Ordinance, would again be tested finally on the floor of the Rajya Sabha

Assemblies with the BJP seeking a repeat mandate in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. The results by the evening would create a political impact on the tempo of the Winter Session with the winner sure to dominate the proceedings in next one month.

Much is at stake for the BJP and the Congress and other Opposition parties in the poll outcome of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram which may set the narrative for the general elections 2019 and could provide a definite suggestion to the political prowess

of the either side. Triple talaq, which has been made a penal offence by the Government by way of promulgating an Ordinance, would again be tested finally on the floor of the Rajya Sabha where it has been pending after being passed in the Lok Sabha where the BJP has a thumping majority.

The Government would also want the Indian Medical Council Amendment Ordinance and the Companies Amendment Ordinance to be passed as Bills in this session.

The Winter Session will be the "last roar" of the Modi Government on the floor of

Parliament with the Opposition parties likely to put a collective effort to puncture it and set their campaign agenda against the BJP.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, whose TDP has quit BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, has been touring various Opposition parties-led States to work out a common strategy against the Modi Government in the Lok Sabha poll. The Parliament session will test whether a "grand alliance Opposition parties" would speak in one voice on the floor of Parliament or would experience disarray on the eve of final electoral battle, next year.

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Vijay Goel said the session from December 11 to January 8 would have 20 working days. This would bring down curtain on the 16th long Lok Sabha where, for the first time, the BJP had a majority on its own.

"We seek support and cooperation of all parties for the smooth functioning of Parliament during the session," said Goel.

The session was delayed this year due to the Assembly elections in five States.

The onus of conducting Parliament session from the Government's side would fall on Narendra Singh Tomar and Goel following the untimely demise of Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar.



Bajirao gets Mastani: Guests attend the wedding of Bollywood stars Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh at the Villa Balbianello in Lenno, Como lake, northern Italy, on Wednesday. The wedding at Villa Balbianello, a lakeside mansion featured in Star Wars and James Bond films, came on the fifth anniversary of the release of their first movie together, Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela

No debate on Rafale price if it's not made public: SC

**Court reserves
order on pleas
for SC-monitored
probe into deal**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said there is no question of a debate on the pricing of the Rafale fighter deal in the court till it comes to the conclusion that the pricing information is to be brought in the public domain.

The court reserved its order on pleas seeking court monitored probe in procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets. The Government refused to make public details related to the pricing of the 36 Rafale fighter jets in the Supreme Court, saying "our adversaries may get an advantage" by such a disclosure.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph concluded in nearly four hours the arguments advanced by various parties which have also sought registration of FIR in connection with the alleged irregularities in the deal.

India had signed a Government to Government contract with France in 2016 worth over ₹59,000 crore to buy 36 fighter Rafale jets in the fly-away condition.

The apex court also said it is dealing with the requirements of the Indian Air Force and would like to hear from an



Deputy Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal VR Chaudhari and Air Marshal Anil Khosla leave the Supreme Court after a hearing on the Rafale Deal, in New Delhi on Wednesday

Air Force officer and "not the official of the Defence Ministry."

Deputy Chief of Air staff Air Marshal VR Chaudhari and two other officers from Indian Air Force appeared in the Supreme Court on Wednesday to assist it on the issue of the procurement. They told the court that no new aircraft has been inducted in the Air Force since 1985.

On price issue, the SC said, "The decision we need to take is whether to bring the fact on pricing in public domain or not."

The Bench, also comprising Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph, told Attorney General KK Venugopal that there is no question of any debate on pricing without making the facts public. The Bench clarified that any discussion on price will be considered if it thinks the issue should enter the pub-

lic domain. Venugopal defended the secrecy clause relating to the pricing of the Rafale jets, saying adversaries may get an advantage if the entire details are disclosed. Refraining to divulge details on the pricing aspect, he said he would not be able to assist the court further on the pricing issue.

"I decided not to peruse it myself as in a case of any leak, my office would be held responsible," Venugopal said. The Bench then told him there is no question of any debate on pricing without making the facts public.

He also said these matters are for experts to deal with. "We have been saying that even Parliament has not been told about the complete cost of the jets," he said. At the exchange rate of November 2016, the cost of a fighter jet was ₹670 crore, he said.

Continued on Page 7

CAPSULE

AMRAPALI'S FAKE FIRMS FACE APEX COURT WRATH

New Delhi: After attaching all properties of Amrapali group, the Supreme Court on Tuesday decided to take action against its "dummy" companies which were created to siphon off homebuyers' money and directed attachment of Amrapali Hospital in Greater Noida, three residential towers in Noida and a villa in Goa.

BJP'S DAUSA MP HARISH CHANDRA JOINS CONG

New Delhi: In a setback to Rajasthan's ruling BJP ahead of next month's elections, the party's Dausa MP Harish Chandra Meena joined the Congress on Wednesday.

NIA FILES CHARGESHEET AGAINST AASIYA ANDRABI

New Delhi: The NIA on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against pro-Pakistani separatist and Duktaran-e-Millat head Aasiya Andrabi and two of her associates for allegedly "waging war" against the country using social media and other internet platforms, officials said.

GSLV-MKIII-D2 INJECTS GSAT-29 INTO ORBIT

Sriharikota: ISRO's heavy-lift rocket GSLV-MKIII-D2 on Wednesday successfully injected into orbit the country's latest communication satellite GSAT-29 that is intended to meet the communication needs of people in remote areas in the North East and Jammu & Kashmir.

Yogi targets Cong again

Bilaspur (PTI): The Congress is the biggest obstacle in the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh



Minister Yogi Adityanath alleged at an election rally in Chhattisgarh on Wednesday.

Speaking at Sakri in Bilaspur district, Adityanath said he renamed Faizabad to Ayodhya so that people across the world would know the place by the name of Lord Ram.

He was campaigning for BJP candidate from Takhatpur, Harshita Pandey, ahead of the second phase of polls in the state on November 20. The Congress has fielded Rashmi Singh from the seat.

"Chhattisgarh is the place of the family of Lord Ram's mother. We have renamed a janpad (district) of UP to Ayodhya so that people from across the country and world know the place by the name of Lord Ram," he said.

"Would this (renaming) have been possible had Congress been in power? Would it have been possible to hold a Dipotsav programme in Ayodhya during Diwali, if Congress had been in power?" the BJP leader asked.

"Had Congress government been in power in Chhattisgarh, would it have been possible to build a magnificent Ram temple in Raipur," he added, referring to a prominent temple in the state capital.

"After the formation of Chhattisgarh (in 2000), Congress came to power in the state. During its rule corruption was at its peak, naxalism flourished and coal and mining mafia were influential," he alleged.

"After the BJP came to power in 2003, the Raman Singh government created a milestone in development and worked for the welfare of farmers, labourers, youths and all sections of society," he claimed.

Nobody had imagined that the BJP would come to power in north-eastern states but now the party is in power in Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Assam, Adityanath said.



Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik administers the oath of office to Justice Govind Mathur as Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, during a swearing-in ceremony in Allahabad on Wednesday

Justice Govind Mathur takes oath as Chief Justice of Allahabad HC

Allahabad: Justice Govind Mathur took oath Wednesday as the chief justice of the Allahabad High Court.

The oath was administered by Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik in a simple ceremony in the court room of chief justice.

Justice Mathur was initially appointed as a judge in the Rajasthan High Court in September 2004, from where he was transferred to the Allahabad High Court in November 2017.

Justice Mathur initially practised at the Jodhpur bench

of the Rajasthan High Court in constitutional, service and labour matters. He also worked as University of Rajasthan's standing counsel, besides that for Indian Oil Corporation, Water and Power Consultancy Services, New Delhi and the National Teacher's Education.

How to make a monkey out of simians at Parliament

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With monkey menace prevailing in the corridors of power in New Delhi, including Parliament, ahead of the Winter Session, the Lok Sabha Secretariat has come out with a circular advising people not to make direct eye contact with monkey and do not cross the path between a mother and her infant.

The Parliament House Complex, along with other nearby buildings, including the North and South Blocks and the Rashtrapati Bhavan around the Central Ridge forest, faces monkey menace. There is no official data on Delhi's monkey population.

The city has thousands of Rhesus Macaque monkeys that break into houses, terrorise people and steal food. The



civic bodies estimated around 30,000-40,000 monkeys in the national Capital. Many people feed monkeys on Tuesdays and Saturdays — days associated with God Hanuman. This practice means that people carrying

food at other times risk being bitten. Around 90 per cent of the monkeys carry tuberculosis.

The circular suggests: "In case a monkey collides with your vehicles (especially two

wheelers), do not stop there. Do not get scared if a monkey makes a 'kho-kho' noise as normally it is a bluff, ignore the monkey and walk away. Be light footed while passing through monkey group i.e do

The Lok Sabha Secretariat has come out with a circular advising people not to make direct eye contact with monkey and do not cross the path between a mother and her infant

not run. Do not irritate or tease the monkey, leave them alone and they will leave you alone," the circular said.

It further suggests that one should not hit a monkey. Keep hitting the ground with a big stick to make monkey leave your house and garden.

Officials of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) are clueless about tackling the problem as despite several advertisements none of langur

walas came forward to catch monkeys.

A few years ago, the MCD had tried to relocate the monkeys caught from the Lutyens zone at the Aravalli hills. But the experiment failed as the simians grew in number and fanned out in search of fruits. Locals objected to the place being used for relocation as they faced animal attacks.

In July, the Delhi Assembly had formed a five-member committee to find a solution to the menace of stray dogs and monkeys in many parts of the national Capital.

Earlier, the House committee of the Rajya Sabha, responsible for allotment and maintenance of its MPs' accommodation, wanted to take a different approach to tackle the problem of monkeys and stray dogs. It had sought

public opinion and experts' views to prepare a report after "studying in detail" the issue.

The monkey menace is not entirely a new experience for the MPs. In 2004, when Mani Shankar Aiyar became a Minister, he refused to go to his allotted bungalow on Kamaraj Marg as the unused accommodation had become a night shelter for monkeys.

In 2007, Delhi's deputy Mayor SS Bajwa died of head injuries after falling from his terrace due to attack by a group of monkeys. In 2012, then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee once lamented that monkeys were eating his home-grown pumpkins.

In 2016, a simian entered in the reading room of the Parliament meant for MPs and journalists and roamed around for half an hour.

Govt suspends nine agri officers, blacklists 4 cos

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh government has suspended nine senior officials of the Agriculture department for alleged irregularities in the award of contract to private firms for soil testing.

The government has also blacklisted four companies for irregularities in the soil testing drive.

UP's Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi said here on Wednesday that these four companies were selected through outsourcing for soil testing in 2017-18. He said the suspended officials had amended the terms and conditions for the tender document for award of soil testing contract to benefit these companies.

The minister said that the government, on receipt of complaint, had ordered a probe and the inquiry conducted by the Agriculture Production Commissioner upheld the charges.

Shahi said that the suspended officials included the heads of the tender committee in five divisions.

The suspended officials include joint director agriculture Pankaj Tripathi, deputy director agriculture at Bareilly, Vinod Kumar, deputy director agriculture at Moradabad, Ashok Kumar, joint director

agriculture at Aligarh, Jugendra Singh Rathore, joint director agriculture at Saharanpur, Rajiv Kumar, joint director agriculture at Jhansi, Ram Pratap, joint director agriculture at Meerut, Suresh Chandra Choudhury, joint director agriculture Shrivdev Sharma and assistant director at Bareilly Sanjeev Kumar.

The minister said that the four companies which were given undue benefit had been blacklisted while in two divisions, the government had ordered recovery of money from the four companies.

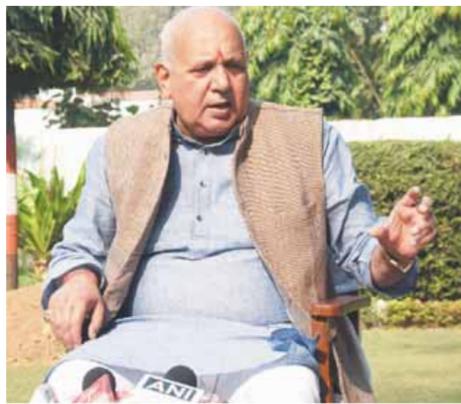
He said that departmental inquiry had been ordered against the suspended officials.

The blacklisted companies have given illegal 50,000 soil samples, against which FIR will be lodged against them.

The Agriculture Minister said the state government would be providing subsidy to 10,000 farmers to help them purchase solar water pumps for the agriculture purpose.

"The will would be given solar pump subsidy from November 15 to December 10 and the farmers who make payment of their share by demand draft would be given subsidy on first-come basis," he said.

Shahi said the government would provide 70 per cent subsidy on the 3 hp solar



Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi addressing media persons at his official residence in Lucknow on Wednesday

pumps and 40 per cent subsidy on 5 hp solar pumps.

The minister said the government had already announced 80 per cent subsidy on eight agricultural equipment.

Referring to the new maize purchase policy of the state government, Shahi said that one lakh tonnes of maize would be procured from farmers in 20 districts. He also said that the government would also purchase groundnuts, til, and bajra along with wheat and paddy.

The Agriculture Minister said the government was providing 75 per cent subsidy on seeds of pulses and oilseeds and 60 per cent subsidy for wheat and some other crops.

He also said that the officials had been directed procure crop with transparency and had been warned that any irregularity compromising the interests of the farmers would not be tolerated.

Shahi said 15 lakh farmers had registered themselves on the portal for online registration for selling their produce to the government.

Flights between Prayagraj, Bengaluru from today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Giving a boost to regional connectivity, a direct flight connecting Prayagraj (Allahabad) with Bengaluru will start from Thursday.

Uttar Pradesh Civil Aviation minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' will inaugurate the flight.

This flight will be operated by private player Indigo the whole week barring Tuesdays. The flight will depart from Prayagraj at 16:30 hours.

"With this flight, Prayagraj will be connected with six cities. Before Kumbh, more flights will be added to the kitty of this regional flight service," Nandi said in a statement issued here on Wednesday.

There is a boom in regional flight connectivity in UP as recently the Lal Bahadur Shastri International airport in Varanasi crossed 10,000 passenger-mark in a day. The Aviation department claims that 10,037 passengers flew in and out Varanasi airport on November 10 (Saturday).

On that day, as many as 4,836 passengers arrived in Varanasi by different flights while 5,174 passengers boarded flights for different destinations from this city.

On Monday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for introducing UDAN scheme which connected smaller cities with big cities.

He said that along with air connectivity in smaller cities of the state, the government was also constructing international airports at Jewar (Greater Noida) and in Kushinagar.

"The air connectivity between Lucknow and divisional headquarters will improve business. UP can gain further if smaller cities are linked with Lucknow. The Central government has been approached with a proposal and we are waiting for a positive response from there," the CM had said in his statement on November 12.

Under the regional connectivity scheme, UP has received approval for starting air services in five sectors. There are plans to construct 10 airstrips. Out of these, eight will be under the control of state government and two - in Jhansi and Saharanpur - would be controlled by the Army.

Ayodhya issue: VHP welcomes efforts for amicable solution

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which is organising a 'dharma sabha' in Ayodhya on November 25 to exert pressure on the Union government to bring a legislation in favour of Ram temple, has welcomed any effort by any individual or group for an amicable solution to the vexed Ayodhya issue.

VHP international vice-president Champat Rai along with other senior functionaries of the organisation held a press conference in the state capital on Wednesday to give details of the proposed 'dharma sabhas' to be held at Ayodhya, Nagpur and Bengaluru the same day.

"We welcome any move by any individual or group to solve the Ayodhya issue so that the construction of Ram temple starts," Rai said while commenting on the recent move by Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravishankar and some Muslims in Ayodhya in this regard.

He said the people of the country should understand the sentiments of the Hindus. "The struggle for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya has been going on for 500 years and now the wait is unbearable," he added.

The VHP has clearly said that no politician has been invited to the 'dharma sabha', including Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, who is expected to visit Ayodhya on November 25.

"The act of the Supreme Court in delaying the hearing on the Ayodhya issue is unfortunate as it (apex court) has



VHP international vice-president Champat Rai addressing media persons at VIP Guest House in Lucknow on Wednesday

ignored the demand of the 125 crore people of the country," Rai said while demanding that the Central government immediately bring a legislation to pave way for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"The Supreme Court has already taken six-and-a-half years to open the Ayodhya case and this is very unfortunate," the VHP leader commented.

Refusing to make any comment on the Narendra Modi government, the VHP leader blamed Congress leader and senior lawyer Kapil Sibal and lawyer Rajiv Dhawan for being instrumental in delaying the hearing on the Ayodhya case in the apex court.

"We want early solution to Ram temple construction issue and hence we have called these

'dharma sabhas' of saints and common man to take a decision on the future strategy," he said.

To galvanise the Ram temple movement, Rai said, a 'dharma sansad' would be held at New Delhi on December 9 while discussions on Ram temple issue would be held at every district of the country on Gita Jayanti on December 18 when 3-hour prayers would be held at the selected 3,000 blocks and tehsils.

Rai also said that the 'dharma sabha' was exclusively of the saints in which around one lakh people in a radius of 150 km of Ayodhya would also participate.

The 'dharma sabha' will be held at Bade Bhaktmal grounds on the Parikrama Marg.

BJP MLA wants Sultanpur dist renamed as Kushbhawanpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Jumping on the name-change bandwagon, a leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party unit has demanded that Sultanpur be renamed as Kushpur or Kushbhawanpur after the son of Lord Ram.

The Yogi Adityanath government has recently renamed Allahabad and Faizabad as Prayagraj and Ayodhya, respectively.

BJP MLA from Sultanpur, Deomani Dwivedi, said he had already submitted a proposal to the Vidhan Sabha Speaker for renaming the district and it was likely to be debated during the winter session of the UP legislature. "I have proposed that the name of Sultanpur be changed to its original name Kushpur or Kushbhawanpur," Dwivedi said, adding that he had also written a letter to the Revenue department in this regard.

"Kushbhawanpur Day is celebrated here on August 26 each year since Independence. A rally is taken out every year to mark the occasion," the MLA

from Sultanpur said.

He said that Sultanpur Nagar Palika had already passed the proposal to restore the name of Sultanpur to Kushbhawanpur and had forwarded the proposal to the Urban Development department.

According to sources, the other cities to be renamed soon may include Shahjahanpur.

The Yogi government's name-changing spree drew strong criticism not just from the opposition but also its ally Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP).

Cabinet minister and SBSP chief Om Prakash Rajbhar criticised the BJP, saying that it should change the names of its Muslim leaders before renaming towns and places. "The BJP changed the names of Mughalsari and Faizabad. They say they were named after the Mughals. They have a national spokesperson Shah Nawaz Hussain, Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Uttar Pradesh minister Mohsin Raza, three Muslim faces of the party. They should change their

names first," Rajbhar said.

Samajwadi Party president Akhlesh Yadav has also attacked Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for claiming to have initiated development by just renaming cities. "Raja Harshvardhan made 'Prayag Kumbh' great by offering donations, but today's rulers are trying to take credit for works just by renaming the city to Prayagraj," he had tweeted.

The Congress, too, hit out at the ruling dispensation, with a party leader saying that changing the name of the historic Allahabad city to Prayagraj was an attempt to play with the history of the nation.

Earlier, the government had renamed the Mughalsari railway station, another historic spot, as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya junction. In August this year, the UP government had sent a request to the Centre to rename the airports in Agra, Bareilly and Kanpur.

The BJP has, however, justified the change of names, saying they were merely restoring the old names and correcting historical distortions.

4 killed in mishaps

Lucknow (PNS): Four persons were killed in separate mishaps.

Three persons were killed on Wednesday when their car was hit by an unidentified vehicle on the Gonda-Ayodhya Highway near Chandapur in Gonda.

An FIR was registered against unidentified persons in connection with the accident, Superintendent of Police (SP) Lallan Singh said.

In Muzaffarnagar, one person was killed and another injured after their cart was hit by a truck near Ramraj village.

Surjit Singh, a farmer, was killed on the spot while Shiv Kumar was injured in the accident on Tuesday. Kumar, also a farmer, was admitted to a local hospital and his condition was stated to be serious.

4 IPS officers transferred

Lucknow (PNS): The state government shifted four IPS officers on Wednesday. SP PAC in Bareilly Ajay Kumar has been shifted as SP of Shamli, replacing Dinesh Kumar P, who will now join as SSP of Saharanpur in place of Upendra Kumar Agarwal. Agarwal has been transferred to Ghaziabad as SSP, replacing Vaibhav Krishna, who will now go to Police Headquarters in Allahabad.

Jhansi police bring 'savera' in lives of deserted old citizens

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ LUCKNOW

In a noble gesture, the Jhansi police are playing the role of a good Samaritan by extending the much needed support to senior citizens, who need more of emotional security than any other help extended particular by law enforcing agencies. The initiative is doing wonders for the old aged persons, particularly those whose near and dear ones have abandoned them at the mercy of god.

Talking to *The Pioneer* about the success of this initiative, Jhansi range DIG Subhash Singh Baghel, who formed the Saveras—Senior Citizen Police Cell in Jhansi four months back, said that while preparing a data base of senior citizens in the district to protect them from crimes as they were the softest targets of criminals, the police were shocked that several senior couples and individuals living in the district were least bothered about their belongings or personal security as they had lost interest in life because their near and dear



ones had abandoned them. Baghel said that during interaction with the senior citizens, the cops felt that the deprived old aged citizens needed more emotional care because they all felt happy during interaction with the men in khaki, as someone had come to enquire about their well-being.

The DIG said that with the data base of senior citizens in hand, they took a decision to lend a helping hand to them and so he formed the Saveras—Senior Citizens Police Cell. Saveras, comprising senior officers as officer-bearers and 14 prominent citizens of the district, organises programmes

in which the senior citizens celebrate festivals and occasions under one roof like a family.

The key objective of the Senior Citizens Cell is to provide relief and security to the neglected and destitute senior citizens and make them aware that there is someone who cares for them.

In this cell, each police personnel is also sensitised about the grievances of senior citizens and counselling of senior citizen.

The DIG said that since its inception, Saveras has organised Independence Day celebration, Janmashtami, Raksha Bandhan, Dussehra and recently Diwali at old age homes in the district. He said that they

ensured that all senior citizens living alone attended the function so that they did not feel being alone.

Baghel said that they had created a fund through contributions by cops and prominent persons of the districts as well as establishments extending financial help to senior citizens.

The DIG said the local station house officers had been entrusted with the task to ensure regular medical check-ups of these senior citizens and also provide them their CUG numbers so that during any emergency, they could call them so that help reach these old persons within 10 minutes. He added that some old citizens living on streets had been rehabilitated by Saveras.

Baghel said that impressed by the gesture of the Saveras, Director General of Police OP Singh, who visited the district recently, not only honoured the Saveras trust with the citation of Jhansi Ki Rani but also assured to extend this initiative in other districts of the state to lend a helping hand to abandoned senior citizens.



NOTICE

This is to inform that Parukuty Nair alias Parukuty Amma alias Kunjimalu are the one and same person. In future She will be known as Parukuty Nair W/o Sreedharan Nair, R/o 3/53, Virat Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow U.P.

सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि देव नारायण तिवारी पुत्र रघु श्री कृष्ण कुमार तिवारी, निवासी-481142 मोहनमैत्रिन रोड, डालीगंज, धाम-हसनगंज, लखनऊ, मेरा धरतू नाम: पंकज कुमार तिवारी, पंकज तिवारी हैं, दोनों नाम एक ही व्यक्ति के हैं और मुझे दोनों नामों से जाना व पहचाना जाए। देव नारायण तिवारी उर्फ पंकज कुमार तिवारी।

सूचना

मेरे मुखपंड सं D 4/98 विकल्प खण्ड गोमती नगर का मूल समायोजन पत्र वास्तव में कहीं मूल गया है। जिसका कहीं अन्य प्रयोग अवैधानिक है। इस पत्र में मुखपंड सं D 3/12 के स्थान पर D 4/98 का आर्टिकल किया गया है। कोकोको सक्सेना एवं लालिमा सक्सेना

इंडियन बैंक
Indian Bank
Zonal Office: 2-B, Habibullah Estate, 11 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Hazratganj, Lucknow

POSSESSION NOTICE (Rule 8(1) for immovable property)
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice (details of which have been mentioned hereunder) calling upon following the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower & others having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rules 8 & 9 of the said rule. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount and interest & other expenses thereon as described here in below.

We draw attention to the provisions of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act and the Rules framed there under which deals with your rights of redemption over the securities.

Name of Branch- Gomti Nagar	Name and address of the Borrower	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Demand Notice/Dth of Possession Notice/Outstanding Amt.
	Borrower: Mr. Anshuman Singh S/o Mr. Salik Ram Singh and others Home Loan Ac. No. 6427918922	All that part and parcel of the house property constructed on Plot which is part of Khasra No. 216, Village-Atrauli, Ward Shankarpurva, Pargana-Mahatma, Tehsil & District Lucknow, measuring area 111.524 Sq. Mtr. Le 1200 sq. ft. Bounded by: North : By Plot others, South : Remaining part of seller, East : 20 ft wide Road, West : Plot others.	23.10.2017 13.11.2018 Rs. 20,97,661/- as on 13.11.2018 + Interest thereon

Place : Lucknow Date : 15.11.2018 Authorised Officer, Indian Bank

कार्यालय:- अधिशासी अभियन्ता जोन-8
जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ

पत्रांक-834 / EE-8/18-19 दिनांक : 5.11.2018

(अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना)

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु अनुमती देकराओं से मुह्रबन्द निविदा दिनांक - 16.11.2018 को अपराह्न 03:00 बजे तक अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो कि उसी दिन सायंकाल 04:00 बजे उपस्थित निविदादाताओं के समक्ष कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी। सन्दर्भित कार्य हेतु निविदा किसी भी कार्य दिवस में दिनांक 16.11.18 समय 3.00 बजे तक कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। अनैररन्मनी एफ0डी0आर0/सी0डी0आर0/एन0एस0सी0 के रूप में अधिशासी अभियन्ता जोन-8 के पद नाम से बन्धक होना अनिवार्य है। बिना अनैररन्मनी के प्राप्त निविदाओं पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। एक या समस्त निविदाओं को निरस्त करने का अधिकार बिना कारण बताये महाप्रबन्धक, लखनऊ जल संस्थान में निहित होगा। पूर्ण विवरण कार्यालय से किसी भी कार्य दिवस में देखा जा सकता है। प्रत्येक कार्य हेतु अलग-अलग निविदायें क्रय करनी होंगी।

क्र0 सं0	कार्य का नाम	घरोहर धनराशि	निविदा का मूल्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	Laying of 250 mm sewer line near H.No. 8C/485 to 8C/498 Sector-8C, Vrindavan Colony, Lucknow	Rs. 8600.00	Rs. 400.00	15 days
2	Laying of 250 mm gap sewer line Tubewell No. 3 (8C) to H.No.8C/485 Sector-8C, Vrindavan Colony, Lucknow	Rs. 8700.00	Rs. 400.00	15 days
3	Construction of new manhole different places at Sector-8C and 8B, Vrindavan Colony, Lucknow	Rs. 8100.00	Rs. 400.00	15 days
4	Repairing and white washing work of SPS Sector-10C, Vrindavan Colony, Lucknow	Rs. 8300.00	Rs. 400.00	15 days
5	Repairing and white washing of Tubewell No.-2 and 3 Sector-4B, Vrindavan Colony, Lucknow	Rs. 5200.00	Rs. 200.00	15 days

1. बिड लिफाफे में डाला जाना होगा तथा लिफाफे के ऊपर कार्य/योजना का नाम लिखना अनिवार्य है।
2. निविदा खोलने की तिथि को किसी कारण अवकाश घोषित होने की दशा में निविदायें अगले कार्य दिवस में खोली जायेगी।
3. निविदा प्रपत्र के साथ-साथ प्रतिशत घरोहर राशि, एफ0डी0आर0/सी0डी0आर0 अथवा राष्ट्रीय बचत पत्र (NSC) के रूप में जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ ई0ई0-8, के पक्ष में न्यूनतम 180 दिनों हेतु बन्धक बनाकर तकनीकी बिड के साथ संलग्न करनी अनिवार्य होगी।
4. एक या समस्त निविदाओं को बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी के पास सुरक्षित है।
5. अन्य शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र के अनुरूप होंगी।
6. निविदा प्रपत्र डाक द्वारा मंगाने पर डाक शुल्क रु0 150.00 अतिरिक्त देय होगा।

अधिशासी अभियन्ता जोन-8
जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ

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Minorities feeling safe all over UP, says DGP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Not only in Ayodhya, minorities are feeling safe in entire Uttar Pradesh as there has been no communal riot in the state in the past one-and-a-half year, state police chief said on Wednesday. Director General of Police (DGP) OP Singh made the remarks after a litigant in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi case, Iqbal Ansari, had reportedly said that Muslims were feeling unsafe in Ayodhya. "Not only in Ayodhya, minorities are feeling safe in entire UP. In the past one-and-a-half year, there has not been any communal riot and wherever there was

communal tension, it was contained timely," Singh told reporters here. The state police chief said, "I am not aware of what he has said. I have not seen the video. I am surprised if someone is saying so. He can come and talk to me. I will direct local officials to give security to him." He said he can assure people of the state that it was his responsibility to provide security to "23 crore people in the state" and he was committed to it. "If anyone feels threatened, he can approach us or the local police. We will make arrangements so that he does not feel unsafe," he said. The DGP said that not only communal incidents, but the

police in the state had cracked many heinous criminal cases on priority. Earlier in the day, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) international vice president Champat Rai told reporters here that the Parishad will organise a Dharm Sabha in Ayodhya on November 25 to apprise the government and the court of Hindu sentiments. He said Hindus have faith that SC's decision will come in favour of Ram temple in Ayodhya. "People of the country should realise the sentiments of the Hindus. Struggle is on for past 500 years for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya and now the wait is unbearable," Rai said.



The four-day Chaath Puja festivities concluded on Wednesday with oblation to the rising sun by devotees

LESA won't give single-point connections to private apartments, says chief engineer

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow Electricity Supply Administration will not be giving single-point connection to multi-storey buildings of private builders. LESA chief engineer Pramod Kakkar said as per the directives of Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission, individuals living in apartments would get separate connections by LESA. There had been complaints by residents being fleeced by private builders for charging

arbitrary and high rates for power connections. Kakkar said that residents of the multi-storey buildings could apply for individual connections. "Previously, we had been giving these multiple apartment builders a single-point connection from where they gave power to the apartment residents. However, the builders were realising high tariffs, and hence complaints poured in with the UP Electricity Regulatory Commission, which

issued these directives," Kakkar said. He added that work had already started in this regard and LESA had to complete it by March 31 next year. "For the new multi-storey apartments under construction, we are giving them no single-point connection. There will only be multiple connections," he asserted. Kakkar said in case of the already constructed apartments, LESA needed space on the ground floor to set up electricity meters.

Ambedkar supporters clash with police

Cops sat over complaint as tension escalated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The installation of a Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar statue on a government land in Maal and temple construction evoked stiff protests, giving the Lucknow police a tough task on law and order front. Huge force, led by senior police and district administration officials, camped in the area till late evening to keep a watch on mischief-mongers. The construction work was stopped by the police even as the situation was tense but under control. There was a huge police-public showdown because of the delay in action against the

move to install a statue of Ambedkar and that of Lord Hanuman on a land in Garhi village. Some of the supporters of the Dalit icon installed his statue last week, taking advantage of police laxity. After the issue came to the notice of rivals, they lodged a police complaint. However, the cops sat on the complaint waiting for the public ire to subside. A couple of days ago, some people started construction of a temple and installed a statue of Lord Hanuman opposite the place where Ambedkar's statue was installed. Instead of taking the matter seriously, the cops played a waiting game and informed the district administration about the same. On Wednesday, a team consisting of district administration officials, revenue officials and cops reached the

place. The team later seized the building material from the temple construction site. This made the temple supporters seek an action against those who had installed Ambedkar's statue. Soon as the team moved ahead to seize the statue, a huge number of protesters assembled at the scene. They pelted the cops with stones, forcing them to make a hasty retreat. Additional police force was called and the protesters were caned. Later, the police seized the statue. A police spokesman said the land on which the temple was being construction was meant for a pond for public use. He said the police were keeping a close watch on the developments and the situation was under control. He added that a case would be registered in this connection.

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SECURITY HELPLINE 182

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नवजात शिशु देखभाल सप्ताह

15 से 21 नवंबर, 2018

अनमोल जीवन की शुरुआत नवजात शिशु की देखभाल के साथ

1. सामान्य या सीजेरियन प्रसव के 1 घंटे के अंदर नवजात को माँ का पहला पीला गाढ़ा दूध ही पिलायें

2. 6 महीने तक शिशु को सिर्फ माँ का दूध ही पिलायें तथा कोई ऊपरी आहार न दें

3. शिशु को जन्म के तुरंत बाद विटामिन K1 की एक खुराक के साथ-साथ बीसीजी, ओपीवी-0 तथा हेपेटाइटिस के टीके लगवायें

4. मां शिशु को त्वचा से त्वचा का संपर्क करा कर कंगारू केयर दे

5. 24-48 घंटे के बाद ही स्नान करवायें

खतरनाक लक्षण दिखते ही नवजात शिशु को सिक न्यूबॉर्न केयर यूनिट या स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र पर ले कर जायें

- सांस लेने में तेज़ी/ सांस लेने में कठिनाई
- बुखार
- असामान्य रूप से शरीर में ठंडक
- दूध पीने में कमी
- सामान्य से कम शारीरिक गतिविधि
- पूरे शरीर में पीलापन
- दौरे, झटके आना

Min asks women entrepreneurs to take risks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Women entrepreneurs should be told that they should go ahead and take risks because there is no gain without it. They have to face a lot of problems while working in a male-dominated society, getting no loans and having no share in property but they should understand the fact that risk was an integral part in every venture.

These views were expressed by Minister for Women's Welfare Rita Bahuguna Joshi at the inaugural function of Flo Indian Women Artisans' Avadh Festival and Film Forum at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on Wednesday. The minister also felicitated women making their contributions in all fields with the highlights of the award ceremony being the Reel Women Power Award, which was given away to actress Taapsee Pannu.

The minister pointed out that women were mostly in large numbers in the unorganised sector. "What is important is that these women have to be found out, skilled and then empowered. These women should also know that there are clear directives from the government to the banks to search them and then fund their ven-



tures," she said. Citing several examples of the past such as those of making a famous brand of papads, Rita said that women in the past had started with small ventures and made them extremely popular. Rita said that the biggest quality which the women had was that they returned 90 per cent of their loans. "They are not manipulative and do not cheat the country. There are so many women who have everything which they require and they need not toil for it but they are still helping the other women to reach the point where they have reached," she said.

She said that among the BRIC nations India was the

fastest-growing economy yet the women did not have an equity in this growth and no growth could be achieved in the absence of growth of women.

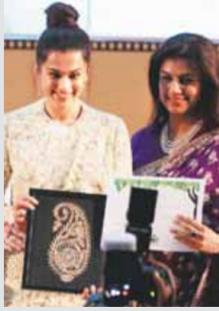
The minister said that having fought for the rights of the women for the past 40 years she wanted that they should move ahead and take risks because this gave them the satisfaction that it was something of their own which they had achieved. She said that the government had come forth with various schemes and projects. "The government has set aside a sum of Rs 1,000 crore for the ODP Project and women who have been traditionally

involved in the handicrafts should benefit from it," she said. The Flo Indian Women Artisans' Avadh Festival and

I choose roles resonating with my character: Taapsee

Lucknow (PNS): Actress Taapsee Pannu said she had started choosing roles resonating with her character and she was primarily considering issue-based films on which she wanted to spend her hard-earned money and three hours as a viewer. The actress was addressing a session at the FLO Film Festival, along with singer Kanika Kapoor.

Pannu admitted that earlier, she was not in a position to choose films. "Beggars can't be choosers, and I began choosing my films after the success of 'Pink'," she pointed out. "People will be surprised to know that I had never planned to become an actress. I had completed BTech and though I was a qualified software engineer, I wanted to explore for a year as to what could be done other than engineering. I had already tried my hands at modelling during my college days for extra



bucks," she said. Kanika Kapoor, who belongs to Lucknow and has taken training for the past 12 years in Bhatkhande, said she felt she was an established singer now. "When 'Baby doll...' happened, people said I was a one-song wonder, but then 'Chittiyon kalaiyan...' hit the bulls-eye and all other songs also became chartbusters," she said.

Film Forum will take place in Lucknow from November 14 to 16 at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan.

Majority of LDA buildings lack security arrangements

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Eighty-eight per cent of apartments and multi-storied complexes under the Lucknow Development Authority jurisdiction are devoid of any security arrangements for the residents and were virtually waiting for a mishap to occur, a security audit report, tabled on late Tuesday night, revealed.

The state government was urged to immediately work on a plan for security to safeguard lives and properties. The report said action should be taken against those responsible for overlooking the security measures and a foolproof plan be chalked out for corrective measures. It was disclosed in the audit report that seven per cent of the buildings have security system in place, but it is

either obsolete or non-functional. Only three per cent structures were found to have foolproof security arrangements. Surprisingly, the apartments and multi-storied complexes, designed and developed by private builders of reputation, did not have security arrangements.

The latest example of poor security is the big fire incident in a Jankipuram Extension apartment on November 9. Though no causality was reported, there was a major loss to the property. It could have been checked if the apartment had proper firefighting equipment.

AB Pandey, who is a senior officer of fire services, admitted that most of the buildings were sans proper fire-fighting equipment. He said a detailed report in this regard had been sent to the

state government with a request to ensure installation of latest fire-fighting equipment or upgrade the existing ones.

Another incident was a theft committed in the flat of a posh apartment in Gomti Nagar around 10 days back. The thieves had barged into the premises and broke the locks of the flat on the third floor before decamping with cash and valuables worth lakhs of rupees. Neighbours and security staff deployed there came to know about the theft only after three days. The culprits could have been identified if there were CCTV cameras.

Office on special duty RK Shukla said the issue was serious in nature and the LDA administration was working on a plan with the help of the crime branch of Lucknow police and fire services.

CITY BRIEFS

CHILDREN'S DAY

DGP OP Singh called upon people to promote children deprived of facilities to continue their studies. He was addressing children at a function on Children's Day at Reserve Police Lines in Lucknow on Wednesday. Students of Police Modern School branches at RPL and Gomti Nagar took part in the programme. Singh said the children participating in the function were fortunate as they had got the chance to make their careers by studying at schools but there were several children who did not get the opportunity to go to pursue studies. The DGP also asked the children to keep their surroundings clean. Those present included ADG Lucknow Zone Rajeev Krishna, IG Lucknow Range Sujat Pandey, SSP Lucknow Kalanidhi Naithani.



Children's Day celebrations at Reserve Police Lines on Wednesday

scholars of the university will receive their degrees.

HEALTH AWARENESS

CSIR-CDRI participated in a health awareness programme under the aegis of Aspirational Districts Programme of NITI Aayog launched by the Prime Minister in January, in Bahraich. It organised health awareness programme and free health check-up camp at Gajadharpur village in Fakrpur block on World Diabetes Day on Wednesday in association with CARE India and sensitised villagers about health, education and cleanliness.

AKANKSHA SAMITI

Akanksha Samiti celebrated Children's Day at a primary school in Narhi on Wednesday. The chief guest on the occasion was Renuka Pandey. Akanksha Samiti also organised a magic show and a first-aid training camp at the school. Saplings were also planted on the occasion.

The 10th convocation of Integral University, Lucknow will be held on Friday. Managing Director, Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation, Kumar Keshav, will be the special guest. The University will confer the degree of Doctors of Letters (Honoris Causa) on Kumar Keshav. About 2,000

SEMINAR

On the occasion of Children's Day, Ajanta Hope Society organised a seminar on infertility management at Ajanta Hospital on Wednesday. Gynaecologist Gita Khanna counselled more than 50 childless couples about infertility and IVF. She said pollution, stress obesity reflection like sexually transmitted diseases tuberculosis endometriosis, PCOD, environmental and lifestyle factors like alcohol, smoking, different shifts hours of working couples, late marriages, late baby planning due to career ambitions and poor quality of eggs produced by ageing ovaries caused infertility. Earlier, the seminar was inaugurated by mayor Sanyukta Bhatia.

FOUNDATION COURSE

Making a new beginning in UP, a short course by Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, began in Lucknow on Wednesday. The 20-day foundation course in screen acting is being held in association with the Information and Public Relations department. Four women and 21 men from seven states are attending the course. "The course marks the foray of FTII's nation-wide film education outreach initiative SKIFT (Skilling India in Film and Television) into UP. With over 110 SKIFT courses already conducted in 26 cities across the country in the last 17 months, Lucknow had to be added to the list," FTII director Bhupendra Kainthola said.

उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा विधि विस्तार सूचना
कार्यालय की ई-निविदा संख्या 133-वि.पा. मं.प्र.सं./2018-19 जो कि दिनांक 14.11.2018 को खोली जानी थी, अब किन्हीं अपरिहार्य कारणों से दिनांक 26.11.2018 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 27.11.2018 को 12.30 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें पृष्ठ 2 पर हैं।
अधीक्षक अभियन्ता, विद्युत मण्डल-प्रथम, उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि.क.सं.-111 से 114, भू-तक, पारसगंज, विद्युत खण्ड-11, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ पत्रांक 2276 दिनांक 14.11.2018 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचायें"

उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि.क.सं.-111 से 114, भू-तक, पारसगंज, विद्युत खण्ड-11, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ पत्रांक 2276 दिनांक 14.11.2018 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचायें" साधारण बन्ध के स्थान पर एनओडीडी बन्ध का प्रयोग करें।

विद्युत नगरीय वितरण मण्डल, द्वितीय, लेसा, लखनऊ (ई-निविदा सूचना-89)
अधीक्षक अभियन्ता विद्युत नगरीय वितरण मण्डल-द्वितीय, लेसा सरकार की ई-टेंडर वेबसाइट लखनऊ के प्रयोगार्थ 01 अदर वातातुल्यकृत डीजल चालित वाहन (एम्बेज, डिजायर, इटियास जो कि अनुबंध की तिथि से दो वर्ष पूर्व की अर्थात् 2017 माडल हो) किराये पर रखे जाने का कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है, उपरोक्त निविदा की ई-टेंडर वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर दिनांक 29.11.2018 को 14:00 बजे तक डाउन लोड किये जा सकते हैं, जिसका प्रथम भाग उसी दिन को 16:00 बजे अथवा डीजल चालित वाहन मय चालक तथा प्रथम भाग हेतु वांछित अभिलेखों के मूल्यांकन/संबंधित बैंक से जमा निविदा शुल्क/घरोहर राशि की पुष्टि के बाद उपयुक्त पाई गयी निविदाओं के ही भाग दो खोले जायेंगे। द्वितीय भाग के खुलने की सूचना ई-टेंडर जिसके प्रथम भाग में (1) जीओएसटी निविदा खुलने की तिथि को सावजनिक अवकाश पड़ता है तो निविदाएं अगले कार्यदिवस में सौल्ट रू 360.00 (जीओएसटी 0758002100139255 आइएफसी कोड PUNB 0392600) में जमा करना होगा। (3) वाणिज्यिक तकनीकी शर्तें (4) वाहन का वाणिज्यिक पंजीकरण, इन्सुरेंस लाइसेंस वाहन का बीमा का प्रमाण (5) विगत वर्षों में निम्नांकित निविदाओं के समरूप समान कार्यों के अनुभव की छायाप्रति तथा समस्त संबंधित प्रमाणपत्रों की स्कैन प्रति तथा निविदा शुल्क एवं घरोहर धनराशि के RTGS/NEFT के जमा करने के साधन स्वरूप सूचीआर सं०, पे-इन-रिलफ रसीद (Copy of Issued bank confirmation mail)

₹1.12 lakh, dry fruits stolen from bakery

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Thieves broke into a bakery in Gomti Nagar and made off with Rs 1.12 lakh and dry fruits worth Rs 5,000 sometime on Tuesday night. Shyam Sunder Dixit of Viram Khand-4 is the manager of Brajwasi Bakers. On Wednesday, he told the police that he reached the shop around 8:25 am and found it burgled. "As I entered the shop, I was shocked to see the rear door lying flung open. I later came to know that the cash box was missing. Packets of dry fruits worth Rs 5,000 were also missing," he stated in his complaint. A police spokesman said an FIR had been registered and sub-inspector Hori Lal was probing the case.

ORNAMENTS LOOTED

Two motorcycle-borne unidentified miscreants looted silver ornaments weighing 2 kg from a jeweller in Madaion on Wednesday night. Anil Soni of Madaion was returning home after closing the shop and was carrying the bag containing ornaments. On the way, the

miscreants reached near his scooter and the pillion-rider pushed him down. The miscreants held him at the gun-point and looted the jewellery bag. Passersby rushed to Soni's rescue and gave a chase to the miscreants but they sped off. Confirming the incident, a police spokesman said Soni was yet to give a complaint in this regard. "A case will be registered when the complaint is lodged," he added.

ATTACKED

A group of men bulldozed the boundary wall of a plot in Gudamba and looted the building material on Tuesday night. They also thrashed the security guard when he offered resistance. As per reports, Ram Lakhan of Basha village in Gudamba owns a land in Newazpur village. He got the boundary wall constructed to keep the encroachers at bay. On Tuesday night, a group of men, three of whom he identified as Chandra Shekhar, Kallu and Misri Lal (all of Newazpur), reached the scene with a crane. They demolished the boundary wall and stole building material. Ram Lakhan's guard Sushil was informed by the villagers and he reached the scene. Sushil told the police that the miscreants thrashed him and also issued death threats to him.

A police spokesman said a case for brawl, threatening and loot was registered against the accused. He said the police were raiding the hideouts of the accused to nab them.

PM's infra development vision to spur economic growth, says ASSOCHAM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lauding PM Modi for launching landmark projects in Varanasi, industry body ASSOCHAM said expanding investment in infrastructure will generate jobs, promote tourism and play catalytic role in overall growth and development of Indian economy. ASSOCHAM secretary general Uday Kumar Varma said on Wednesday that the government's vision for new and improved infrastructure that can serve the nation for a long time.

Varma was referring to the inauguration of a sewage treatment plant, two major national highways and an inland waterways project by the prime minister in his Lok Sabha constituency, Varanasi, on Monday. The Prime Minister launched projects worth Rs 2,413 crore, which includes a multi-modal terminal on the Ganga river. "Infrastructure development will boost the confidence of domestic and global investors/stakeholders as it will reduce the cost of doing business, stimulate economic growth, spur job-creation and improve living standards of the people, not just in Uttar Pradesh but countrywide," Varma said. "Our country needs reliable infrastructure to connect supply chains and efficiently move goods and services seamlessly, thus a multi-modal terminal on the Ganges offers an unprecedented opportunity for local businesses to export more

goods and services and create high-quality jobs at home," he added. Considering that infrastructure is vital to economic growth, he said: "India's ability to realise its competitive potential depends on making smart infrastructure choices, thereby responding to economic, demographic, fiscal, and environmental changes in order to help people, places and businesses thrive and prosper."

Varma also said that availability of infrastructure support would give fillip to the growth and development of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which is critical to the overall growth of industrial sector in both UP and across India. "Lack of proper infrastructural facilities causes a very serious damage to an enterprise's valuable chain process including production, consumption and distribution of products," he said, adding that this constraint is apart from scarcity of finances, inadequate marketing facilities and technological obsolescence that are being already faced by MSMEs. "So, there is utmost requirement of infrastructure development for growth of industries in general, and MSMEs in particular, which should include all types of infrastructural facilities like railways, waterways, roadways and airways, proper channels of telecommunication, adequate supply of power and other supporting facilities like tool rooms, testing labs, design centers and others," the ASSOCHAM secretary general added.

'Rahagiri' to be declared open on November 25

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Social initiative programme known as 'Rahagiri' will be formally declared open on November 25) It was organised on November 11 on a trial basis to know the public response and also steps to be taken to get rid of its shortcomings to make the event better in the days to come. This was disclosed by one of its organisers, SS Sisodia. It is said that the social initiative plan is a joint venture of the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) and a New Delhi-based NGO to bring a sense of creativity among the kids and the students and youths and to make them aware about the deteriorating environment, traffic regulations, drug addiction and importance of greenery.

LDA Vice-Chairman PN Singh has appointed two officers to plan and organise the event — deputy director (garden) SS Sisodia, and executive engineer-1 Avadhesh Tiwari. The event will be organised on the second Saturday and last Sunday of the month. Initially the timing was from 6.30 am and 10 am but was changed in the wake of the winter season. Now it would commence at 7.30 am and conclude at 10.30 am.

The organisers claimed that there was good response of the people during the test which was conducted on Sunday last. Sisodia said there were several anomalies found during the

trial which would be removed, and added that constant efforts would be made in future for its betterment and to make the show more attractive.

It is said that it would not be confined only for the kids, students or youths but would be open for the elders and senior citizens too. Besides, its objective was to establish cordial relations between the youths and students on the one hand and the traffic police and the officials of the district administration on the other to help them in removing the evils plaguing the society. Its location will be between the main gate of the Riverfront Project (located on the bank of the river Gomti) and Gandhi Setu in Gomti Nagar). Interestingly, the entire area in and around it has been declared a no motor-car zone during the event. The people interested in participating in the event have to leave their four-wheelers two kilometers away. The senior citizens who are not in a position to walk down to the venue would be transported there by an e-rickshaw. The social initiative policy was of the Union Environment Ministry to encourage the state government departments to start an event to enlighten the kids, youths and students to make them aware about the problems plaguing the society so that they could come forward to help the government departments and agencies engaged in bringing about a social change.

SCHOOLSCAN



SKD ACADEMY

Students of all five branches of SKD Academy celebrated Children's Day on Wednesday. Primary and pre-primary students have taken part in various competitions like painting, quiz, fancy dress, rangoli, singing etc. Children of

pre-primary classes also enjoyed various games such as musical chair, passing the parcel etc. The kids highlighted the lifestyle India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru through speech, messages and a skit on his birth anniversary.

CMS STUDENT WINS FIRST PRIZE IN SINGING COMPETITION

Shreya Srivastava, a student of City Montessori School, Aliganj Campus II, bagged



BAL DIWAS

The Lucknow Public Collegiate celebrated 'Bal Diwas' on Wednesday. At the morning assembly, the pedagogues had planned an entertainment programme in both the branches. Principal Jawaid Alam Khan conveyed his love for the children and requested them to be disciplined. DPS (Eldeco) also celebrated Children's Day with enthusiasm. The function began with a special assembly organised by teachers. The teachers showered their love and affection on the children by singing a song for them.

Fast food seller found dead

Lucknow (PNS): A fast food seller was found dead under mysterious circumstances inside his house in Vikas Nagar on Wednesday. The body was said to be in a highly decomposed state. Police claimed that the man died after he fell down in the room, but failed to provide any evidence to buttress the claim.

Some residents of Subauli village in the area felt putrid smell emanating from a room in which Anil (35) lived. As they had not seen Anil for a long time, they called the police. The police broke open the door and found Anil dead. "The body seemed several days' old and there were blood stains on the floor. A grinder was lying near the victim's head and it seemed that he fell down and got his head banged against it, which caused the bleeding," said sub-inspector Bhanu Pratap Singh, who is investigating the case. He said Anil was a native of Gonda and was living in the room on rent. "His brothers Lallu and Ganeshi also live in Lucknow and do menial jobs to make ends meet. They reached the place after being called and identified the body," the S-I said, ruling out the possibility of foul play. "As the door was bolted from inside, it was evident that no other person entered the room," he explained.

GOVT STAFF JOINING RSS ACTIVITIES

PM apprised of removing ban clause

Congress promises to implement ban in Madhya Pradesh

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI



As the political fever rises with the Assembly polls for five States underway and the Congress vowing to "implement ban" on Government employees from participating in the activities of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the RSS affiliate Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove the ban provision from the Government service rules.

The ban on Government officials taking RSS membership and joining its activities was there but some States like Gujarat, Goa, Madhya Pradesh have them in service rules. After Keshubhai Patel Government took over in Gujarat in 2000, the provision was removed from the Service rules but in Madhya Pradesh it is continuing, said RSS functionaries.

Congress manifesto for the November 28 Madhya

Pradesh polls in the State promises to ban 'Shakhs' of the RSS in Government premises and stop Government employees from attending RSS 'Shakhs'. Congress General Secretary Digvijay Singh has said that the rule existed even under the Jan Sangh and BJP Governments in the State in the past, including the regimes of V K Sklecha, Kailash Joshi, Sunderlal Patwa, Uma Bharti and Babulal Guar and that the Congress was "only pledging to continue it."

RSS leaders maintain that it was already in the service rule but it was never implemented in letter and spirit. "Congress is for the first time promising to implement if it comes to power

in Madhya Pradesh", they said. They remind that even during Jawahar Lal Nehru's time, several Congress members in the party's Central Working Committee were also members of the RSS.

The BMS has sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi to have the service rule removed so as to lift the ban on the Central Government employees from working with the RSS.

The RSS outfit has appealed to the Prime Minister to intervene in the matter personally and direct the concerned Ministry to issue necessary amendments permitting the Government employees to participate in nation-building activities.

The Secretary-General of

Government Employees National Confederation, affiliated to the BMS, in a letter to the Prime Minister on October 20, pointed out that in accordance with provisions of DP & AR OM No. 15014/3/(S)/80-Estt. (B), dated 28.10.1980, there is a ban on participating in the activities of RSS by the Central Government Employees.

"Through an order dated November 30, 1966, (by the Ministry of Home Affairs), the then Congress Government has imposed the ban on swayamsevak, who work in various departments under the Union Government. Unfortunately, the order has been evoked time and again by the successive Governments", the letter said.

Pointing out that any person going against the rule invites "imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years or fine or with both", the BMS maintained that many Government employees interested in the RSS activities hold back on account of the fear of disciplinary action and "are not able to lend their hand in a genuine cause of Nation Building."

NIA chargesheets Dukhtaran's chief Andrabi, two others

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against banned terror group Dukhtaran-E-Millat's chief Aasiya Andrabi and her associates, Sofi Fehmeeda and Naheeda Nasreen, before a designated court here for allegedly waging war against the country.

Andrabi and her associates Sofi Fehmeeda and Naheeda Nasreen were actively running a terrorist organisation Dukhtaran-E-Millat which is proscribed under the First Schedule to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. DEM as a terrorist organisation is engaged in Anti-India activities and has been inciting the general populace of Kashmir for an armed rebellion against the Government of India with aid and assistance of terrorist organisations based in Pakistan, the NIA said.

"The three accused persons were using various media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, TV Channels including those in Pakistan to spread insurrec-

tionary imputations and hateful messages and speeches against India. DEM through Aasiya Andrabi and others, openly advocates secession of Jammu & Kashmir from the Union of India and its merger with Pakistan through violent means," the NIA said in a statement.

A case was registered by the NIA on April 27 this year under various Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, waging war against the nation and under provisions of the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The trio was arrested by NIA on July 6 in connection with the case and is since lodged in the Tihar Jail here.

Investigation has established that Aasiya Andrabi is heading Dukhtaran-E-Millat as its Chief and has used social media and other platforms to abet waging of war against Government of India. She is spreading seditious and insurrectionary imputations against Government of India. She is promoting ill-will and enmity between different communities in India on ground of religion. Investigation has also estab-

lished that she has close contacts with designated Global Terrorist Hafeez Mohammad Saeed who is head of Jamaat-Ud-Dawah (JuD) and Lashkar-E-Toiba (LeT), internationally designated terrorist organisations that are based in Pakistan," the NIA further said.

Andrabi has used public platforms to incite youth of Kashmir to rise in armed insurrection against the Government of India with an object of achieving cessation of Kashmir from India and its merger with Pakistan, the agency said in its chargesheet.

The agency said investigation has also established that Sofi Fehmeeda, as Personal Secretary to Chief of DEM and also Press Secretary of Dukhtaran-E-Millat, and Naheeda Nasreen as its General Secretary have been instrumental in the use of social media and other platforms for abetment of waging war against the Indian Government besides spreading seditious and insurrectionary imputations against it, and are promoting ill-will and enmity between different communities in India on grounds of religion.

Twitter removes 2 fake Election body accounts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Twitter has suspended two fake accounts being run in the name of the Election Commission (EC). The account used the EC logo as well as the Twitter handle @ElectionComm. Another account used @DalitFederation as its handle. The two accounts have been suspended after the EC asked Twitter to take "decisive action."

The Election Commission's spokesperson confirmed that the Commission does not have its own verified Twitter handle. The fake accounts had a huge following with one of them having 4,751 followers. The EC feared that they could mislead public ahead of Assembly polls in five States and coming up Lok Sabha elections next year. "The EC does not have any presence on Twitter, though it does operate a Facebook handle," said an official of EC on the condition of anonymity.

The media division of the EC asked Twitter to take decisive action against them. Although there were no tweets from these accounts, they had a large following. The Commission has avoided opening an account on Twitter as it does not have the manpower, a dedicated team of professionals or media budget to handle requests and grievances that are likely to flood it once it registers its presence on Twitter," an official said. However, EC has authorised the State chief electoral officers to create a Twitter account of their own.

EC had earlier held talks with Twitter and other social media companies like Google and Facebook to help it track fake news and monitor poll expenditure on social media advertising and publicity. Google, Facebook and Twitter on Monday promised to do more to fight news in India, while refusing to provide any definite timeline for bringing tougher actions that could eliminate the menace of fake news from their platform.

Database of all Govt, pvt health establishments will go online soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon database of country's almost all health establishments including clinics, nursing homes, hospitals and diagnostic labs whether in private or Government sector will be available online with interactive maps.

Aiming to improve health outcomes and create health database, the Union Health Ministry has rolled out the National Health Resource

Repository (NHRR) wherein massive exercise to map all public and private healthcare establishments at the district level is being undertaken in the country. This is the first ever healthcare establishment census, using paperless technology.

A senior Health Ministry official said that a web-based and geo-mapping enabled single platform of all the health resources both Government and private is being developed.

It will comprise of the data on health infrastructure, human resource and the availability and type of medical facilities.

The importance of health mapping lies in the production of interactive and published maps that would link the geography of communities with other dimensions such as availability and accessibility of health services, or disease prevention and control services particularly in rural areas, added an official from the WHO.

Over 18L foreigners visited India this year on e-Visa

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Liberalised Visa regime implemented for the past two years witnessed sharp increase of visit of foreigners to India. As per the statistics in 2017 and 2018, more than 35 lakh foreigners visited India, including tourists, business purposes. Before launching of e-Visa and instant visa, in 2015, as per the statistics, around 4.5 lakh foreigners visited India. As many as 26 airports and five sea ports, the Bureau of Immigration (BoI)

has implemented e-Visa system.

"The Electronic Visa Facility now covers practically all the countries of the world. Foreign nationals of 166 countries can now enjoy this facility at 26 airports and 05 seaports. The foreigner does not have to interact with any Indian official till his arrival at the immigration counter. The Bureau of Immigration (BoI) generally decides within 24-48 hours whether or not to grant an e-visa to a foreigner. The popularity of e-visa is sky rocketing. The

number of foreigners who visited India on e-visa has gone up from 4.47 lakhs in 2015 to 17.00 lakhs in 2017. The figure for 2018 is 18.78 lakhs upto 30th October, 2018," said Home Ministry in a statement on Wednesday, detailing the sharp increase of visitors.

Currently e-Visa is permitted in five categories like tourist, business, medical, conference and medical attendant. "The local FRRO has been empowered now to extend duration of electronic visas beyond 60 days upto 90 days. Moreover, these e-visas can

now be availed three times in one year against twice in a year earlier. For foreigners who are already in India and who require any consular/visa services like extension of visa, conversion of visa, exit permission or any of the total 27 visa-related services, an online e-FRRO facility has now been launched throughout the country. The foreigners do not have to physically visit the offices of FRROs/FROs. They can apply as well as receive consular/visa services online after making online payment," said Home Ministry.

'India experiencing digital revolution'

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Pitching India as the "best" investment destination for global tech giants, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Wednesday the country was experiencing a digital revolution of unprecedented speed and scale that has enabled the financial inclusion of 1.3 billion Indians. In his keynote address at the prestigious Fintech Festival, the world's largest event on financial technology, Modi said the technology has transformed governance and delivery of public services in India and unleashed innovation, hope and opportunities.

"Technology is defining competitiveness and power in the new world and it is creating boundless opportunities to transform lives," Modi, the first head of government to deliver the keynote address, said as he began his two-day visit to Singapore. "With the power of Fintech and the reach of digital connectivity, we have started a revolution of unprecedented speed and scale. To begin with financial inclusion has become a reality for 1.3 billion Indians. We have generated more than 1.2 billion biometric identities — called Aadhaar or foundation — in just a few years," he said. Modi said technology has empowered the weak and brought into mainstream those who were on the margins. "It has made economic access more democratic," he said. "With our Jan Dhan Yojana, we aimed to give a bank account to every Indian. In three years, we have opened 330 million new bank accounts. There are 330 million sources of identity, dignity and opportunities. Less than 50 per cent of Indians had bank accounts in 2014; now, it is nearly uni-



versal," he said. Modi said more than a billion biometric identities, more than a billion bank accounts and more than a billion cell phones give India by far the biggest public infrastructure in the world. Modi said the festival was an acknowledgement of the financial revolution sweeping through India. "This is an event of finance and technology and, it is also a festival. It is also a celebration of belief."

"Belief in the spirit of innovation and the power of imagination. Belief in the energy of youth and their passion for change. Belief in making the world a better place," Modi said. The festival, which is in its third year, drew as many as 30,000 participants from over 100 countries in 2017. The event involves a three-day conference, and exhibition of Fintech firms and capabilities, a global competition of Fintech solutions and a platform for matching entrepreneurs and investment capital. Modi said the festival was a tribute to the youth of India with its eyes firmly fixed to the future. "Financial inclusion has become reality for 1.3 billion Indians. We have

generated more than 1.2 billion biometric identities- Aadhaar or foundation- in just a few years," Modi said at the event.

"The character of the global economy is changing. Technology is defining competitiveness and power in the new world. And, it is creating boundless opportunities to transform lives," Modi said. He said India is a nation of diverse circumstances and challenges. "Our solutions must also be diverse. Our digitisation is a success because our payment products cater to everyone," he said. "The Indian story shows six great benefits of Fintech: Access, inclusion; connectivity; ease of living; opportunity; and, accountability," the prime minister said at the event. This enormous talent pool in India benefits from the ecosystem created by initiatives such as Digital India and Startup India, and by supportive policies, incentives and funding programmes, Modi said. "It also helps that India has the largest data consumption in the world and the cheapest rates for data. And one of the top nations in Fintech adoption. So, I say this to all the Fintech companies and startups

— India is your best destination," Modi said. "The economies of scale achieved in India by the LED bulb industry allowed this energy efficient technology to become more affordable globally. Likewise, India's vast market can enable Fintech products to achieve scale, reduce risks and costs, and go global," he said. Modi also launched APIX (Application Programming Interface Exchange), a global Fintech platform with Deputy PM of Singapore T Shanmugaratnam after his address at the event. "APIX will eventually connect our companies to financial institutions globally," he said.

Modi said the digital technology was introducing transparency and eliminating corruption through innovations such as the Government e-Marketor GEM. "There is an explosion of Fintech innovation and enterprise in India. It has turned India into a leading Fintech and Startup nation in the world. The future of Fintech and Industry 4.0 is emerging in India," he said at the festival which was launched in 2016 and is in its third edition. Modi said it was a "great honour" for him to be to address the festival. "We are in an age of a historic transition brought about by technology. From desktop to cloud, from Internet to social media, from IT Services to Internet of Things, we have come a long way in short time," he said. "Just as India will learn from others, we will share our experience and expertise with the world. Because, what drives India also holds hope for others. And, what we dream for India is what we also wish for the world. This is a common journey for all," Modi said.

Govt launches credit scheme for cooperative startups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to encourage cooperative startups and business ventures in agriculture and allied sectors, the Ministry of Agriculture on Wednesday launched a new scheme that aims to provide cheaper loans to startups in the cooperative sector and those having innovative projects costing up to ₹3 crore.

The scheme is called 'Yuva Sahakar Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme' will be implemented by the National Cooperative Development

Corporation (NCDC). A corpus fund of ₹1,000 crore has been created to this purpose. The scheme would be liberal to cooperatives in the north eastern region, those registered and operating in aspirational districts identified by think-tank Niti Aayog as well as cooperatives which have 100 per cent women and SC/ST members. The heavily incentivised scheme has component of subsidy as well as interest subvention and cooperative registered even one years ago will be eligible.

Launching the scheme, Union Agriculture Minister

Radha Mohan Singh said that the new scheme aims to encourage newly formed cooperatives to take advantage of innovative ventures, especially by societies having new and innovative ideas. "Cooperatives operating for at least for one year and having a positive net worth are eligible to avail credit under the scheme for new and innovative project ideas", Singh said.

The project cost should not exceed ₹3 crore and there will be two years moratorium on payment of principal amount, he said, adding that the period of moratorium may vary

depending on type of project and ability to generate revenue. NCDC lending so far has been to cooperatives working in fishery, sugar, textiles, food-grains, crops, fruits, vegetables, cold storage, water conservation, dairy, poultry, handlooms, coir and sericulture so far. There are eight lakh registered societies in the country.

As an incentive, the Minister said the credit will be provided at two per cent less than the applicable interest rate on term loan for the project activities. The interest rate incentive would be applicable only for timely repayers.

ISRO successfully launches satellite GSAT-29 using its heaviest rocket

Sriharikota (AP): India on Wednesday successfully put into orbit its latest communication satellite with its heaviest rocket and the new space mission is expected to serve the communication needs of people in the remote areas of the country.

The textbook launch of the rocket GSLV-MkIII-D, which is dubbed by the ISRO as the 'Bahubali' or 'fat boy' of Indian rockets, is also seen as crucial for the space agency as it would be used for the ambitious Chandrayaan-2 (lunar mission) and the country's planned manned space mission. The 3,423 kg satellite GSAT-29 is also the heaviest Indian satellite to be put into orbit.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K Sivan said while the rocket's



first operational mission was going to be "none other than Chandrayaan" in January 2019, "this fantastic vehicle is going to carry humans to space in three years from now."

ISRO has set a 'target' of achieving the country's ambitious manned mission to space by 2021, with the first unmanned programme of 'Gaganyaan' planned for December 2020, according to

Sivan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in his Independence Day address this year that India will attempt to send an astronaut to space by 2022 on board 'Gaganyaan'. The 27-hour-countdown for the Wednesday launch began at 2.50pm Tuesday and the rocket blasted off at 5.08 pm from the spaceport at Sriharikota over 100 km from Chennai.

The satellite carries Ka and Ku band high throughput transponders which will provide communication services to remote places in the North East and Jammu and Kashmir, besides aid the Centre's Digital India programme, Sivan said.

ISRO scientists broke into cheers as the satellite was injected into a geosynchronous orbit, 16 minutes after lift-off.

BJP releases second list of 31 candidates for Raj Assembly polls

New Delhi: The BJP on Wednesday announced its second list of 31 candidates for the Rajasthan Assembly election, dropping 15 sitting MLAs, included three Ministers.

The BJP has so far announced the names of 162 candidates in the 200-member Assembly.

Outgoing Ministers Babulal Verma, Rajkumar Rinwa and Dhan Singh Rawat were denied party ticket this election.

BJP MLA Gyandev Ahuja, who hit the national headlines at the height of the JNU controversy in 2016 for his remarks that thousands of condoms were found on the university campus daily, was also dropped. PTI

PM Modi, Pence discuss defence, cooperation

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US Vice-President Mike Pence held talks on Wednesday on a wide range of bilateral and global issues of mutual interests including defence and trade cooperation, ways to counter terrorism and the need for maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. The two leaders had a warm meeting on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit here, Ministry of External Affairs

spokesman Raveesh Kumar said. They had "productive discussion on all aspects of global strategic partnership based on growing convergence of interests on regional and global issues," he said. Pence referred to the upcoming 10th anniversary of the deadly Mumbai terror attack on November 26 and hailed cooperation between the two countries on countering terrorism, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale told reporters after the meeting. Modi thanked Pence

and reminded him that in one way or other all the traces and all leads in the global terror attacks ultimately leads to a "single source and single place of origin", without naming any country or organisation.

"He did point out that the mainstreaming of people involved in the Mumbai attacks in a political process which has taken place in the recent elections in Pakistan should be a matter of serious concern and not to just the two countries which is India

and US but to international community," Gokhale said, referring to the Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's party contesting the July 25 elections in Pakistan. "There was some good understanding of the areas of how we move forward in building cooperation in counter terrorism and both countries recognised this is a challenge we have to fight together and to fight along with the rest of the international community," Gokhale said.

App to register snake bites in country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The big four snakes — Russell's Viper, Common Cobra, Common Krait and Saw Scaled Viper are responsible for more than 90 per cent snake bite deaths across India. But, surprisingly, the Government has no incident-related data that could help it frame policies and develop better snake anti-venoms to save the victims.

Taking initiative in this

direction to collate the data at the ground level, The Big4 Mapper app has been developed that would register each incident of bites by the big four snakes. The app which is a part of "Indian Snake Bite Initiative," a joint project by Madras Crocodile Bank, Global Snakebite Initiative and Indiansnakes.org would help conservationists and herpetologists to map out the distribution of snakes and incidents of bites reported in the country.

By collating incidents at the ground level, the app aims to help researchers and policymakers get a clearer picture of the situation and can potentially save lives, said the brain behind the app, Jose Louies from the Wildlife Trust of India. He elaborated, "The Big4 Mapper app helps conservationists and herpetologists map out the distribution of snakes and incidents of bites reported in the country. The app can

potentially save lives, once it reaches its critical mass and if received well by the government machinery."

Talking about its functioning, he said that the snake rescuers have to download the app and take a photo of the snake every time they go on a rescue trip. When rescuers take a photo of the snake in the place they found it, the app automatically logs in the GPS coordinates, time and the date.

SABARIMALA ROW

Trupti to visit temple on Friday with six women

Thiruvananthapuram: Woman activist Trupti Desai on Wednesday waded into the Sabarimala issue when she asked for complete police protection during her visit to the temple starting Friday. But temple activist Rahul Eashwar promised to fight her tooth-and-nail to prevent her entry.



PROMISING AN EVEN BIGGER RESISTANCE, SABARIMALA TANTRI FAMILY'S RAHUL EASHWAR ALONG WITH ACTIVISTS AND DEVOTEES TOLD THE MEDIA HERE, THAT DESAI WOULD KNOW THE POWER OF THE FAITH OF AYYAPPA DEVOTEES WHEN SHE AND HER GROUP REACHES THE TEMPLE TOWN

Desai wrote to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to order police protection for her group when they visit Sabarimala on November 17 when the temple will open for the two-month long pilgrimage.

The temple town has witnessed protests by Hindu groups and temple tantri and officials ever since the Supreme Court verdict on September 28, allowed women of all ages to pray at Lord Ayyappa temple that hitherto banned girls and women aged between 10 and 50.

Desai wrote to Vijayan on Wednesday that she along with six other women would be arriving in Kerala on Friday for a visit at the temple on Saturday. She sought police protection right from the time she lands in Kerala till they leave the State, saying "we will visit the temple whatever be the resistance".

While Eashwar said he and his officials along with Lord Ayyappa's true devotees would ensure that none were able to break the tradition of the temple.

"We will lie down before the women who come to break the temple's tradition."

The temple will open on Friday evening for the Mandala Mahotsavam and she has asked to be escorted right from the airport to their rooms in Kottayam, where they would rest for the day.

The police must then provide protection when they head for the hilltop temple on Saturday.

Speaking to a Malayalam TV channel, Desai said she has written to the Chief Minister, Kerala Police chief Loknath Behra and also Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "I have written but have not done any online booking for the darshan. The Supreme Court order is now very clear and hence we will be there and we will visit the temple whatever be the resistance," said Desai.

The temple will be open for 66 days till January 20, with a small break in between. Promising an even bigger resistance, Sabarimala Tantri family's Rahul Eashwar along with activists and devotees told the media here, that Desai would know the power of the faith of Ayyappa devotees when she and her group reaches the temple town.

Eashwar was put in jail in October during the first month's protest after the top court's ruling came into existence. "Come, what may, we will ensure that our protest will be in the true Gandhian way and none will be able to break the tradition of the temple."

"We will lie down before the women who come to break the temple tradition and if they have to move forward, they will have to walk on our bodies and once that happens, the police will have to arrest such people," said Eashwar. IANS

Holistic approach needed keeping sentiments in mind, says Union Min



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asked if an ordinance was required to deal with the situation, Sharma said the Kerala Government had to decide on the matter, adding that the Centre would intervene at the right time if required

Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma called for a "holistic approach" to be adopted on the Sabarimala temple issue on Wednesday so that the sentiments of the people were not hurt, observing that the Centre would intervene in the matter at the "right time" if required.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to review its verdict allowing the entry of women of all ages into the hilltop shrine in Kerala, which had sparked violent protests in the southern State, but refused to grant a stay.

Asked if an ordinance was required to deal with the situation, Sharma said the Kerala Government had to decide on the matter, adding that the Centre would intervene at the right time if required.

"The State Government has to take a call on that (ordinance) and the Central Government, if required, will definitely intervene at the right time," he told reporters

here.

Asked if the contention that the entry of menstruating women would make the temple impure, Sharma said, "Well, I am a doctor, I will not make any comment because the matter is sub-judice, but we have to take a holistic call on it." The two-month-long Mandala Makaravilakku pilgrimage season that commences on November 17 attracts millions of devotees from all over the country to Sabarimala.

On September 28, a five-judge constitution bench of the apex court, headed by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra, in a 4:1 verdict, had lifted the centuries-old ban on girls and women in the 10-50 age group from entering the shrine, saying it amounted to gender discrimination. The review petitions against the verdict were taken up "in-chamber" by a bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and justices RF Nariman, AM Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra.

LoP Saikia slams Sonowal for failing to protect Assam's interest

ANUP SHARMA ■ GUWAHATI

Assam's Leader of the Opposition, Debabrata Saikia, slammed Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal-led Government in the State for failing to protect the State's interest and address the growing insecurity in the State.

Saikia's statement came days after a top brass of the Assam police admitted that the resentment against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 has led young people in some districts to join the anti-talk faction of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

"This is nothing short of a confirmation of the Sarbananda Sonowal-led Government's failure to protect Assam's interests and its tendency to betray people," Saikia said in a statement issued on Wednesday.

Director General (Special Branch) of Assam Police and the Superintendent of Police, Tinsukia and other senior officials of the police administration have recently stated that the resentment against the Bill across the State has been fuelling a fresh spurt in young people of the Brahmaputra Valley joining the ULFA faction led by its

commander in chief Paresh Baruah.

"The ULFA's popularity had gradually waned during the decade-and-a-half when the Congress was in power in the State. But the Narendra Modi-led Central Government's decision to table the controversial Bill and the Sarbananda Sonowal-led State Government's failure to mount a strong opposition to the proposed legislation are inducing a section of young boys and girls to take up arms against the State," Saikia said.

He said that dwindling employment opportunities

and stagnation of development activities like the MGN-REGA are also creating frustration and resentment among many youth, who are gravitating towards the ULFA faction.

Referring the all-round failure of the state government, the Opposition leader pointed out that although the Chief Minister keeps talking about "zero tolerance of corruption", yet the Chief Minister has only resorted to superficial whitewashing and has been unable to muster the courage to conduct a CBI inquiry into the widespread reports of several syndicates

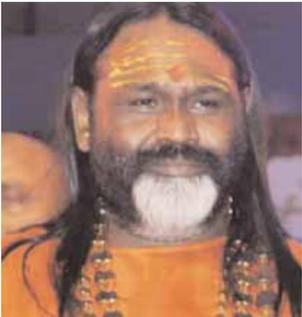
operating in the state to smuggle coal, stone, sand, 'supari' (dried areca nut) etc.

"Similarly, the Chief Minister has remained a helpless spectator to the woes of the health sector, including serial crib deaths in the medical colleges-cum-hospitals in Barpeta and Jorhat and the supply of contaminated medicines by certain parties, a fact which the government admitted in the House," he said adding that the state will slide back to the days of violence and lack of development if the Government led by Mr. Sonowal does not pull up its socks.

HC dismisses Daati Maharaj's plea for review of CBI probe order

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday dismissed self-styled preacher Daati Maharaj's plea for review of its decision to transfer the probe in the rape case against him to CBI and cautioned the agency against starting a fresh inquiry in the matter. A bench of Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice VK Rao rejected the preacher's contention that facts were suppressed by the petitioner - a lawyer - while seeking transfer of the probe.



It said the investigation was handed over to CBI "after going through the charge sheet in detail" and after considering the plea moved by the "victim herself". "The contention of the applicant (Daati Maharaj) that there is suppression of fact cannot be accepted in its totality and this submission gets diluted or becomes non-effective because of the fact that the victim herself has approached this court and it was after considering her prayer and also after going through the charge sheet in detail that the order in question was passed by us," said the bench. It said it found "no error apparent on the face of the record to review the order" of October 3. The preacher had also contended that CBI had started a fresh investigation in the case which was not permitted. Dealing with the argument, the court said it had directed only for further investigation by the CBI and not a de novo (fresh) probe.

de novo inquiry into the matter. We had directed for supply of the entire charge sheet to the CBI and they were required to go through the charge sheet, conduct further investigation as is permissible under law and then submit a report to us," the bench said. "The report submitted by them, interim in nature, only indicates that they have initiated the process and, therefore, we caution them to ensure that the investigation to be conducted by them is not a de novo inquiry but it is only a further investigation or inquiry into the matter," it said. "In the meanwhile, based on the charge sheet already filed, the trial court shall proceed with the matter in accordance with law," it added and dismissed the application. On October 3, the

high court had said that the manner in which the probe was carried out by police "casts a shadow on the investigation" as it did not arrest the accused in the case even after recording the complainant's statement before a magistrate under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). The preacher's plea against the October 3 order was initially filed in the Supreme Court which had asked him to approach the high court with his grievance. The CBI had earlier submitted before the high court its status report of the probe in a sealed cover. The agency had registered a case of rape and unnatural sex against Daati on October 26. The complainant's plea was earlier being heard by a single judge bench of the high court, but was transferred to the division bench after a PIL on the issue was filed. A complaint was filed against Daati Madan Lal alias Daati Maharaj on June 7 and an FIR was registered on June 11. On June 22, police questioned the accused, who has been charged with rape of a disciple at his ashrams in Delhi and Rajasthan. The accused has claimed that he was being framed. The complainant has filed the case against the preacher, his three brothers and a woman at Fatehpur Beri police station in South Delhi. The case was later transferred to the crime branch. The complaint said the FIR against him has been registered for alleged heinous offences of rape, unnatural sex, molestation and common intention under the IPC.

BJP 'exposes' Congress with video featuring Kamal Nath

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Armed with a video clip purportedly featuring Congress leader Kamal Nath, the BJP Wednesday alleged that it showed the opposition party's "hatred" towards the RSS and Hindus. In the video, Nath, the Madhya Pradesh Congress chief, is purportedly seen telling a group of Muslims to be cautious about the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) campaign and that his party will deal it with after the November 28 state Assembly polls. Addressing a press conference at the BJP office here, party spokesperson Sambit Patra claimed that the video exposed the real face of the Congress and its president Rahul Gandhi's "fancy-dress Hinduism". "A video of top Congress leader Kamal Nath is circulating on the social media, in which he is talking to a group of Muslim clerics and telling them you do not worry, we will take care of the other community and the RSS," he said. It exposed the "real, divisive" face of the party and its "hatred" towards the Sangh and especially towards Hindus, Patra claimed.

Security upped after miscreants hijack passenger taxi in Jammu

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Security was beefed up all along Jammu-Pathankot National Highway, dotted with vital Army installations, after four suspected 'miscreants' hijacked a passenger taxi, hired from Jammu railway station, near Madhopur in Punjab, late Tuesday night.

The incident came to light in the wee hours of Wednesday after driver of the passenger Taxi, Raj Kumar, raised an alarm soon after he managed to escape after a brief scuffle with the miscreants.

The miscreants had threatened to kill him and dump his dead body in the nearby canal.

After the alarm was raised, Punjab and J&K police, alerted security check points on possible escape routes to track down the hijackers and prevent possible terror strike in the close vicinity of Pathankot air base.

Jammu Railway Station Taxi Operator's Union, Vice-President, Rajvender Singh told reporters in Jammu, "a group of four people had booked a Taxi from Jammu railway station for dropping at Pathankot late Tuesday evening".

He said, "the Taxi was booked in the name of Major Sarabjeet Singh and an advance payment of ₹3,550 was also made at the booking counter". The Taxi left the parking at around 9:00 pm, he added.

Quoting eyewitness account of the driver of the taxi, Rajvender also claimed, "the driver stopped the Taxi for dinner at Kathua and later they crossed Toll plaza at Lakhampur-gateway of J&K".

Rajvender Singh also claimed if the men on duty at Toll plaza had checked identity of the passengers they would have been trapped. He said since they claimed they were army men the men on duty permitted them to move on

without paying any toll tax.

According to the driver of the Taxi, the passengers sat silently during the entire journey and were not using mobile phones either. According to him, the passengers were speaking typical Punjabi language, not popular in India but on the other side of the border.

After entering the Punjab border the driver again stopped his Taxi for paying passenger tax near Madhopur. Rajvender Singh said it was around the same time the driver was prevented from stepping out of the Taxi and in the ensuing scuffle he managed to run away from their custody.

Earlier, on Tuesday a heavily armed Pakistani terrorist was shot dead by an ambush party inside the Indian territory in Pallanwala area of Akhnour. The ambush party had also recovered huge cache of arms and ammunition. The security forces are also investigating the possible linkage between the two incidents by joining the dots.

Renaming Bengal: Didi slams Centre for delay

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A furious Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday came down heavily on the Central Government for "intentionally delaying" the process of renaming West Bengal to "Bangla" as proposed and passed by the State Assembly in September last year.

"I had personally requested the Union Government and Home Minister Rajnath Singh to hasten up the matter of renaming Bengal into Bangla after the resolution was passed in the State Assembly. But nothing has been done in this regard. The Centre is ignoring the opinion of the majority population because some people who are in a microscopic minority (State BJP leader) want them to do so. This is amounts to defying the federal nature of the Constitution," she said.

"They (the BJP Government) are changing the names of other places but they are delaying the renaming of Bengal when the people of the State want it to be done as was proved by the unanimous support this cause received in the State Assembly," the Chief Minister said wondering "if the name of Bombay, Bangalore, Orissa and Pondicherry changed into Mumbai, Bengaluru, Odisha and Puducherry, then why West Bengal cannot be changed into Bangla."

The proposal of renaming the State had been in the air since the nineties but it was finally passed in August 2016 when West Bengal was

renamed into Bengal, Bangla, Bangla in English, Hindi and Bengali. The proposal was turned down by the Centre which then asked the State to consider a new name.

It was then that the Assembly voted in favour of single name Bangla in September last year.

"They (BJP) are of the opinion that Bangladesh is also called Bangla so it is not the proper alternative for West Bengal, but these people fail to realize that there is one Punjab each in Pakistan and India without doing any harm to any sentiments," Mamata said.

Warning the present Government which was "crossing its limits in many ways," Banerjee reminded "the Constitution has divided the powers of the State and the Centre and so no one should think itself superior to the other."

"Even the State Chief Ministers were called Prime Minister in the British period but after the Independence the States got Chief Ministers and the Centre got a Prime Minister considering the different roles they played," she said adding there was no reason to think that the State or the Centre were superior to each other.

Instead of upholding the values enshrined in the Constitution the Centre was disregarding India's federal structure she alleged. "It is not a few leaders in Delhi who run this country. In fact India is run by the federal States."

Reacting to Banerjee's

charges Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh however said that "instead of renaming the State the Government should concentrate on development and restoring democracy in the State."

However the Chief Minister argued the BJP Government was changing the names of places overnight (consider Mughalsarai, Ayodhya, Lucknow etc) but it is delaying the renaming of Bengal when the people of the State want it earnestly because Bangla is culturally and emotionally more close to the people's heart.

Apart from an emotional issue it is politically also more helpful," she said.

"Whenever there is a national level meeting of the States the delegates of West Bengal get their chance to speak after even the small Union Territories have spoken their views. This is so because the turn to speak comes alphabetically. By the time West Bengal delegates get their chance to speak the central representatives lose their interest and we fail to represent our cases in an appropriate manner," Mamata earlier said.

Attacking the BJP Government for bringing "mischievous ploys" to drive away Bengalis from Assam, Biharis from Gujarat and Maharashtra Banerjee said "they are getting time to do mischief with Bengalis and Biharis in Assam, Gujarat and Maharashtra but they are not getting time to listen to our legitimate proposal."

Madhav says Governor rule to continue in J&K

PTI ■ KATHUA



Accusing the NC and the APDP of trying to scuttle the democratic process, BJP general secretary Ram Madhav has asked them to clear stand on whether they would participate in state assembly elections or boycott them, like they did during the local bodies polls. Asked about any proposal to dissolve the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Madhav said the Governor's rule will continue till the middle of December and what happens next will be discussed then.

"We are happy with it and that is why BJP has decided to continue the Governor rule for sometime," he said at a function here to felicitate the newly-elected BJP councillors late last night. Under the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, there is no provision for extension of Governor's rule. Sources have told PTI that the central government might recommend a spell of President's rule in Jammu and Kashmir when the Governor's rule expires on December 19.

Without naming the NC or the PDP, Madhav said their hypocrisy stands exposed as they first boycotted the ULB

polls but are now pressing for dissolution of assembly for fresh elections. "On one hand they say they will not take part in elections to safeguard Article 35A, on the other, they demand dissolution of assembly and fresh elections. Tomorrow if assembly elections are held, will you fight or go by your boycott?" he said.

The BJP leader asked if the two parties decide to participate in the state polls, "what will happen to Article 35A, which you used as a pretext to stall the ULB elections." He, however, said he welcomes the parties to take part in the democratic process but wants "them to give up hypocrisy".

"They took part in (Ladakh autonomous hill development council elections) in Kargil polls but boycotted

the ULB polls to scuttle the democratic exercise. However, people taught them a good lesson and forced them to take part in panchayat polls," Madhav said. On the sidelines of the event, the BJP leader also said the Indian security forces are fully capable of facing any challenge from Pakistan in an "appropriate manner", his comment coming after three Army soldiers and a porter were killed in sniping incidents along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir in a week.

Asked whether the time has come for another "surgical strike" across the border, he said the security forces would review the situation and "whatever is required will be done by them". Praising the Governor's administration, Madhav said a very good atmosphere has been built in the state. "Terrorism is being dealt with strictly and it (operations against terrorists) will continue," he said. He said people are acknowledging the work done Governor Satya Pal Malik. About resignations of some BJP councillors in Kashmir, he said people are also joining the party in large numbers. "Those who have resigned will be brought back," he said.

Status quo on proceedings against Asthana extended

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday extended till November 28 its order asking the CBI to maintain status quo on proceedings against Special Director Rakesh Asthana, who has sought quashing of an FIR against him in a bribery case. The court did not go in for the full hearing in the matter as it was informed that CBI Director

Alok Kumar Verma has not been served with its notice on the pleas by Asthana and DSP Devender Kumar, who is also seeking the quashing of the FIR. Justice Najmi Waziri was also told by the counsel of CBI Joint Director AK Sharma that he was served with the court notice and petition copy Wednesday itself while the court had issued notice to him and Verma on October 23. When the

court asked the counsel for Asthana and Kumar about non-service of notice and checked the records, it surfaced that due to non-payment of process fees, notice was not issued to Verma and the court directed the advocates to serve it within three days.

The high court questioned Asthana's counsel for not serving the petition to Verma and enjoying the interim order in his

favour. "How come respondent 2 (Verma) is not served. You have an interim order in your favour. I will vacate it. The process fee has not been filed, the interim order will go. How can you enjoy the interim order. Notice has to go to everybody," the judge said. Senior advocate Amrendra Sharan, appearing for Asthana, said that they will serve the notice and petition to Verma by Thursday. Asthana

has also filed a rejoinder to CBI's response to his petition. The court was hearing separate pleas of Asthana, Kumar and middleman Manoj Prasad seeking quashing of the FIR against them. Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee and advocate Rajdipa Behura, appearing for the CBI, requested the court to take up the matter next week after which it was fixed for November 28.

Rahul Gandhi promises 'people's government' in Chhattisgarh

PTI ■ KORBA (C'GARH)

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday promised to install a "people's government" in Chhattisgarh and accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of destroying the state in its 15-year rule.

Addressing a rally for the second phase of polling in the state, Gandhi said it was among the richest in the country in terms of water, forest, mines and minerals. "But, people have remained poor due to the policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government," he charged.

Invoking his family ties with the state, the Congress chief said the relationship was of love and not politics. He claimed that lands of locals in this part of the tribal-dominated state were taken away to set up industries.

But when the units were not set up, the lands were not returned to the people. "The Congress will install a people's government in the state which will empower farmers, small and medium businesses and provide employment to the youth," Rahul Gandhi said. He



said if the Congress came to power in the state, it would enforce the Land Acquisition Act and facilitate loan waiver for farmers, besides providing them bonus and Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crops.

Accusing the Raman

Singh government of being involved in graft, Gandhi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not uttered a word about corruption in Chhattisgarh. "People of the state have suffered because of this," he alleged.

"I do politics for the rights

of poor, farmers and youth. I will not protect 10-15 industrialists at their cost," he said. Polling for the second phase in 72 seats, out of the total 90-member Assembly, will take place on November 20 and the counting of votes will be held on December 11.

Uddhav to visit Ayodhya later this month

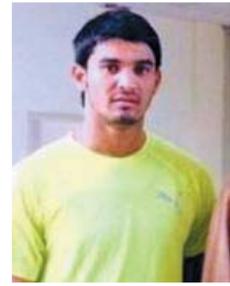
PTI ■ THANE (MAHA)

Maharashtra BJP president Raosaheb Danve on Wednesday said his party welcomed Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's decision to visit Ayodhya later this month. He was talking to reporters here as part of his tour of Thane, Kalyan and Bhiwandi to take stock of the party's preparedness for the Lok Sabha elections next year.

Replying to a query whether the Sena has hijacked the Ram temple issue from the BJP, Danve said, "Nobody can hijack issues. They do their party's work and we do ours... We welcome Uddhav Thackeray's decision to visit Ayodhya." Thackeray had announced in his party's Vijaydashmi rally in Mumbai that he would visit Ayodhya on November 25 and "question" Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the temple construction issue. Replying to a query related to BJP MLA Anil Gote, who has announced his resignation as member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly as well as from the BJP, alleging that "criminals" were being inducted into the party, Danve said such things happen during polls.

Aligarh athlete hangs self

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



An 18-year-old international athlete allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in his hostel room at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Tuesday evening. The deceased, Palender Chaudhary, hailed from Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh and had represented India in 100 and 200 M races at international level.

He also took part in the Youth Asia Athletic meet in Bangkok in 2017 where he won Gold in relay. He also participated in the World Youth Championship last July.

As per a senior police official, they were informed about the case at 9 pm on Tuesday by Safdarjung Hospital.

"Chaudhary was admitted to the hospital in an unconscious state by Coach Harkamaljeet Singh. He has been residing in Jawaharlal Nehru hostel in stadium since November 2016 and was undergoing training for 100 and 200 meter race," said the police official. "We knew that Chaudhary hanged himself with the help of a crepe bandage in presence of his sister. He was soon rushed by the coach and other guards to the medical centre of Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. After giving him first aid, he was taken to Safdarjung

hospital for further treatment where doctors declared him dead on Wednesday morning," said the police official. "No suicide note has been recovered, police said, adding the reason behind taking such an extreme step is being probed.

Chaudhary's father Mahesh Pal has arrived from Agra," the senior police official added. Chaudhary had recently got enrolled in the Indian Army through sports quota and was set to leave for training. Though the police are probing the matter following the death of a young athlete on JLN stadium campus, Sports Authority of India (SAI) has ordered a departmental inquiry in the incident. "We have ordered a departmental inquiry as the incident happened in our

premises. The inquiry will be headed by Secretary SAI Swarn Singh Chabra and it should be completed within a week," said Neelam Kapur, SAI Director General. Kapur said, "The enquiry officer will speak to all concerned people-coaches, other athletes and his family members, especially his sister who had come to visit him that evening, to understand what may have led him to take this extreme step. This is a very sad turn of events and we are extending all support to the family. Arrangements are being made to send the body to Aligarh."

"Preliminary investigation showed that the reason behind suicide was monetary issue. On Tuesday morning, Palender had an argument with his father on phone over money. His sister also came to meet him in the evening on Tuesday. He took the step in front of his sister after threatening her. She came out screaming and our staff immediately went there and brought him down," said Kapur. However Mahesh Pal Chaudhary, Palender's father said that Palender needed money. "I had assured him that I will give him the money but don't know what happened to him," said an inconsolable Mahesh Pal.

Rain washes off dust, but Delhi stares at pollution relapse

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

A brief spell of rain on Tuesday night came to the rescue of the people residing in the national Capital as Delhi's air quality improved "remarkably" and the National Ambient Air Quality Index recorded the level of harmful pollutants as "lowest" of this season.

The contribution from stubble burning to pollution was recorded at three per cent. From severe to poor, SAFAR's trend marked air quality relatively good! However, the forecast said air quality may deteriorate from Thursday.

The major pollutant PM 10, which has remained above 410, was recorded at 280 on Wednesday, whereas PM 2.5 was significantly less on Air Quality Index (AQI) at 127.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC), the overall average Air Quality Index was recorded at 312

microgram per cubic which was 642 on the very next day of Diwali.

Citing the local climate trend, SAFAR said air quality has improved considerably due to rainfall early on Tuesday; it washed away bigger particles and created space for faster dispersion without decline in temperature.

"AQI is back to 'very poor'. A slight increase in AQI is predicted in next three days and likely to remain very poor," SAFAR said.

"This is mainly due to the fact that surface winds are still low and temperature is likely to cool down. Stubble fire is unlikely to impact Delhi AQI as fire counts are significantly down and winds are also flowing from other direction," SAFAR explained on Met graph.

The largest contributor to PM 2.5 pollution on Wednesday was power plants followed by diesel generators. Household pollution contributed 15.9 per cent.



Kids from an NGO celebrate Children's Day in Mumbai on Wednesday

Delhi HC seeks response from Centre, AAP Govt, Speaker on Anshu Prakash's plea

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought response of the Centre, the AAP Government and the Delhi Assembly Speaker's office on Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash's plea challenging the fresh breach of privilege proceedings initiated against him on complaints by two House committees. Justice Vibhu Bakhrui, while issuing notice in the matter, declined to pass any interim orders after Delhi government standing counsel Rahul Mehra said nothing was presently happening against the bureaucrat and that his plea was "premature".

Mehra said the instant petition be heard on November 27 with an earlier plea of the bureaucrat challenging another breach of privilege proceeding going on against him.

Senior advocates Siddharth

Luthra and Vivek Chib, appearing for Prakash, on the other hand urged the court to pass interim orders staying the two fresh proceedings against him and to direct that his presence be not insisted upon by the Privileges Committee.

The judge, however, did not issue any interim directions and listed the matter for hearing on November 27, saying that nothing has happened till now against the bureaucrat and if anything happens he can approach the court.

Prakash, in his plea filed through advocates Asif Ahmed and Ruchira Goel, has sought quashing of the two new breach of privilege proceedings initiated against him on the complaints by the Question and Reference Committee (QRC) and Protocol Committee of the Assembly. Luthra contended that some members of the two committees, which lodged the

complaints against him, were also part of the Privileges Committee which is a "violation of principles of natural justice".

The senior lawyer also argued that MLAs who were chargesheeted in connection with assault of the chief secretary were also part of the two committees. He said that breach of privilege proceedings were initiated after filing of the charge sheet and alleged that they were biased against the bureaucrat and were trying to "harass and intimidate" him.

Opposing the allegations, Mehra submitted in court a list of the members of the committees and said that none of the chargesheeted MLAs were part of the House panels.

He also said that since the two proceedings were initiated on October 1 and October 11 with no summons being issued till now, the petition was "completely premature".

No debate on Rafale price if...

From Page 1

The top law officer said the Centre has given in a sealed cover the complete details of the Rafale jets, the weapons to be fitted on the aircraft and other requirements. The Centre on Monday had submitted to the apex court in a sealed cover, the pricing details of the Rafale jets. Venugopal also told the apex court that the court is judicially not competent to decide what aircraft and weapons are to be bought as it is a matter for experts.

Venugopal said earlier jets were not intended to be loaded with the requisite weapons system and the government had reservations as it did not want to violate the Inter Government Agreement (IGA) and the secrecy clause.

He also opposed advocate Prashant Bhushan who wanted to submit information on the secrecy clause of the Rafale agreement. "Secrecy agreement has to be secret and how is he producing it in court?" Venugopal asked when Bhushan raised the issue.

Bhushan, appearing on behalf of himself and former Union Ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, alleged that the Government is hiding behind the secrecy clause and had not disclosed the price of the fighter jets. The Chief Justice told Bhushan, "We are giving you full hearing. Use this opportunity carefully and cite only those things which are necessary."

Bhushan said the price per aircraft was 155 million Euros and was now 270 million Euros. This shows that there was hike of 40 per cent in its price, the advocate said. He said the CBI was bound to register an FIR in this case. The lawyer alleged that there was a conspiracy with French company Dassault, which tied up

with Reliance as an offset partner. He said Reliance had no competence in executing the offset contract.

Bhushan said they filed the petition after the CBI did not register the FIR under the Prevention of Corruption Act. He also quoted former French president François Hollande and other Dassault officials to impute criminal motives in granting the offset contract to Reliance. The activist-lawyer submitted that the NDA Government had "short circuited" the acquisition process by taking the IGA route. He said there is no sovereign guarantee from the French Government in the deal and argued that the Union Law Ministry initially flagged the issue and later gave in to the proposal of entering into an IGA.

On the issue of lack of sovereign guarantee, the attorney general said though there is no sovereign guarantee, but there is a letter of comfort by France which would be as good as a governmental guarantee. He also told the court that presently three countries France, Egypt and Qatar are flying Rafale fighter jets.

Bhushan said six foreign companies had applied and two firms were shortlisted during the earlier process, Bhushan said. Later, the deal went to Dassault and State-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) was part of it. Suddenly, however, a statement was issued which said there will be no technology transfer, and only 36 jets would be procured, the lawyer told the court.

Bhushan submitted that nobody knows about the alleged change in the deal done by the Prime Minister. Even the Defence Minister was not aware about the change, he said. The Supreme Court ques-

tioned the Government's stance that it had no role in the offset clause, which is the focal point of the opposition's charge of corruption in the 59,000 crore contract. Rafale manufacturer Dassault has not yet submitted details of its offset partner to the Government, Venugopal told the Supreme Court. "The vendor will inform the offset partner to us. So far there is no information on this," said Additional Secretary Defence Apurva Chandra.

The court had asked the defence ministry why the offset guidelines were changed in 2015. The opposition alleges that the Government scrapped a deal for 126 Rafale jets negotiated by the previous UPA Government and opted for a new deal for 36 jets to help Reliance bag the offset contract with Dassault.

When the court asked about the change in the offset guidelines in 2015, the Additional Secretary of the Defence Ministry explained that the offset contract runs concurrently with the main contract.

During arguments in court, the Government said a political issue was being made out of the offset partner. "We have already said the government has no role in the selection of the offset partner," said the top Government lawyer.

Justice KM Joseph questioned, "If the offset partner runs off, what happens? What about the country's interest? What if the offset partner doesn't do any production?" The court said the Government "can't separate" the main contract from the offset contract. "It may not be in the country's interest if the offset contract is executed later because that may lead to delay in production by the offset partner," the court said.

Campaigning for Uttarakhand civic elections gathers pace

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

Campaigning by political parties is gaining momentum in Uttarakhand where civic bodies elections are scheduled for Sunday, as prominent leaders address one poll meeting after another to canvass for their parties' official nominees.

Campaign vehicles of parties, loaded with posters, banners and their symbols are driving through the streets of the state to drum up support for candidates. Slogans penetrate the air every time a poll vehicle speeds through a sleepy neighbourhood in town. Candidates are also conducting door-to-door campaigns to connect with people in different pockets. While Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat and Pradesh BJP president Ajay Bhatt are currently spearheading the party's poll campaign, the next couple of days will see Bhojpur film star and

Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari hitting the campaign trail in Uttarakhand. The chief minister has already campaigned for the party's mayoral candidates in Dehradun, Rishikesh, Haridwar and Kotdwar, besides holding back-to-back poll meetings in Chamoli and Uttarkashi districts.

Wherever the chief minister goes he seeks votes for the party nominees in the name of development and the state government's policy of zero tolerance towards corruption. He highlights fast tracking of infrastructure development projects both in the road and railways sectors by his government besides the crackdown on corruption which has sent over fifty people behind bars ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party took over last year.

Former chief minister and Nainital MP Bhagat Singh Koshiyari on Tuesday issued an appeal asking people to

vote for the BJP if they wanted the benefits of welfare schemes to reach the common man. Apologising for his inability to come to them personally due to health reasons, Koshiyari said he was confident that the people of the state would vote overwhelmingly in favour of BJP as they did in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls and the state assembly elections last year.

Seeking a mandate for the first time after coming to power in Uttarakhand with a massive win in assembly elections last year, it is going to be a high stakes battle for the BJP which faces the challenge of matching its own performance in these elections. The BJP had won 57 out of a total of 70 assembly seats in the state in March last year. The upcoming civic body polls are no less significant for the Congress either, as the outcome will be a pointer to what might happen to the party in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

AICC general secretary and former state chief minister Harish Rawat started campaigning for the party's candidates in Dehradun on Tuesday. While campaigning for the Congress's mayoral candidate for Dehradun, Dinesh Aggarwal, here on Tuesday, Rawat claimed people had seen how the BJP had failed to deliver despite enjoying a majority in Dehradun municipal corporation for ten long years. "People know the truth about the BJP's hollow promises now and will teach it a fitting lesson in the civic polls this time," he said addressing a series of poll meetings in Dharampur area on Tuesday.

The Congress has also released a vision document in view of the polls, terming a massive anti-encroachment drive conducted recently by the state government as an attempt to render people homeless and promising ownership rights to slum dwellers.

BJP's Dausa MP joins Congress

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a setback to Rajasthan's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of next month's elections, the party's Dausa MP Harish Chandra Meena joined the Congress on Wednesday.

Meena, a former director general of police, joined the Congress in the presence of former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee chief Sachin Pilot and All India Congress Committee's state in-charge Avinash Pande.

"I am happy that Harish Meena has decided to join the Congress in such times. I welcome him in the Congress fold," Gehlot said at a press conference about the new entrant who had served as Director General of Police when he was chief minister.

Pilot and Gehlot said they will contest the December 7 polls along with other senior leaders of the state. "We are all united. It is Bharatiya Janata Party's conspiracy to spread

false news that the Congress is divided," Gehlot said. Pilot attacked Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, saying she had betrayed the trust of the people of the state. Pilot said the tension was evident in the Bharatiya Janata Party camp with many senior leaders sidelined and not given tickets, showing that "all is not well".

Asked why the Congress had not declared a chief ministerial face before the elections, Gehlot said this had never been done in Rajasthan. Pilot said Meena belongs to a family of Congress members and had joined the party without any conditions.

In 2014, Harish Meena defeated his elder brother and senior Congress leader Namonarain Meena from the Dausa Lok Sabha seat. Namonarain Meena came third in the electoral contest.

Harish Meena defeated his nearest rival Kirori Lal Meena, who was then a candidate of National People's Party and is

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD
Office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial) Allahabad
 No. CM-1/ATVM/Facilitators/Part-V/ALD Dated 12.11.2018
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Allahabad
 on behalf of President of India invites sealed applications from interested Retired Group "C" Railway Employees for engagement as facilitators for ATVM's (Automatic Ticket Vending Machines) at following stations, (list of stations attached at Annexure-B):-

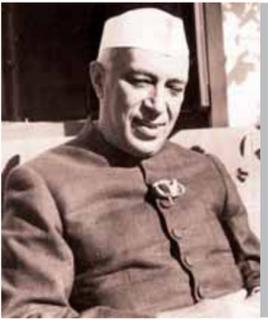
Name of station	Duration of work (hrs)	Earnest Money (₹)	Application Cost (₹)
Mirzapur, Vindhyachal, Manda Road, Allahabad, Bharwari, Sirathu, Fatehpur, Kanpur, Govindpuri, Bharthana, Sonma, Dankaur, Dadri, Hathras, Dabhaura	Up to 31/03/19	NIL	100/-

1. The application forms with all relevant rules and conditions are available (Starting from the date of notification) up to 14.12.2018 at 11.00 hrs. The application form can be obtained from Booking Office MZP, ALD, FTP, GNB, ETW, TDL, ALJN, MKP at any working day (Monday to Friday) from 9.00 to 17.00 hrs. The cost of application form is Rs. 100/- (Non refundable). The same has to be deposited in Booking Office and original MR has to be attached along with application form. 2. Application can also be downloaded from NCR, Indian Railway website www.indianrailways.gov.in, & www.tenders.gov.in. The cost of application form is Rs. 100/- Applicant will have to attach Bank Draft/DD issued by any scheduled commercial bank equal to prescribed value Rs. 100/- in favour of Sr. Divl. Finance Manager, North Central Railway, Allahabad towards the cost of application form. 3. The application form in sealed cover duly filled in and complete with all formalities will be received in the office of Assistant Commercial Manager, Commercial Branch, 2nd Floor, DRM's office, North Central Railway, Nawab Yusuf Road, Allahabad and in the office of Station Director / Dy. CTM/Kanpur, North Central Railway, Kanpur Station building, Kanpur, till 13.00 hrs. dt. 14.12.2018 and will be opened on same date at 15.00 hrs. If due to any reason this day is declared as a holiday, the same will be done on next working day at same place and time. 4. Applications received late will neither be accepted nor will be entertained. 5. Railway Administration reserved the right to postpone/ modify or cancel any one or all the application without assigning any reason or to accept any of the application. 1186/18 FA

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Nehru's legacy

The nation has much to be grateful for, much to be critical of. But we do need a calmer discourse around past leaders



In the sense of a continuum of socio-economic forces unshackled by key figures in history, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor is not entirely wrong when he says that it was Jawaharlal Nehru's endeavour to build democratic institutions and infuse a spirit of egalitarianism in the body politic which provided an opportunity for, in Tharoor's words not ours, even a "chaiwala to become Prime Minister" exactly 50 years after the passing away of India's first Prime Minister. UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi followed this up on the eve of Nehru's birth anniversary on November 14 by asserting

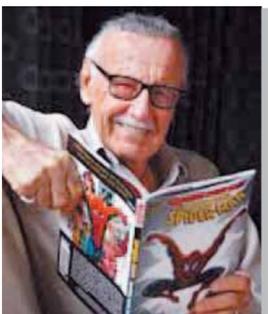
that the current ruling dispensation was out to wreck Nehru's legacy. Neither star-struck hagiographies nor mindless demonising of one of the towering political personalities and public figures of 20th century India, however, does the man justice.

So, let's undertake a quick review of the four meta issues, as it were, on which Nehru cops most criticism: His allegedly cavalier approach to national security including Kashmir, his foreign policy priorities which elided the threat posed by China, his economic policies underpinned by a socialist command-and-control philosophy and his secular politics which while taking on obscurantism within the majority community failed to address the fundamentalist warp and woof of minority politics. On national security, the flak Nehru draws is disproportionate. Yes, he should have been more hard-nosed about Jammu and Kashmir and integration in his approach as far as Valley Muslims were concerned, especially after Sardar Patel had managed the crucial accession so admirably, but to accuse the man who kept a multi-ethnic, multi-faith, multi-linguistic post-colonial nation-state from Balkanisation and ensured its territorial integrity was by and large kept intact through the nascent phase of the construction of a modern Indian state is to be terribly unfair. Nehru's foreign policy priorities, especially his adherence to non-alignment reinforced by the 1955 Bandung Conference, were, whether ideal or less-than-ideal in retrospect, in the national interest. Of that there can be no doubt. How he defined the national interest is, of course, up for debate but abuse has no place in that discourse. Even on China, as some recent books have brought out, the first Prime Minister was not the woolly-headed, naïve socialist as he is sometimes caricatured. Though the 1962 debacle is correctly characterised as his biggest failure as PM and most of the flak he draws is well-deserved, it must be remembered that Communist China and its expansionist designs were not as apparent then as they are today and Chinese perfidy not to mention an India that did not have the economic heft and military infrastructure to stand up to its northern neighbour both played a role in the disaster.

On economic policy, which led to the infamous Hindu rate of growth for nearly five decades after Independence, Nehru does have a lot to answer for. Not for the first decade or so after 1947 when the country needed capacity-building and industrialisation and a centralised command economy was probably, all things considered, the only viable route of achieving that objective. But for ignoring the warning signals towards the latter part of his tenure as crony socialism, corruption and de-growth stared India in the face but the economy continued to be guided by doctrinaire, ideological commitments even when clearly divorced from the reality on the ground. It is, however, 'secularism' which is the most contested and contentious aspect of the Nehruvian legacy. While we need to applaud his courage in siding with reformers within the Indic dharmic tradition and pushing through progressive legislation relating to the Hindu community, his abysmal surrender to the mullahs and padres when it came to reform in Abrahamic religions is incomprehensible to genuine liberals even today. The rather weak defence that he was a creature of his times (who isn't?) leads us to the conclusion that he had swallowed whole the knowledge claims of secularised Christian i.e. Western social sciences which made no distinction between religions qua religions and the Indic civilizational tradition which had been classified as a 'religion' by the British colonial rulers and earlier invaders only to make it fathomable for themselves. If anyone could have seen past it, it was Nehru. The abiding disappointment remains that he didn't.

True Avenger

Whenever we try to be our better selves, Stan Lee's superheroes will have life; he will be missed



He was the greatest avenger of them all, standing tall against time itself, ensuring the continuity of a graphic artform, the comic, well into the post-modern world and moulding his characters in such a manner that they emerged out of their cardboard capes to become flesh and blood realities worth emulation. Marvel Comics chairman Stan Lee has captured fans across time and appeal, contributing millions to Hollywood. And much like the mankind's challenger Thanos, who can control and warp every known limit of space and time in the universe, Lee will

remain a timeless institution with his forever stones. Whether it was the angst-ridden nerd Spider Man or the genius but angry Hulk or the whimsical and rich Iron Man, he had a hero from all sections of society with their own sets of problems, baggage and frailties. Yet they remained very human and believable while summoning up their superhuman will and potential when life tested them. He cooped every race and creed. Black Panther of Wakanda is an African superhero that has given the Marvel franchise its biggest single hero commercial gain. And he did create Chakra, the invincible Indian who could elevate the potential of all seven *chakras* in a magic suit. No film yet on him but he did rule TV for a while. And in a world of #MeToo, Marvel women like the Black Widow set fair rules of engagement and stood up to be counted despite the men. While Stan Lee started his career with his fertile imagination using pen and ink, it soon spilled on to the page and evolved beyond anyone's imagination to become everyday inspiration.

Some of the heroes were outcasts and misfits in the real world who were vain about their pimples and slogged at work. But seared by struggle, they became the best versions of themselves and their skills, a roadmap of hope in an imperfect world. What Stan Lee created was to tie in childhood with adulthood and ensure innocence prevailed in our robotic lives. The creative empire he left behind is a legacy for the entire human civilisation and it will live on forever.

Hammer and tongs approach

For preventing a democracy from descending to anarchy, it's imperative for citizens to have respect for the rule of law and ensure there are checks on any reckless exercise of power



AJOY KUMAR

Reinhold Niebuhr, a famous American academician once said, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." This is a great quote for two reasons: First, because it talks about our humanity and how it craves for justice and equality, which are the foundations of any democracy, and second, because it reminds us of our more base tendencies that can only be kept in check through a democratic system of Government. For a democracy to thrive, there are a few pillars that are at play simultaneously and constantly. These pillars include the judiciary, the executive, the legislature and the Press. Contrary to what this Government would like to assume, a modern democratic society cannot be merely whittled down to the legislature, which makes the laws of the country and are the elected to power. But it also requires the judiciary, the Press, and the bureaucracy to play their important roles. I think someone forgot to tell that to the current Government in power.

While there has been an uneasy consistency with which the Government has targeted these other pillars of democracy, the first real shot was fired by the Finance Minister, who while speaking about the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) said that Indian democracy cannot be a tyranny of the unelected and commented how if the elected are undermined, democracy itself would be in danger. I am afraid that Arun Jaitley has missed the point here because a democracy is not the blind and blank mandate of only the elected but instead, in order to function well, it requires a fine balance between the elected and the unelected.

In this week's column, I will examine how the current Government has tried to minimise the influence of these unelected pillars like the judiciary, the bureaucracy and the Press and demonstrated a tyrannical approach to governance.

For a democracy to prevent its descent to anarchy, it is imperative for citizens to have respect for the rule of law. The primary role of the judiciary is to interpret the law of the land and to state the law as it is. The Supreme Court, as the final interpreter of law in our country, recently ruled that no woman can be restricted from entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala. The Supreme Court came to its decision based on the principles of equality that have been laid down in our Constitution. Since the judgement was borne out of a religiously charged issue, it is the responsibility of the party in power to ensure that the situation on the ground is not further inflamed resulting in greater violence.



Instead, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in clear abdication of its responsibilities stoked tensions further. Comments from the BJP president reflect a clear disregard for the judiciary, which is an essential pillar of a successful democracy and only serves to undermine an important part of the State.

The BJP has been brazen in its attempts to exercise control over the bureaucracy as well. The bizarre episode with the CBI director being replaced in the wee hours of the morning and the CBI raiding its own officers, was just the latest indicator of how this Government has sought to maintain a stranglehold on instruments of the state and has lost control of these institutions. While the elected drafts the laws of the country, this Government will do well to recognise that the actual implementation of the laws of our country is through the bureaucracy.

The bureaucracy has a duty to implement the laws drafted by the legislature without any interference. However, there is clear disregard of this tenet by the Government and was further evidenced by the changes that were proposed with respect to the appointment of civil servants to their respective services.

The most recent example of an attack on the institutions and how the Government acts like a spoilt child if things are

CONTRARY TO WHAT THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO ASSUME, A MODERN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY CANNOT BE MERELY WHITTLED DOWN TO THE LEGISLATURE, WHICH MAKES THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY. IT ALSO REQUIRES THE JUDICIARY, THE PRESS, AND THE BUREAUCRACY TO PLAY THEIR IMPORTANT ROLES

not going its way, is the current stand-off between the Reserve Bank of India and the Government. The widening rift between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Government concerns a demand for funds from the RBI that have been collected over decades. The Government would set a dangerous precedent by invoking Section 7 of the RBI Act that would allow the Government to dictate financial policy. This is because through the past four and a half years, this Government has shown how inept it is at handling the economy. From demonetisation to the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST), our country has had to suffer a great deal because of Modinomics. Also, with fuel prices higher than ever and the rupee lower than ever, questioning the financial prudence of the RBI by forcing the Central Bank into submission, is another way to substitute the expertise of the unelected with the arrogance of the elected. India must avoid such this scenario.

An independent Press is the primary medium to speak the truth to powers that maybe but this pillar has been badgered by this Government into something unrecognisable. I have written in this newspaper before, while discussing freedom of Press, that there is an environment of fear and trepidation in the entire country-

where we are unable to raise questions about the Government without attacks on our patriotism. Of these attacks, perhaps the resignation of Punya Prasad Bajpai from *ABP News*, a few months ago under circumstances that are frighteningly Orwellian, was perhaps the most disconcerting. These attacks coupled with the approach of this Government to shroud itself in secrecy and a Prime Minister who refuses to take unscripted and uncomfortable questions indicate that the Government does not believe that in order for a country to be stronger going forward, it must be able to question its Government.

An examination of the examples I have detailed above shows how this Government has tried to diminish checks on any reckless exercise of its power by whatever means necessary. It is obvious that the Government views any such checks as tyrannical while in reality, it is merely democracy at work that requires the unelected, too, to play an important role. The elected, however, have chosen to adopt a hammer and tongs approach to governance and ignore this basic tenet. The problem, with such an approach, is that if you have a hammer in your hand, everything looks like a nail — even good sense. (The writer is Jharkhand PCC president, former MP and IPS officer. Views are personal)

SOUNDBITE

I enjoy being on Twitter, and I've made great friends on this medium where every day I see the creativity of people.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi

We're trying very hard to make better trade deals with India. But, they're very good traders, you would say, right?



US President —Donald Trump

With the way content is evolving and compelling stories are coming out, there's a need for more stories of stronger women.



Actor —Yami Gautam

Those in power have contempt for Jawaharlal Nehru, we must honour him by safeguarding democracy.



Congress leader —Sonia Gandhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Man of wisdom

Sir — The demise of T N Srinivasan, a distinguished Indian economist marks the end of a journey. He was in some ways a multi-talented personality. Apart from Economics as his major interest, he was efficient in Mathematics as well as Humanities. Srinivasan was a strong votary of free trade and multilateralism.

He was a rather unassuming person and spent his life teaching in the United States till the very end. Srinivasan devoted his entire life in pursuit of knowledge and teaching.

Devendra Khurana
Bhopal

Faith vs law

Sir— The Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Kerala State fighting against allowing young women to enter Sabarimala has become more aggressive in the light of the Supreme Court agreeing to hear the review pleas on January 22.

It seems that they have forgotten all about gender discrimination in the Sabarimala issue and they are still working hand in glove with the traditionalists of the temple though clear-cut Supreme Court verdict in favour of young women was pronounced.

What is their stand in terms of the verdict? Their stand is a flagrant violation of the verdict of the apex court. But while expressing their stand, they make it as complicated and complex as ever leaving the people middle-headed.

They also make a mountain out of molehill on the issue to the advantage of their respective political parties.

People cannot see the truth as long as they are not educated by these parties.

TK Nandan
Kochi

When philosophy rules the roost

The word 'philosophy' and 'philosophical' are often used loosely. Philosophy is about thoughts and questions and finding suitable answers. Thought sharing and exploration of innovative ideas and lacing a creative touch to these, form the base of philosophy. The UNESCO is observing the "World Philosophy Day" on every third Thursday of November since 2002. It believes that a philosophical approach towards problems plaguing the world can be used for moulding a fair society. In times of one culture being pitted against the other, fair thoughts and unbiased news create an equal platform. Philosophers have stressed the need to shun past animosity and buttress the present.

Introspection of one's own knowledge cannot escape attention because according to that great philosopher Socrates, "I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing."



The root cause for all conflicts is people judge soon and talk too soon before actually knowing their surroundings. A day spent well is a day indeed because dawn and dusk are imperative and unavoidable. Though philosophical works are rarely studied with proficiency by the non-professional, its principles should guide us to make this world safe.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

and claim to be fighting for the rights of the people. However, they tried to deprive the people of exercising their primary right of ballot for electing a Government.

They called for boycott of polls, reportedly threatened to chop off hands of those on who had polling ink on their fingers and set off improvised explosive devices.

Defying poll boycott call of the Maoists and ignoring the threats, people came out on the street in record numbers and thronged the polling booths. In 4,336 polling booths of 18 constituencies, across eight Naxal-hit districts, 31.80 lakh voters exercised their voting right to elect their representatives from amongst 190 contestants.

Which political party wins the election is immaterial. Democracy has already come out a winner. The Election Commission, security forces and above all, the voters, deserve accolades for the success of the democratic process.

MC Joshi
Lucknow

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Fighting under alien skies

The deeds of Indian warriors in World War I are a testimony to their spirit despite colonial discrimination



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

World War I, dubbed "the war to end all wars", ended with an armistice signed on November 11, 1918. The main belligerents were Britain, France, Russia (until the revolution of 1917), Italy (from 1915) and the United States (after 1917) on one side and Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey on the other. A number of other countries like India also became a part of its orbit.

No other conflict until then had involved as many countries. Nor did any till then cause such a staggering number of casualties—about 40 million including about 20 million dead (both sides included) and the rest wounded. Among the dead were 9.7 million military personnel and the rest civilians. This was the first war where technology-based military hardware was deployed on a large scale, and aircraft and tanks, the latter brought in by the United States forces, were used for the first time. The questions are: What did this massive carnage achieve? What was India's role in it?

It did not "end all wars." The League of Nations, emerging in 1919 from the Paris Peace Conference, which led to the Treaty of Versailles officially ending it, doubtless sought to promote disarmament, prevent wars through collective security, settle disputes between countries through negotiation and diplomacy, and global welfare. Unfortunately, it never quite took off. Its credibility and effectiveness were both undermined by the United States' decision to stay away and this despite the fact that its president, Woodrow Wilson, played an important role in setting it up and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to secure peace. The League of Nations' fundamental weakness, however, was that it was slow to act, and sometimes did not act at all. This was because a decision required a unanimous resolution passed by the council members, initially numbering nine and subsequently 15. Besides conflicting interests, the unwillingness of many members to have their actions externally-determined, accounted for this. As a result, wars, between and within nations, followed. Notable in the first category were the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 and Japanese invasion of China in 1937. Wars within included the one between communists and the Kuomintang forces in China in the 1930s and the Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939.

The League's biggest failure was its inability to prevent World War II, which involved most countries of the world and left about 55 million civilians and 21 to 25 million—including five million prisoners of war—military personnel dead. World War II witnessed, for the first time, the use of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. The conflagration, which saw the emergence of the Soviet Union as a super power, had momentous consequences. If the confrontation between the blocks led by the US and the Soviet Union respectively, led to the Cold War which split the world, a third shooting World War was prevented by deterrence provided by the accumulation of missile-mounted nuclear weapons, capable of wiping out the entire world, on both sides. Post World-War II wars like those occurring in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and between India and Pakistan, India and China, Israel, Arab countries remained regional. As to the second question mentioned at the beginning, India was under British Rule during World War I, which Indian troops fought as a part of British imperial forces. The country made a signal contribution. A total of over 14 lakh men were recruited for the war, of whom over 13 lakh were sent for service in the Middle East and Europe. One of them was Kaji Nazrul Islam, the fiery Bengali revolutionary poet, who served in Mesopotamia.

Indian troops fought with tremendous gallantry in lands they had never known and under climatic conditions to which they were strangers. As many as 74,187 were killed and 70,000 wounded. Twelve Indians received the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious medal awarded by the British Army to officers and men who had performed "some signal act of valour or devotion to duty" in "the presence of the enemy." The recipients were Mir Dard, Fazal Din, Khudadad Khan, Sahamad Khan, Lala, Darwan Singh, Gabbar Singh Negi, Karanbahadur Rana, Badlu Singh, Chhattan Singh, Gobind Singh and Kulbir Thapa. Indians also fought in the air. Four of them joined the Royal Flying Corps, which later became the Royal Air Force. Lieutenants all, they were Indra Lal Roy, Hardit Singh Malik, S.C. Welingkar and ESC Sen. Roy and Welingkar were killed, the former in aerial combat, and the latter in a German hospital after crashing during a dogfight and taken prisoner. Roy was only 19 years old when he died on July 22, 1919, after having performed the incredible feat of shooting down 10 German planes in 14 days. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross given for "exceptional gallantry during active operations against the enemy in the air." Britain, however, has never adequately acknowledged India's contribution, which did not receive much attention until some years ago. Bias against Indians has been alleged. While Malik claimed six victories against the Germans, he was credited with only two. But then discrimination is integral to colonial rule.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, The Pioneer, and an author)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

IN THE AFFIDAVIT, MODI ADMITTED TO CHANGES IN THE CONTRACT WITHOUT ASKING THE AIR FORCE AND PUT ₹30,000 CRORE IN AMBANI'S POCKET.

—CONGRESS PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI



REALISING THAT THE MODI GOVERNMENT BOUGHT THE RAFALE AT A CHEAPER PRICE, THEY'RE NOW RESORTING TO PETTY HAIR-SPLITTING.

—UNION FINANCE MINISTER ARUN JAITLEY

A bid to disturb the peace

Given ISI's determination to revive insurgency in Punjab, anti-national elements must be dealt with stringently and those who raise pro-Khalistan slogans should be put behind bars



JK VERMA

On November 3, Army Chief, General Bipin Rawat, while delivering a lecture at a seminar organised by the Centre for Land and Warfare Studies (CLAWS), emphatically mentioned that although at present Punjab is peaceful, but because of foreign linkages, attempts are being made "to revive insurgency in the state." He also stated that "we have to be very careful" and we would take early action, before it is too late. He emphasised that internal security is India's leading problem but it cannot be resolved easily because of foreign assistance to insurgent groups. He also mentioned that foreign powers are trying to revitalise insurgency in Assam. He rightly asserted that only military cannot curb insurgency and all Government agencies, civil administration and police should work in cohesion to restore peace.

The Union Government has also informed Punjab Government that the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) is trying hard to reanimate insurgency in Punjab through Sikhs settled abroad, especially in Canada, Europe, the United States, and Australia. On August 12, 2018, Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), a pro-Khalistan organisation, promoted the 'London Declaration on Referendum 2020 for Sikhs'. The so-called referendum, which was organised with the financial and logistical support of the ISI, demanded an independent Khalistan.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a resident of the United States is an important functionary of the SFJ. The organisers collected details, including passport copies, college documents, photographs, mobile numbers, email and WhatsApp addresses of Sikhs from Punjab in the name of sponsoring them, to attend the referendum. In this way they have collected details of large number of young Sikhs who were interested in attending the pro-Khalistan referendum. These details can be misused by the ISI as well as by pro-Khalistan elements in future. As the ISI is ready to finance the referendums, the SFJ declared that it will organise referendums in other countries as well.

The SFJ is planning to finance the visit of 10,000 Sikh pilgrims to Pakistan to celebrate 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. The ISI would utilise the visit to distribute anti-India and pro-Khalistan literature and might try to instigate Khalistan sentiments to a large number of Sikhs visiting Pakistan. The Gurdwaras controlled by pro-Khalistan elements in Canada, the US and the UK have prohibited the entry of Indian diplomats, Indian Members of Parliament, et al. The Indian Government urged the Governments of these countries to lift the ban but they refused to help.

Security forces also unearthed a depraved plan of the ISI under which young persons of Pakistani origin and citizens of Western countries were cultivated and trained in Punjabi and Sikh traditions. Later on, they were sent to Punjab and marry Sikh girls and convert them into pro-Khalistan entities. Hence, the ISI is using not only young women to honey-trap but also using young men to allure Sikh women. However, the ulterior motive lies the revival of

“ AT PRESENT, THE KHALISTAN MOVEMENT IS DORMANT IN INDIA BUT IT IS NOT DEAD AND IT CAN REVIVE WITH FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. A VAST MAJORITY OF SIKHS ARE AWARE ABOUT THE FUTILITY OF THE KHALISTAN MOVEMENT BUT A FEW DISENCHANTED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY MAY BE TEMPTED TO PLAY WITH FIRE FOR THEIR SELFISH INTERESTS ”



insurgency in Punjab.

The interrogation reports of Sikh terrorists, including Jagtar Singh Chief of Khalistan Tiger Force, clearly indicate that the ISI is fomenting trouble in Punjab and spread concocted reports in Pakistani media. These reports are picked up by international media, which are sympathetic to the intelligence agency.

As the ISI was funding lavishly, pro-Khalistan elements have created several terrorist outfits namely Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), Bhindranwala Tigers Force of Khalistan (BTFFK), Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF), Khalistan Liberation Army, All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), Khalistan Armed Force aka Dashmesh Regiment, Shaheed Khalsa Force, Khalistan Guerilla Force, Khalistan Security Force, et al.

However, these forces lack mass support and, hence, sometimes they put few pro-Khalistan posters or carry out terrorist activities. In 2015, three Sikh terrorists killed a superintendent of police, three home guards and three civilians in Dina Nagar police station (Gurdaspur), and Shiv Sena and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leaders were also assassinated. Analysts claim that these incidents happen when the ISI refuses to release funds unless their agents carry out some terrorist activities.

The ISI has given shelter to a few Sikh leaders, including KCF chief Paramjit Singh Panjwar, BKI chief

Wadhwa Singh Babbar, ISYF chief Lakhbir Singh Rode and KZF chief Ranjit Singh Neeta in Pakistan. These leaders propagate Khalistani ideologies to the Sikhs residing abroad. The ISI also uses them to spread anti-India and pro-Khalistan views to Indian Sikh jathas (group of pilgrims) whenever they visit Pakistan.

At present due to close family relationship between Sikhs and Hindus, Sikhs understand that Khalistan is not practicable. However, the ISI persistently sends its agents to Punjab in order to instigate Sikhs.

The ISI has also smuggled drugs in Punjab and at present youth have become drug-addicts. The ISI uses them as support agents to spread hatred towards Hindus. As there is no ideological basis for Khalistan, the ISI circulates news about perceived atrocities and statements of anti-establishment political leaders who denounce Indian system with ulterior motives.

Analysts also claim that the economy of Pakistan is ruined and it is on verge of loan default. Prime Minister Imran Khan returned empty handed from China. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has put stringent conditions to grant loan and, hence, the Pakistan Government is raising the Khalistan issue to sidetrack the attention of poor and illiterate masses.

India must safeguard its interests. The analysts claim that not only ISI but several intelligence agencies support various terrorist outfits. Hence, Indian security forces must analyse the reason why European countries, Canada and the US never help Indian

security agencies against Khalistani elements.

Pro-Khalistan Sikhs should be blacklisted and they should not be allowed to enter India. At present, the Khalistan movement is dormant in India but it is not dead and it can revive with foreign assistance. A vast majority of Sikhs are aware of the futility of the movement but a few disenchanted members of the community may be tempted to play with fire for their selfish interests.

Sikhs settled abroad may also render ideological and financial assistance to the perceived discrimination and atrocities. Hence, Central as well as State Government should try to sort out simmering issues, including punishment to the executioners of 1984 anti-Sikh riots, Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal issue, among others. The separatists' allegation that Hindus want to submerge Sikh religion must be countered.

In view of the above, Indian policy planners must be careful and chalk out a comprehensive plan under which the genuine problems of Punjab will be redressed. On the other hand, anti-national elements must be dealt with stringently and those who raise pro-Khalistan slogans should be put behind bars. The Government and the nationalist elements should also formulate a plan to counter the misinformation campaign launched by Khalistan supporters in India as well as abroad.

(The writer is a member of United Services Institute of India and Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis. Views expressed are personal)

Dry riverbeds of tomorrow

Only zero tolerance policies pertaining to pollution and climate change can retrieve our rivers from doom. But do the authorities have the will to see this through? Only time will tell



KOTA SRIRAJ

There is certainly something seriously going wrong with our fresh water bodies, not only in India but also across the world. Is it global warming, or climate change, or failing rains? Or a combination of all these? The scientific and the environmental experts are getting hard pressed to find the exact reason and hopefully the solution for the same. In the meanwhile, the once flourishing rivers in parts of the world are rapidly turning into dry river beds comprising of nothing but sand and quickly falling prey to land sharks and real estate mafia.

In India, the 1990s saw a flurry of hydel projects being approved and built of various capacities; these projects successfully dammed the rivers emanating from the Himalayas at var-

ious points, leading to electricity generation no doubt, but eventually causing the rivers downstream to quickly dry up and adversely affected millions of people and agriculture, which was dependent on the natural flow of the river.

Is this an India-specific phenomena? Apparently not. It would be of interest to note that of all places, Europe is, as we speak, flummoxed by drying up of their rivers. Water levels in Western Europe and Germany's most important river, the Rhine, is at record low levels currently. More shockingly the water levels in this river is fast approaching zero at several spots. This occurrence is due to a recent drought, which is being blamed on climate change. Needless to say that the development has affected freight supplies, as the river is one of the most important transport routes in the region.

German media reports quoted Germany's Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration as saying that about half of Germany's river ferries had stopped running, and river cruise ships were having to transport their

passengers by bus for parts of their journey. The reports also noted that thousands of fish in the Swiss section of the river had died because of the heat and low oxygen levels. The most important effect of this has been on supplies of freight. Roughly 80 per cent of the 223 million tonnes of cargo is transported by ship in Germany each year travels the Rhine, which links the country's industrial heartland to Belgium, the Netherlands and the North Sea.

As a consequence of the river drying up, petrol stations in the region that rely on tankers to deliver fuel from refineries in the Netherlands have run out of supplies. A number of inland ports are now idle, and millions of tonnes of goods are being transported by rail or road. Media reports have speculated that drying of the Rhine could be due to climate change. The river's flow relies not just on annual rainfall, but also on long-term water reserves in the Alps. Melting snow and glaciers, as well as Lake Constance, the source of the Rhine, feed the upper parts of the river. These

reserves are substantially lower today due to climate change. And in more bad news, other major rivers on the continent, such as the Danube and the Elbe are also drying up in parts.

Similar to the Rhine, the Ganges is an important river of India and is exceedingly suffering the same fate. The Ganges serves as the source of drinking water for almost 500 million people. It flows all the way from 3,000m above sea level in the Himalayan Mountains to the Bay of Bengal, and is one of the most revered and sacred water bodies. Despite this, it is also under increasing threat from climate change, industrial pollution and unhygienic rituals and waste disposal engendered by its legend. In fact, it was ranked as the fifth most polluted river worldwide.

The Ganges already sustains nearly half a billion people and according to the International Water Resource Management Institute (IWRMI), the demand for fresh drinking water will only increase. It projects the demand will rise roughly by one-third in the coming 15 years, meaning that the

Indians will rely on the river more than ever. However, a recent study surveying 925 rivers worldwide found that climate change posed a serious threat to many of the world's running water sources. Due to its geographical location, the Ganges was found to be particularly at risk, along with Africa's Niger River and the Chinese Yellow River.

Climate change is poised to affect the Ganges in another, more direct way. Water pollution in Asia has long been a subject of concern, and the Ganges is one of the harder hit bodies of water from the effects of the industrial boom in the continent. A report from the World Bank estimates that around 20 per cent of the contaminants in the river come from industrial emissions, and roughly one billion gallons of untreated sewage enters its waterways on a daily basis. Clearly, the situation is a concerning one. Add to this, the deeply religious significance of the river does little to help cleanup efforts. The Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a non-profit NGO from New Delhi, conducted a survey of 500 people and

interviewed 150 more to find out how attitudes to the river affected its cleanliness.

A large number of respondents to the survey felt that the religious value of the Ganga was non-negotiable. The respondents to the survey even suggested that the scale of traditional rituals such as corpse immersions in the Ganga were so low that they did not really upset the ecological balance or biodiversity of the river and that immersion of dead bodies in the river had in no way been found to hinder water management initiatives in the Ganga. The mythological idea of the Ganga is sadly more valued than the river itself.

If this trajectory of destruction continues, our pious and sacred rivers will be staring at becoming dry riverbeds of tomorrow. Only zero tolerance policies pertaining to pollution and climate change can retrieve our rivers from doom. But do the authorities have the will to see this through? Only time will tell.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



CAST AWAY SELFISH AMBITIONS

The Sri Lankan crisis is clearly a power struggle with extremely selfish motivation of politicians which does not involve the interests of the people at all, despite the groups on either side of the current political divide screaming at the top of their voices that they are fighting for democracy. (The Daily Mirror editorial)

WPI inflation hits 4-mth high

RBI may maintain status quo in next policy review

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Inflation-based on wholesale prices spiked to a four-month high of 5.28 per cent in October mainly due to rise in fuel prices, but the RBI is likely to maintain status quo in its next monetary policy review as crude prices and currency are stabilising.

The Wholesale Price Index-based inflation stood at 5.13 per cent in September and 3.68 per cent in October last year.

Food articles witnessed softening of prices with deflation at 1.49 per cent in October, against 0.21 per cent in September, government data released on Wednesday showed. Vegetables too became cheaper with deflation at 18.65 per cent in October, compared to 3.83 per cent in the previous month.

Inflation in 'fuel and power' basket in October spiked to 18.44 per cent, from 16.65 per cent in September. Individually, in petrol and diesel it was 19.85 per cent and 23.91 per cent, respectively, and for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) it was 31.39 per cent during October.

The WPI inflation is in contrast to the retail or consumer price index-based inflation data released earlier this week. The October CPI inflation had cooled to a year-low of 3.31 per cent.

'While the uptick in both the core-CPI and core-WPI inflation in October 2018 warrants some caution, the recent pullback in the rupee and crude oil prices has softened the risks to the inflation trajectory'

ICRA principal economist Aditi Nayar said the uptick in the WPI inflation in October reflected the impact of the pass through of higher commodity prices and the rupee depreciation. The disinflation in food prices had a much smaller impact on wholesale inflation than the CPI, given the difference in weights for food items in the two indices.

"Despite the change in the monetary policy stance to calibrated tightening and the uptick in the core-CPI and core-WPI inflation in October 2018, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) appears likely to maintain a status quo on the repo rate in the December 2018 policy review, following the decline in the October 2018 headline CPI inflation, the deep correction in crude oil prices, and the pull-back in the INR," Nayar said.

The RBI is scheduled to come out with its fifth bi-monthly policy review statement on December 5.

She said that the easing in the crude oil prices and the recent strengthening of the rupee, would keep WPI inflation range bound between 4.5-5 per cent in October-March period.

Nayar said the core WPI inflation hardened to a three-month high of 5.1 per cent in October, reflecting the impact of the rupee depreciation on the landed price of imports.

"While the uptick in both the core-CPI and core-WPI inflation in October 2018 warrants some caution, the recent pullback in the rupee and crude oil prices has softened the risks to the inflation trajectory," she added.

The Indian rupee had touched the record closing low of 74.39 in October, and ended the month with total losses of 104 paise or 1.43 per cent due to a strengthening dollar, firming oil prices and trade worries.

Since then the currency has recovered and is now trading around 72.2 to a dollar.

Brent crude, the international benchmark, was trading around USD 76.25 per barrel in October. The Brent crude futures is now trading at USD 65 to a barrel. To cushion the impact of global fuel price rise, the government had, with effect from October 5, cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹1.50 per litre and had asked state-owned oil firms to subsidise the fuel by another ₹1 a litre.

The 5.28 per cent inflation is the highest in four months, and a higher inflation than this level was last seen in June at 5.68 per cent.

Among food articles, potato prices continued to rule high with 93.65 per cent WPI inflation in October. While onion witnessed deflation of 31.69 per cent, the same for pulses stood at 13.92 per cent.

The Reserve Bank of India mainly takes into account retail inflation data while formulating monetary policy. In its fourth monetary policy review for the fiscal, released last month, the RBI maintained status quo on the benchmark interest rate but warned that volatile and rising oil prices, and tightening of global financial conditions posed substantial risks to the growth and inflation.

For October-March, the RBI pegged CPI-based retail inflation to be between 3.9-4.5 per cent.

Govt launches credit scheme for co-op startups

New Delhi: Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh on Wednesday announced the launch of a scheme that aims to provide cheaper loans to startups in the co-operative sector and those having innovative projects costing up to ₹3 crore.

The 'Co-operative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme' will be implemented by the National Co-operative Development Corporation and will be linked to its Co-operative Startup and Innovation Fund that has an annual corpus of ₹100 crore. "The new scheme aims to encourage newly formed co-operatives to take advantage of innovative ventures, especially by societies having new and innovative ideas," Singh said after inaugurating the 65th All India Co-operative Week organised by the National Co-operative Union of India here.

Co-operatives operating for at least for one year and having a positive net worth are eligible to avail credit under the scheme for new and innovative project ideas, he said. The project cost should not exceed ₹3 crore and there would be two years moratorium on payment of principal amount, he said, adding that the period of moratorium may vary depending on type of project and ability to generate revenue. The credit will be provided at 2 per cent less than the applicable interest rate on term loan for the project activities.

Market ends flat after choppy session; pharma, IT stocks crack

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices began early gains to end marginally lower at 35,141.99 after a highly volatile session on Wednesday as losses in pharma and information technology shares offset gains in energy, banking and metal stocks, amid weak global cues.

The BSE Sensex swung nearly 365 points both sides on heavy buying and selling during the session. The 30-share index, after a gap-up opening at 35,330.14 points, hit a high of 35,351.88 points at the outset on the back of sliding global crude oil prices and recovery in rupee.

However, a weak trend in most other Asian markets and a lower opening of European markets, triggered selling on the domestic bourses, dragging the Sensex into negative terrain to hit a low of 34,986.86. The index finally settled 2.50 points, or 0.01% down at 35,141.99. It had rallied 332 points on Tuesday.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty, after shutting between 10,651.60 and 10,532.70 points on alternate bouts of buying and selling, closed 6.20 points, or 0.06%, down at 10,576.30.

According to analyst, market was volatile despite fall in oil prices and appreciation in rupee as concerns about domestic liquidity and weak global cues overrode the sentiment. "Oil

prices fell to \$65/barrel and will ease concerns on current account deficit. IT and pharma indices witnessed selling pressure due to stronger rupee while stock-specific buying on the basis of quarterly results and decline in oil prices supported out-performance of midcaps," they added.

The rupee strengthened 50 paise to 72.17 against the US dollar (intra-session) in late afternoon trade. It scaled a high of 71.99 at the outset.

Sun Pharma emerged worst performer in the Sensex kitty, plunging 7.36%, after the company on Tuesday reported a consolidated net loss of ₹218.82 crore for the July-September quarter on account of a ₹1,214-crore provision for the settlement of the Modafinil antitrust case in the US.

Shares of software exporters such as TCS, Infosys and Wipro lost up to 2.85% due to stronger rupee which rose 50 paise to 72.17 against the US dollar in late afternoon trade. It scaled a high of 71.99 at the outset.

Bank, Adani Ports, Vedanta, Hero MotoCorp, L&T, RIL and ITC, falling up to 3.04%.

Among gainers, Maruti Suzuki, ONGC, Asian Paint, SBI, IndusInd Bank, HUL, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, PowerGrid, HDFC, Bajaj Auto and NTPC, rose up to 2.85%.

Shares of oil marketing companies and aviation operators rose on falling crude oil prices. State-run HPCL, BPCL and IOC gained up to 4.75%.

In the aviation sector, shares of Interglobe Aviation and Jet Airways gained up to 7.67%.

Sectorally, the BSE IT index emerged as the top loser by falling 2.24%, followed by tech index that shed 1.86%, metal 1.65%, realty 1.52%, health 0.81%, auto 0.66% and and capital goods 0.46%. On the other hand, oil and gas index was the best performer surging 1.18%, PSU index gained 1.07%, FMCG 0.94%, bankex 0.52%, power 0.39% and infrastructure 0.39%. Investors turned cautious on news that inflation based on wholesale prices hit a four-month high of 5.28 per cent in October, mainly due to spike in petrol and diesel prices, too influenced investor sentiment here, brokers said. The broader markets depicted a mixed trend with mid-cap index rising 0.09%, while small-cap index fell 0.15%.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
HINDPETRO	242	261.65	241.25	242.2	9.4
BPCL	313	329.4	312.85	314.05	10.9
UPL	738.2	761.8	736.5	759	22.45
MARUTI	7,180.10	7,409.00	7,180.10	7,350.20	199.75
IOC	146	155.5	144.2	145.2	3.8
ONGC	157.7	163.9	157.25	160.6	4.1
ASIANPAINT	1,312.00	1,337.95	1,302.00	1,318.00	33.1
ULTRACEMCO	3,838.00	3,978.30	3,830.35	3,910.00	80.1
HINDUNILVR	1,672.00	1,739.50	1,668.05	1,706.00	34.9
SBN	280.4	287.7	278	283.05	5
INDUSINDBK	1,498.00	1,529.00	1,492.50	1,512.00	26.45
HDFCBANK	1,938.55	1,960.00	1,936.60	1,959.90	32.15
ICICIBANK	365	369.9	361.3	366.3	5.4
BHARTIARTL	300	311.8	298	301.15	3.6
HDFC	1,836.00	1,850.00	1,830.25	1,838.00	13.3
POWERGRID	184.3	187	184.1	185.35	1.3
DREDDY	2,449.90	2,470.00	2,406.80	2,455.00	16.95
BAJAJ-AUTO	2,675.00	2,714.90	2,652.00	2,680.00	14.5
GRASIM	881	891.7	868	881	4.75
NTPC	157	160.6	156.4	157.5	0.7
INFRATEL	260	261.5	256.85	259.1	0.7
BAFINANCE	2,299.00	2,315.00	2,265.00	2,287.00	2
ZEE	440	470	420.7	438.15	0.05
RELIANCE	1,105.05	1,112.65	1,085.50	1,099.00	-0.45
BAJAJFINSV	5,606.00	5,648.00	5,560.00	5,569.10	-2.6
COALINDIA	267	267	263.75	265.3	-0.25
EICHERMOT	23,300.00	24,184.00	23,056.00	23,186.65	-43.2
ITC	278.1	278.4	274.65	276.15	-0.7
ADANIPOWER	335.3	337	329.5	332.4	-1.7
IT	1,394.00	1,398.00	1,379.00	1,384.00	-7.1
WIPRO	325	326.1	318.65	324.15	-2
IBULHSGFIN	851	854.9	835.05	836.6	-5.35
TITAN	897.05	897.5	883	891.5	-6
TATASTEEL	605	610.6	584.3	584.5	-4.7
VEDL	206.5	207.9	203.55	203.8	-1.8
HEROMOTOCO	2,898.90	2,927.40	2,823.00	2,851.85	-27.85
AXISBANK	622.25	623.3	608.8	610.6	-7.7
HINDALCO	232.75	233.4	228.3	228.6	-2.95
CIPLA	530.6	532.6	517	520.9	-7.2
YESBANK	226.9	229	221	222.05	-3.4
TATAMOTORS	180.5	183	176.25	176.75	-2.75
INFY	665.7	665.7	640.5	652.4	-13.3
M&M	793.1	797.4	765.5	772.15	-17.9
JSWSTEEL	351	353.75	337.25	338.25	-9.85
TCS	1,925.00	1,929.90	1,870.00	1,880.00	-54.95
HCLTECH	1,031.00	1,031.40	963	997	-36.2
KOTAKBANK	1,170.10	1,175.00	1,122.40	1,125.00	-40.9
GAIL	366.2	367.3	349.55	352.5	-12.85
TECHM	725	727.9	692.1	702	-26.05
SUNPHARMA	557.2	558.8	516	520.8	-40.95

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	10,634.90	10,651.70	10,532.70	10,576.30	-6.2
HINDPETRO	242	261.65	241.25	242.2	9.4
BPCL	313	329.4	312.85	314.05	10.9
UPL	738.2	761.8	736.5	759	22.45
MARUTI	7,180.10	7,409.00	7,180.10	7,350.20	199.75
IOC	146	155.5	144.2	145.2	3.8
ONGC	157.7	163.9	157.25	160.6	4.1
ASIANPAINT	1,312.00	1,337.95	1,302.00	1,318.00	33.1
ULTRACEMCO	3,838.00	3,978.30	3,830.35	3,910.00	80.1
HINDUNILVR	1,672.00	1,739.50	1,668.05	1,706.00	34.9
SBN	280.4	287.7	278	283.05	5
INDUSINDBK	1,498.00	1,529.00	1,492.50	1,512.00	26.45
HDFCBANK	1,938.55	1,960.00	1,936.60	1,959.90	32.15
ICICIBANK	365	369.9	361.3	366.3	5.4
BHARTIARTL	300	311.8	298	301.15	3.6
HDFC	1,836.00	1,850.00	1,830.25	1,838.00	13.3
POWERGRID	184.3	187	184.1	185.35	1.3
DREDDY	2,449.90	2,470.00	2,406.80	2,455.00	16.95
BAJAJ-AUTO	2,675.00	2,714.90	2,652.00	2,680.00	14.5
GRASIM	881	891.7	868	881	4.75
NTPC	157	160.6	156.4	157.5	0.7
INFRATEL	260	261.5	256.85	259.1	0.7
BAFINANCE	2,299.00	2,315.00	2,265.00	2,287.00	2
ZEE	440	470	420.7	438.15	0.05
RELIANCE	1,105.05	1,112.65	1,085.50	1,099.00	-0.45
BAJAJFINSV	5,606.00	5,648.00	5,560.00	5,569.10	-2.6
COALINDIA	267	267	263.75	265.3	-0.25
EICHERMOT	23,300.00	24,184.00	23,056.00	23,186.65	-43.2
ITC	278.1	278.4	274.65	276.15	-0.7
ADANIPOWER	335.3	337	329.5	332.4	-1.7
IT	1,394.00	1,398.00	1,379.00	1,384.00	-7.1
WIPRO	325	326.1	318.65	324.15	-2
IBULHSGFIN	851	854.9	835.05	836.6	-5.35
TITAN	897.05	897.5	883	891.5	-6
TATASTEEL	605	610.6	584.3	584.5	-4.7
VEDL	206.5	207.9	203.55	203.8	-1.8
HEROMOTOCO	2,898.90	2,927.40	2,823.00	2,851.85	-27.85
AXISBANK	622.25	623.3	608.8	610.6	-7.7
HINDALCO	232.75	233.4	228.3	228.6	-2.95
CIPLA	530.6	532.6	517	520.9	-7.2
YESBANK	226.9	229	221	222.05	-3.4
TATAMOTORS	180.5	183	176.25	176.75	-2.75
INFY	665.7	665.7	640.5	652.4	-13.3
M&M	793.1	797.4	765.5	772.15	-17.9
JSWSTEEL	351	353.75	337.25	338.25	-9.85
TCS	1,925.00	1,929.90	1,870.00	1,880.00	-54.95
HCLTECH	1,031.00	1,031.40	963	997	-36.2
KOTAKBANK	1,170.10	1,175.00	1,122.40	1,125.00	-40.9
GAIL	366.2	367.3	349.55	352.5	-12.85
TECHM	725	727.9	692.1	702	-26.05
SUNPHARMA	557.2	558.8	516	520.8	-40.95

BSE 500

Script	Last Price	Abs Change	% Change
3MINDIA	20799	298.3	1.46
8KMILES	106.5	5.05	4.98
AARTIND	1416.4	40.95	2.98
ABB	1287	-7.2	-0.56
ABBOTINDIA	7605	93.65	1.25
ABCAPITAL	107.15	3.6	3.48
ABFCL	189.95	-2.8	-1.45
ACC	1474.6	16.35	1.12
ADANIPOWER	331.05	-2.95	-0.88
ADANITRANS	190.55	17.3	9.99
ADVENZYMES	185	-2.15	-1.15
AGEISLOG	217.1	-1.9	-0.87
AIAENG	1695.35	12.55	0.75
AJANTPHARM	1069.3	-4.15	-0.39
AKZOINDIA	1578	-6.5	-0.41
ALBK	38.75	1.3	3.47
ALKEM	1928.35	-39.2	-1.99
ALLCARGO	108.25	2.6	2.46
AMARAJABAT	734	-10.05	-1.35
AMBUJACEM	211.15	5.35	2.56
ANDHRABANK	28.5	-0.25	-0.87
APARINDS	617.95	8.95	1.47
APLAPOLLO	1263	1.75	0.14
APLITD	584.65	-0.46	-0.78
APOLLOHOSP	1166.15	20.8	1.82
APOLLITORE	223.15	0.75	0.34
ARVIND	312.6	1	0.32
ASAHINDIA	282	-3.45	-1.21
ASHOKA	127.3	-5.9	-4.63
ASHOKLEY	106.6	-12.45	-10.46
ASIANPAINT	1319.9	35.1	2.73
ASTRAL	1015.05	52.85	5.49
ATUL	3448.1	44.75	1.31
AUBANK	577.8	41.15	7.27
AUROPHARMA	782.7	8	1.03
AVANTI	368.15	-5.35	-1.43
AXISBANK			

US, India can be a bulwark for prosperity and peace: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Tuesday said US' relationship with India can act as a "bulwark" for freedom, prosperity and peace as he celebrated Diwali in the White House along with eminent Indian-Americans. It is the second consecutive year that President Trump has celebrated the largest festival of India and Indian Americans in the White House.

"I am thrilled to be here for the celebration of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, and I am honored to host this beautiful ceremony at the White House. Very, very special people," Trump said. "I'm honoured to host this beautiful ceremony at the White House. Very, very special people. We're gathered today to celebrate a very special

holiday observed by Buddhist, Sikhs and Jains throughout the United States and around the world," Trump said. "This ceremony signifies the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. It is a jubilant occasion that brings loved ones, neighbours, and communities closer together," Trump said before lighting the ceremonial diya in the historic Roosevelt Room of the White House.

He said the shining lights remind people to "seek wisdom, to give thanks, and to always cherish and love the ones who grace our lives. "Our nation is blessed to be home to millions of hardworking citizens of Indian and South East Asian heritage to enrich our country in countless ways. Together we are one proud American family. Do we agree with that? I think so. I think we do. Right?

Better, believe it," he said. "India is the world's largest democracy, and the relationship between our two countries can act as a bulwark for freedom, prosperity, and peace," Trump said, amidst China flexing its military muscles in the strategic Indo-Pacific region. He said the United States has deep ties with India and he was grateful for his friendship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Modi is my friend and now her (Ivanka) friend and has great respect for India and the Indian people that I can say," said the US President as he introduced his daughter to the audience, who was present in the room.

"Absolutely," replied Ivanka, who had visited India last year. She was the first top official of the Trump administration to travel to India to attend the Global

Entrepreneurship Summit in Hyderabad in November last year.

Trump also mentioned the ongoing negotiations between the US and India on a trade deal but indicated that the talks were moving though it was tough. "We're trying very hard to make better trade deals with India. But, they're very good traders. They're very good negotiators. You would say right. The best. So we're working. And it's moving along," he said.

Along with nearly two dozen top Indian-American officials of his administration, Trump invited the Indian Ambassador to the US, Navtej Singh Sarna, his wife Dr Avina Sarna, and his special assistant Pratik Mathur to be present during the White House Diwali celebrations.



President Donald Trump participates in a Diwali ceremonial lighting of the Diya in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, on Tuesday.

'Over 8,400 hate crime incidents reported in US in 2017'

Washington (PTI): Over 8,400 hate crime incidents - including 24 against Sikhs, 15 against Hindus and over 300 against Muslims - were reported in the US in 2017, according to an FBI report. The report released on Tuesday is topped with 1,678 hate crimes committed against the Jews. In all, as many as 8,437 hate crimes were recorded in the year 2017. Nine anti-Buddhist hate crimes were also registered last year, the report said.

According to the report, a total of 24 anti-Sikh, 15 anti-Hindu and 314 anti-Muslim hate crimes were reported in the US. The Sikh Coalition, a community-based organisation that defends Sikh civil rights, said that in 2017, it received 12 anti-Sikh hate crime cases and tracked a total of 24 anti-Sikh hate-related incidents nationwide. "This figure alone is under representative of the problem since many individuals impacted by hate do not report the incidents."

"For the reported cases to law enforcement, a historical challenge is that agencies routinely fail to identify bias during investigations. Even when they do, they often do not report it to federal authorities, so the data never shows up in the statistics," it said.

"Even with incomplete data, this new report shows our elected officials that hate in America is thriving and profoundly impacting the safety and well-being of minority communities nationwide," said Sim Singh, Sikh Coalition senior advocacy manager.

Trump praises 'incredible' role played by Indian-Americans in his admin

Washington (PTI): US President Donald Trump, who has appointed more than two dozen Indian-Americans to senior positions since he assumed office in 2017, has praised them for their "incredible" performance in his administration.

Reflective of the recognition of the inherent talent that Indian-Americans have in various fields, Trump has entrusted members of this small ethnic community, comprising about one per cent of the total US population, with task of running some of the crucial departments of his administration. "I'm grateful to have numerous Americans of Indian and Southeast Asian heritage who fulfill critical roles across my admin-

istration. And they've done an incredible job," Trump said as he hosted Diwali celebrations in the historic Roosevelt Room on Tuesday.

Except for the former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley some two dozen of his top Indian-American lieutenants were present at the celebrations. Haley, the first Indian-American appointed to top Cabinet-level position, resigned last month as the US ambassador to the UN. And as a Diwali gift to the community, Trump surprised many by announcing that he has nominated his regulatory czar Neomi Jehangir Rao, to the powerful US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. Rao, 45, would replace the

Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh in the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, where he served earlier before heading to the apex court. In eight years, former president Barack Obama had appointed more than 50 Indian-Americans to key administration positions, including Raj Shah as United States Agency for International Development administrator; Nisha Desai Biswal as the Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia and Richard Verma as the US Ambassador to India. By appointing more than two dozen Indian-Americans in key administrative positions, Trump seems to be on the track to breaking the record set by his predecessor Obama.

US President celebrates Diwali

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump celebrated Diwali at a White House ceremony but surprisingly omitted mentioning Hindus - the largest community in the world that celebrate the festival of lights - in his tweets, drawing severe criticism from netizens forcing him to redo his tweet.

Trump hosted Diwali celebrations in the historic Roosevelt Room of the White House which was attended by prominent Indian-Americans, Indian-origin administration and diplomatic officials.

Diwali was celebrated across the world on November 7. In his first tweet, he forgot to greet the Hindus. "Today, we gathered for

Diwali, a holiday observed by Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains throughout the United States & around the world. Hundreds of millions of people have gathered with family & friends to light the Diya and to mark the beginning of a New Year," Trump said in a tweet as he posted along with a YouTube link of the White House event.

The alert netizens were quick in identifying that he missed greeting the 'Hindus'. "It is a major Hindu holiday," CNN's Congressional correspondent Manu Raju said in a tweet. Trump soon deleted his first tweet, and replaced it with another one. "Today, we gathered for Diwali, a holiday observed by Buddhists, Sikhs,

and Jains throughout the United States & around the world. Hundreds of millions of people have gathered with family & friends to light the Diya and to mark the beginning of a New Year," Trump said in his second tweet which again missed mentioning the Hindus.

"So after initially not including Hindus in his first Diwali tweet, Trump deletes that tweet and reposts another message. And still leaves out Hindus...," Raju said, as he was joined by several others on the social media. Soon, the president deleted his second tweet and came up with the third one. "It was my great honour to host a celebration of Diwali, the Hindu Festival

of Lights, in the Roosevelt Room at the @WhiteHouse this afternoon. Very, very special people!" Trump said in his third tweet. The White House did not respond to questions on the series of tweets by the president and the criticism that he did not mention the Hindus in his tweets. "President Trump leaves out Hindus in Diwali tweets," Time magazine said in an article. Trump had also mentioned Hindus in his November 7 Diwali greetings. "Known as the Festival of lights, Diwali is a joyous and spiritual time marked by many Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists," the president had said in his Diwali greetings last week.

'Neomi Rao to replace Kavanaugh on DC Circuit'

Washington (PTI): Prominent Indian-American lawyer Neomi Rao has been nominated by US President Donald Trump to fill Justice Brett Kavanaugh's seat on the powerful DC Circuit Court of Appeals.

Trump during Diwali celebrations on Tuesday at the historic Roosevelt Room of the White House announced the nomination of the 45-year-old regulatory czar for the DC Circuit which is considered next to the US Supreme Court.

And, if confirmed by the Senate, Rao, who is currently administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), would be the second Indian-American judge in this powerful court after judge Sree Srinivasan, who was appointed during the previous Obama regime. "She is going to be fantastic. Great person," Trump said on his nominee. Rao would fill the seat vacated by Supreme Court Justice Kavanaugh, who served on the appeals court for 12 years. A formal announcement on her nomination is expected to be made by the White House on Wednesday.

"I just nominated Rao to be on the DC circuit court of appeals, the seat of Justice Brett Kavanaugh. That could be a big story," Trump announced.

22.5 mn Pak children out of school, mainly girls: Report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Nearly 22.5 million children in Pakistan are out of school, the majority of them girls, according to a report by an international rights group. The report titled - 'Shall I feed my daughter or educate her: Barriers to girls' education in Pakistan' - by Human Rights Watch (HRW) was issued this week and is available on the website of the group. "The new government, elected in July 2018, stated in their manifesto that nearly 22.5 million children are out of school. Girls are particularly affected," it said. "Thirty-two per cent of primary school-age girls are out of school in Pakistan, compared to 21 per cent of boys. By grade six, 59 per cent of girls are out of school, versus 49 per cent of boys."

Only 13 per cent of girls are still in school by ninth grade. Both boys and girls are missing out on education in unacceptable numbers, but girls are worst affected," it said.

It said that as of 2017 Pakistan was spending less than 2.8 per cent of its gross domestic product on education which is below the recommended four to six per cent. "Political instability, disproportionate influence on governance by security forces, repression of civil society and the media, violent insurgency, and escalating ethnic and religious tensions all poison Pakistan's current social landscape. These forces distract from



the government's obligation to deliver essential services like education - and girls lose out the most," said the report.

It said Pakistan was described as "among the world's worst performing countries in education" at the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education and Development. "The Pakistan government's failure to educate children is having a devastating impact on millions of girls," said HRW women's rights director, Liesl Gerntholtz, in a press release. "Many of the girls we interviewed are desperate to study, but instead are growing up without the education that would help them have options for their future," she said. HRW interviewed 209 people for the report in all four provinces, most of them girls who have never attended school or were unable to complete their education.

It said there were several barriers inside the schools and outside which the girls have to face in order to get education.

Pence takes Suu Kyi to task over Myanmar treatment of Rohingyas



US Vice-President Mike Pence, right, meets Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Singapore on Wednesday.

AFP ■ SINGAPORE

The violence which drove 700,000 Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar into Bangladesh was "without excuse," US Vice President Mike Pence told Aung San Suu Kyi in stinging comments on a summit sidelines on Wednesday. Suu Kyi has seen her reputation as a rights defender destroyed by her refusal to speak up for the Rohingya, a stateless group reviled in Buddhist-majority Myanmar. Pence added to the pressure on Suu Kyi, who this week has had an Amnesty International honour revoked and faced sharp words from Malaysia's premier at a usually tame meeting of Southeast nations in Singapore.

Sitting next to Suu Kyi, Pence - who has joined the summit for bilateral meetings

- condemned the "violence and persecution" against the Rohingya as "without excuse".

Then in a front-on challenge to Myanmar's civilian leader, Pence said he was "anxious to hear about the progress" being made to hold the perpetrators accountable. A crackdown led by Myanmar's army last year sparked an exodus of the Muslim minority into neighbouring Bangladesh, taking with them accounts of atrocities - rape, murder and arson of their villages. UN investigators say the army's actions amounted to genocide.

On Thursday a long-delayed - and heavily criticised - plan to repatriate Rohingya was set to begin, despite dire warnings their safety will be in jeopardy if forced to return to Myanmar. The Rohingya crisis

has decimated Myanmar's reputation among large sections of an international community which has supported its transition from outright military rule. Suu Kyi has no power over the army, which retains autonomy over all security matters.

But she has come under fire for not doing more to speak out against the generals' excesses. She has also been criticised for her failure to speak up for two Reuters reporters jailed for seven years for breaching a colonial-era state secrets act after reporting on the extrajudicial killing of 10 Rohingya men during a military crackdown last year. The sentence prompted a storm of global outcry as an assault on freedom of speech, casting doubt on the direction and depth of Myanmar reforms.

Britain's Prince Charles celebrates 70th birthday

AFP ■ LONDON

Britain's Prince Charles, who has been heir to the throne for more than six decades, celebrates his 70th birthday with a tea party and a banquet in Buckingham Palace on Wednesday. In two official photographs released to mark the Prince of Wales's milestone, Charles is shown surrounded by his wife Camilla, two sons William and Harry and three grandchildren.

A fourth grandchild is on the way after Prince Harry's wife Meghan, an American former TV actress, announced her pregnancy following the couple's Windsor Castle wedding this year. Charles is set to attend a tea party later on Wednesday with "inspirational people" who are also turning 70 this year. In the evening, Queen Elizabeth II is holding a banquet which friends, family and European royals are expected to attend. There will be gun salutes in London and lawmakers will voice their congratulations for the king-in-waiting in parliament. The Twitter account for Clarence House, Charles's official residence, featured flying balloons and a slideshow of pictures

from throughout the prince's life to mark the occasion. Charles also edited an edition of Country Life to mark his birthday. The prince told the magazine about his fondness for red pheasant crumble pie and "groussaka" - a version of the Greek dish moussaka but with grouse instead of lamb. He also said he allowed red squirrels, which are being pushed out by American grey squirrels in Britain, to run around his home on the Queen's Balmoral estate in Scotland. The prince has spent a lifetime forging his own path during a record wait for the throne, overshadowed by public adulation for his mother.

He has battled a string of public relations headaches and accusations of being cold towards his first wife Diana as well as of interfering in political affairs. Charles sees himself as a "dissident" working against the prevailing political consensus, according to his former spin doctor Mark Bolland. The prince has been plagued by low self-esteem but has felt driven to do the right thing, Bolland said. "The trouble is, there isn't a job description so you have to rather make it up as you go along," he said.



In this handout image provided by Clarence House and taken on Sept. 5, 2018, Britain's Prince Charles poses for an official portrait to mark his 70th birthday in the gardens of Clarence House, with Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, Prince William, Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, Prince George, Princess Charlotte, Prince Louis, Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, in London, England.

'Comments on FB alcohol ads encourage youngsters to drink'

Washington (PTI): Alcohol advertisements on social media sites such as Facebook can encourage young adults to drink, especially if such content is followed by positive comments from users, a study has found. Social media users who view alcohol ads are also more likely to "Like" or "Share" an ad when it has pro-drinking comments, according to the study published in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs.

"There is more information on social media than just a post or a message. We are exposed to how other users respond to a post, and it is those responses that can influence your desire to drink," said Jonathan Noel, from University of Connecticut in the US. "Our findings suggest that comments left by



other social media users may either reinforce or negate the message from a post," said Noel.

With hundreds of corporate-sponsored alcohol ads on social

media sites, plus millions of views of alcohol ads on YouTube, alcohol companies have expanded platforms to reach young consumers. The study suggests that the industry needs to improve the voluntary self-regulatory system that governs its advertising, possibly by limiting or banning comments on social media advertising. The research involved 120 young adults, ages 21 to 24, living in the US. Each participant viewed four online ads posted on Facebook.

The researchers then chose certain comments that would appear with the ads - either pro-drinking comments that had accompanied that ad online or anti-drinking comments. The ads also varied on whether there were a high number

of Likes, Shares, or Comments. After the participants viewed each advertisement, they were asked whether they thought the ad would increase the desire to drink. The participants also said whether they would Like or Share the ad they viewed. The lowest desire to drink was found after participants were exposed to ads with anti-drinking comments plus a high "user engagement" (ie Likes/Shares/Comments).

The desire to drink was 3.5 times higher after participants saw an ad with pro-drinking comments and high user engagement. Further, compared with the ads with anti-drinking comments, ads with pro-drinking comments left participants more than twice as likely to say they would Like or Share the ad. "It's fas-

inating really. Not only might these comments influence the desire to drink, but they also can increase the reach and virality of the original message," said Noel.

Overall, though, it wasn't the number of Likes, Shares, and Comments that appeared to influence the participants but the type of comments, researchers said.

"Heavy alcohol users and those who are alcohol dependent may be the most susceptible to the potential effects of pro-drinking comments," the researchers write. The ads, coupled with positive comments about drinking, may serve as alcohol cues "and an increased desire to drink after exposure to alcohol cues may predict relapse after treatment for alcoholism."

SL's Parl passes no-confidence vote against PM Rajapaksa

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Parliament on Wednesday passed a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa who was installed by President Maithripala Sirisena in a controversial move, a day after the Supreme Court overturned the presidential decree to dissolve Parliament and hold snap polls. The Parliament on Wednesday met for the first time since October 26, when President Sirisena sacked prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, installed Rajapaksa in his place and suspended the Parliament plunging the island nation into a constitutional crisis. Parliament Speaker Karu Jayasuriya announced that a majority of the 225-member assembly supported the no-confidence motion against Rajapaksa, the former strongman.

"According to the voice, I recognise that the government has no majority," Jayasuriya announced in the House as Rajapaksa supporters protested. He gave the ruling after the no-confidence motion was taken for a vote. The Speaker calculated the votes based on the voices he heard as Rajapaksa supporters disrupted the proceedings.

Jayasuriya later adjourned the House until 10 am Thursday. Speaker Jayasuriya has officially written to President Sirisena asking him to take further constitutional action on the issue. A copy of the motion with 122 signatures of Parliamentarians, who have expressed lack of confidence in Prime Minister Rajapaksa and his cabinet, has been sent to President Sirisena.

The Speaker's office said that the Speaker has requested the President to take the next step under the Constitution.

Speaking after the no-trust vote, ousted prime minister Wickremesinghe claimed that his government had been restored after extra constitutional action by President Sirisena to sack him as the premier.

"We will now take steps to ensure that the government in place before October 26 will continue. I wish to inform all government servants and police

China hopes for political stability in Lanka

Beijing (PTI): A concerned China today expressed hope that Sri Lanka, where it has made huge investments, would see the return of stability as pro-Beijing Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was voted out by a no-confidence motion in Parliament.

Asked about the Sri Lankan Parliament passing a resolution of no-confidence against Rajapaksa after the nation's Supreme Court issued a stay order against President Maithripala Sirisena's order to dissolve the national legislature, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said here that Beijing is closely following the evolving situation in Sri Lanka. "China is a traditional friendly neighbour of Sri Lanka. We are closely following the situation unfolding there," she said. "We hope Sri Lanka will see stability and we believe that parties have the



Newly appointed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, center, with supporting members argues with other lawmakers before walking out from the parliament chamber, in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Tuesday. AP

wisdom and capability to deal with the situation," she said.

China has high stakes in Sri Lanka since it invested over USD eight billion in the island, including the Hambantota port and the Colombo port project, during the previous tenure of Rajapaksa as presi-

dent who is widely regarded as pro-China. Sirisena's government subsequently handed over Hambantota port on a 99-year lease to China in a USD 1.1 billion debt swap deal raising concerns in India as Beijing stepped up its presence in the Indian Ocean.

that you should not carry out illegal orders from the purported government that has failed to demonstrate the confidence of the people," he said. Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) Deputy Leader Sajith Premadasa told reporters that the Government headed by Rajapaksa clearly lost the floor test.

He said Prime Minister Rajapaksa must now step down as he does not have majority support in Parliament. However, Dinesh Gunawardena and Vasudeva Nanayakkara, both Rajapaksa's senior aides, said Speaker's action was illegal. Housing Minister Wimal Weerawansa said the floor test in Parliament was illegal and so Rajapaksa will continue as Prime Minister, further deepening the political crisis that has paralysed the government for nearly three weeks.

The Parliament session on Wednesday morning comes a day after the Supreme Court on Tuesday overturned President Sirisena's controversial decision to dissolve Parliament and halted the preparations for snap polls on January 5. In its ruling,

the apex court had said Sirisena's dissolution of Parliament will be suspended until December 7 and it will consider all the petitions filed on the President's decision next month before giving a final ruling.

After the court verdict, Speaker Jayasuriya summoned Parliament's session for Wednesday morning. Sirisena had dissolved Parliament after it became clear that he lacked support from lawmakers to install Rajapaksa as the new Prime Minister following his sacking of Wickremesinghe as premier. While sacking prime minister Wickremesinghe, president Sirisena had also suspended Parliament till November 16. He, however, advanced the convening of the House to November 14 amid international and domestic pressure against the move.

Major political parties, including the United National Party and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and an election commission member Ratnajeewan Hoole, on Monday dragged Sirisena to the Supreme Court, challenging his decision by fil-

ing fundamental rights petitions against the move, which they said violated the Constitution. Sirisena dissolved Parliament last week, almost 20 months before its term was to end, and ordered snap election on January 5, plunging the country's into an unprecedented political and constitutional crises.

Wickremesinghe has maintained that his sacking by Sirisena was unconstitutional and illegal and he was still the prime minister. He had demanded that Parliament be convened to hold a vote among the lawmakers to decide who enjoyed majority support in Parliament to be the Prime Minister. As pressure grew and both sides claimed they had the numbers, the President dissolved Parliament and called for elections.

Rajapaksa needed the support of minimum 113 parliamentarians in the 225-member House to prove his majority. Sirisena on Sunday stoutly defended his move to dissolve Parliament, saying it was taken to prevent clashes among rival lawmakers.

'No plans to grant MFN status to India'

PTI ■ LAHORE

The Pakistan government has said it has "no immediate plans" to grant Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India. Asked whether the government was considering granting MFN status to India and that Prime Minister Imran Khan was keen to hold peace talks with the Indian government, Adviser to the Prime Minister for Commerce, Textile, Industry and Investments, Abdul Razak Dawood said, "No such plans at the moment." "At present we have no immediate plans to grant MFN status to India," he said here at an event on Tuesday. However, he said Pakistan is working out free trade agree-



ments with different countries, especially China, and hopes to complete the second FTA with China by June, 2019. Pakistan is yet to award the MFN status to India and it maintains a negative list of 1,209 items which are not permitted to be imported

from India. As per a World Trade Organisation rule, every member of WTO is required to accord this status to other member countries.

India has already granted this status to all WTO members,

including Pakistan.

Under the MFN status, a WTO member country is obliged to treat other trading nations in a non-discriminatory manner, especially with regard to customs duty and other levies, but Pakistan is yet to transition fully to MFN status for India. Pakistan allows only 137 products to be exported from India through the Wagah border land route.

Bilateral trade between the two countries stood at USD 2.28 billion in 2016-17.

India mainly exports cotton, dyes, chemicals, vegetables and iron and steel to Pakistan while it imports fruits, cement, leather, chemicals and spices.

May set for Cabinet clash over Brexit deal

PTI ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Theresa May will face a major showdown with her Cabinet ministers on Wednesday as the UK's withdrawal agreement with the European Union enters a crucial stage. Downing Street has said that the UK and the EU have agreed an initial draft agreement on the negotiating terms for Britain's exit, the so-called divorce settlement, from the economic bloc by March next year.

Theresa May now has the tough task of convincing her deeply divided Cabinet that the agreement is the best possible outcome for Britain. "The negotiations for our departure are now in the endgame. And we are working extremely hard, through the night, to make progress on the remaining issues in the withdrawal agreement, which are significant," May had said in a speech earlier this week. "Both sides want to reach an agreement. But what we are negotiating is immensely difficult. I do not shy away from that," she said, hours before it emerged that Brussels was ready to publish a 500-page document of the withdrawal agreement once May is able to get her Cabinet on board.

On one of the most contentious aspects of the negotiations, the EU has reportedly dropped its demand for Northern Ireland to remain in the economic bloc's Customs Union as a "back stop" until a future trade deal is signed. However, Prime Minister May



A shop on Westminster Bridge in London, on Wednesday. AP

is believed to have agreed that the region can remain more closely aligned to the EU regulations in some areas than the rest of the UK. The deal will involve a two-year transition until 2021, followed by a UK-wide Customs Union "back-stop" in the event that the Irish border issue cannot be resolved during that period.

While the full details of the agreement are yet to be published, leading Brexiters and even some pro-Remain MPs of the ruling Conservative Party have called on ministers to reject the deal as unacceptable. Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), on

whom May relies for her majority in the House of Commons, has warned that the agreement could lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom.

An embattled May hosted one-on-one briefings with her ministers in Downing Street on Tuesday ahead of the full Cabinet meeting expected to last around three hours later on Wednesday. Some key pro-Brexit ministers, including international development secretary Penny Mordaunt and work and pensions secretary Esther McVey, are being named as possible members of her Cabinet who might resign in

protest and possibly even pave the way for a leadership challenge against May.

But May is thought to have won the support of five key ministers - foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt, home secretary Sajid Javid, Brexit secretary Dominic Raab, environment secretary Michael Gove, and Attorney General Geoffrey Cox. If the Cabinet ends up signing off on the deal, the European Commission is expected to publish the details of the agreement alongside a much shorter declaration on future economic and security relations, which still need to be fully thrashed out.

Firefighters battle blazes on two fronts in Calif, 50 dead

Paradise (AFP): Thousands of firefighters battled blazes in northern and southern California on Tuesday as body recovery teams searched the remains of houses and charred cars for victims of the deadliest wildfire in the history of the US state. At least 50 deaths have been reported statewide so far from the late-season wildfires, and with hundreds of people unaccounted for, the toll is likely to rise.

Most of the fatalities have been caused by the so-called "Camp Fire" in and around the town of Paradise, population 26,000, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains about 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of Sacramento. "Today an additional six human remains were recovered, which brings the total to 48. All six of those remains were located in Paradise, and they were located within homes," Sheriff Kory Honea told a news conference. Another two deaths have been reported from the "Woolsey Fire," north of Los Angeles. Paradise, which is home to many retirees and has experienced an unusually dry fall, was virtually razed to the ground by the fast-moving "Camp Fire" blaze.

Residents have recounted harrowing tales of fleeing the fires on foot with little more than the clothes on their backs. Others escaped by driving through tunnels of smoke and fire as flames licked at their vehicles on gridlocked roads



A sign hangs on a wall at the Paradise Elementary School destroyed by the Camp Fire on Tuesday. AP

dotted with abandoned cars. Melissa Schuster, a member of the Paradise town council, told ABC News that the entire town "is a toxic wasteland right now." "We have teams - you know, coroner teams - that have to go house to house and vehicle to vehicle," Schuster told ABC. The "Camp Fire," which erupted on Thursday, has ravaged 130,000 acres (50,600 hectares) of land and is 35 percent contained, according to Cal Fire.

Butte County, where the blaze is located, has seen less than an inch of rainfall in more than 30 weeks. The "Camp Fire" has destroyed more than 6,500 homes and 260 commercial properties. Battling the blaze are more than 5,600 fire personnel, some from as far away as Washington state and Texas. The "Woolsey Fire," which also began on

Thursday, has razed 97,114 acres (39,300 hectares) and has been 40 percent contained.

Cal Fire said more than 3,500 fire personnel were battling the "Woolsey Fire." "We're starting to get a handle on this fire," said Captain Brian McGrath of the Ventura County Fire Department in an online briefing. "I'm not feeling nearly the amount of wind and it's a little bit cooler this morning." The "Woolsey Fire" has destroyed 435 structures including the 100-year-old Paramount Ranch where HBO's "Westworld" and other popular television shows and movies were filmed.

The fires have forced a quarter of a million people to flee their homes and seven evacuation shelters have been set up in Butte County, three of which are already full, according to the authorities.

Trump names new US envoy to Saudi

Washington: President Donald Trump on Tuesday tapped John Abizaid, a top US general from the Iraq war who has studied the Middle East for years, as ambassador to Saudi Arabia amid growing friction between the longstanding allies. Abizaid is a fluent Arabic speaker of Lebanese Christian descent who headed US Central Command - which covers the Middle East - during the Iraq war from shortly after the US invasion in 2003 through 2007. The 67-year-old wrote his master's thesis at Harvard University about Saudi Arabia, studying how the kingdom makes its decisions on defense spending, in a paper that won acclaim in academic circles. A California native, Abizaid graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point and later won a scholarship to study in Jordan, where he honed his Arabic, which he did not speak as a child.

Trump has been slow in filling key posts amid his promises to shake up Washington. But the absence of an ambassador in Riyadh, nearly two years into his presidency, has become more glaring amid rising tensions between the countries.

Trump, who quickly forged a close relationship with Saudi Arabia upon taking office, has been forced to criticize the kingdom and its powerful crown prince, Mohammed bin



Salman, after a team from the kingdom killed a US-based critical journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Amid a US souring on the heir apparent, the United States has also curbed cooperation and demanded a halt to the Saudi-led military campaign against rebels in Yemen that has contributed to a humanitarian crisis believed to be the worst in the world.

But US pleas - made by telephone rather than in person by an ambassador - have failed to sway the Saudis. Abizaid requires confirmation from the Senate, which would appear likely as the retired four-star general has long enjoyed respect in Washington.

Shortly after taking over as CENTCOM commander, Abizaid told reporters that US forces were facing a "classical guerrilla-type campaign" from remnants of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party.

Israel defence minister says resigning after Gaza ceasefire

Jerusalem (AFP): Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman announced his resignation on Wednesday and called for early elections after a sharp disagreement over a Gaza ceasefire deal, throwing the government into turmoil. "What happened yesterday - the truce combined with the process with Hamas - is capitulating to terror. It has no other meaning," Lieberman told journalists in explaining his reasons for resigning.

"What we're doing now as a state is buying short-term quiet, with the price being severe long-term damage to national security," He added later: "We should agree on a date for elections as early as possible." Lieberman also said his party was leaving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition, leaving the premier with only a one-seat majority in parliament. Elections are not due until November 2019, but Lieberman's resignation increases the likelihood of an earlier vote. Lieberman, a security hardliner, heads the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu party, which holds five seats in the 120-seat Knesset, or parliament.

Netanyahu has defended Tuesday's ceasefire deal that ended the worst escalation between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza since a 2014 war.

India votes against UNGA draft resolution on use of death penalty

United Nations (PTI): India has voted against a UN General Assembly draft resolution on the use of death penalty, saying it goes against the statutory law of the country where an execution is carried out in the "rarest of rare" cases. The draft resolution, taken up in the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, Cultural) of the General Assembly Tuesday, was approved with a recorded vote of 123 in favour, 36 against and 30 abstentions.

India was among the countries that voted against the resolution, which would have the Assembly call on all States to respect international standards on the rights of those facing death penalty and ensure that it is not applied on the basis of discriminatory laws or as a result of discriminatory or arbitrary application of the law. First Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN Paulomi Tripathi, giving the country's explanation of vote, said the resolution sought to promote a moratorium on executions with the aim of abolishing death penalty. "My delegation has voted against the resolution as a whole, as it goes against statutory law in India," she said.

"In India, the death penalty is exercised in 'rarest of rare' cases, where the crime committed is so heinous that it shocks the conscience of the society. Indian law provides for all requisite procedural safeguards, including the right to a fair trial by an independent Court, presumption of innocence, the minimum guarantees for defence, and the right to review by a higher court," she said.

The draft resolution's passage followed an intense debate and Singapore introduced an amendment on behalf of 34 countries that reaffirmed the countries' sovereign right to develop their own legal system. The Committee then approved

this amendment by a recorded vote of 96 in favour to 73 against, with 14 abstentions. India voted in favour of this amendment.

By its terms, the Assembly would reaffirm the sovereign right of all countries to develop their own legal systems, including determining appropriate legal penalties, in accordance with their international law obligations. Tripathi said every State has the sovereign right to determine its own legal system and appropriate legal penalties and it was in this context that India voted in favour of the amendment but has voted against the resolution as a whole.

Singapore's delegate decried the draft resolutions "one-size-fits-all" approach to a delicate question, which seeks to impose a particular vision of the world onto others. The representative of Singapore said the amendment aimed to ensure respect for the diversity of views. The amendment is simple and neutral and it does not take a position on the substance of the draft resolution, nor make judgments about State policies, Singapore said. Tripathi said the Indian laws have specific provisions for commutation of death penalty in the case of pregnant women and has rulings that prohibited executions of persons with mental or intellectual disabilities, while juvenile offenders cannot be sentenced to death under any circumstances.

Death sentences in India must also be confirmed by a superior court and an accused has the right to appeal to a High Court or the Supreme Court, which has adopted guidelines on clemency and the treatment of death row prisoners, she said. Tripathi said "poverty, socio-economic, psychic compulsions, undeserved adversities in life" constituted new mitigating factors to be considered by courts in commuting a death sentence to life imprisonment.

Drinking coffee may cut diabetes risk says, Study

Berlin (PTI): Drinking about three to four cups of coffee everyday can significantly reduce the risk of developing diabetes, scientists say.

A report from the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC) highlights the potential role of coffee consumption on the reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes,

and the possible mechanisms involved. Eminent experts in diabetes gathered at a symposium hosted by ISIC in Berlin, Germany, to discuss the latest research on coffee consumption and type 2 diabetes.

Mattias Carlstrom from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden reviewed the latest scientific research on the association



between coffee consumption and type 2 diabetes risk, including his own meta-analysis of the data which looked at 30 prospective studies, with a total of 1,185,210 participants.

Professor Kjeld Hermansen from Aarhus University in Denmark explored the potential mechanistic perspectives behind the

inverse association between coffee consumption and type 2 diabetes, presenting a summary of the research that has been undertaken in this area.

The research suggests that a number of factors may be involved including an antioxidant effect, an anti-inflammatory effect, thermogenic effects or the modulation of

microbiome diversity.

The research suggested that drinking 3-4 cups of coffee per day is associated with an approximate 25 per cent lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Both caffeinated and decaffeinated coffee are associated with a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, researchers said.

INDIA, AUSTRALIA RIDE HIGH ON EDUCATION

Under the leadership of **RAVNEET PAWHA**, the Deputy Vice President (Global) and the CEO-South Asia, Deakin University, Australia, became the first international university to establish operations in India in 1994. The continued contribution of Ms Pawha towards establishing the university as a premier choice among Indian students was recently recognised at the India Australia Business Community Award (IABCA) where she was honoured with the 'Business Leader of the Year 2018' award. In an interview with **ANKITA SAXENA**, Ms Pawha shares the University's journey in India and its commitment to strengthen the India-Australia ties in the domain of education. Edited excerpts from the interview:

◆ **What does the IABCA award mean to you and the university at large?**

This award celebrates the Australia-India relationship and the contribution made by people towards strengthening the bond between the two countries. For me, this award is important because it celebrates Deakin's 25 years in India, which has been amazing from both personal and professional perspective. It is also important to celebrate the people behind the success. Be it the team at the India office or the leadership of the university, it is the passion in people that has dictated our fruitful journey.

◆ **What made Deakin University choose India for its first international office?**

The second Prime Minister of Australia, Alfred Deakin, on whom the university is named, had a vision that the Australia-India relationship is going to be very important for the two countries. Concurring with the same, Deakin, being a young and innovative university decided to embark on the journey and establish its presence in India not just to look at student recruitment but to also work with India, in India, for India. The whole idea was to engage, contribute and to exchange excellence in knowledge between the two countries.

◆ **With you at the helm of the operations, how has the 25-year long journey been so far?**

To think of the journey so far, we have to first think of India 25 years ago. The globalisation of the Indian economy and the education sector in particular was a big change. Deakin University was the first of its kind to set up an office abroad and I remember, at that time there was no understanding of the how and why. Thus, we

had to first create that understating in the market and then look at partnerships with the Indian universities. This whole process has been very interesting. We hardly understood globalisation ourselves; leave alone know its implementation in terms of curriculum, degree, decisions on infrastructure requirements and more importantly the impact on the student community. However, we have come a long way, where today, Deakin's South Asia office and its activities are often showcased as a 'case study' of successful model of engagement. We are indeed proud to be featured as a successful case study in the 'India Economic Strategy to 2035' by the Australian government. A document that charts out Australia's vision for economic partnerships in India for next 20 years.

◆ **Please elaborate on some of the partnerships in India**

Over the past two decades, Deakin has established strong strategic partnerships with premier institutions in India, both with industry and academia. The university provides strategic inputs in teaching and learning programs besides offering various options for studies through semester abroad programs, research, internships, mobility and in-country capacity building programs. We have partnered with institutions in India such as All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), IIT Madras, National Skills Development Council (NSDC), CII, ISB, Centurion University, CEPT University, NID, VIT University, IITs, IISC, Symbiosis International University, University of Mumbai, Hyderabad University and Amity University. Our strategic collaborations to engage in areas of health science, biotechnology and sports include those with The Energy and Resources



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGING WITH THE GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIA IN INDIA, HAS PUT DEAKIN UNIVERSITY, AUSTRALIA, IN THE SPOTLIGHT AS A PLATFORM FOR KNOWLEDGE BUILDING AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Institute (TERI), Indian Premier League team—Rajasthan Royals, Max Healthcare, NIMHANS and Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF). We also run various Student Mobility Programs in

collaboration with some of these partners under which, each year, about 200 Deakin students travel to engage in several activities.

◆ **What are some of Deakin's initiatives to encourage research in India and Australia?**

We work closely with premier academic institutions, government bodies, key industry bodies to engage in cutting-edge research in community based topics in the areas of science, material, manufacturing, management, social sciences and CSR. The Deakin India Research Initiative (DIRI) is at the helm of our commitment to build a robust knowledge cohort. Currently, DIRI involves over 80 projects over 20 organisations across India. The establishment of research centres of excellences like the TERI Deakin Nanobiotechnology Centre, the TOBY Playpad Laboratory and the Centre of Excellence in Advanced Materials with IIT Madras, have been some of the key milestones.

◆ **Does the university offer scholarships to Indian students to study at Deakin? Are there any specific student engagement activities?**

In a first of its kind initiative, Deakin has established a scholarship program—'Changing Lives', with NDTV, which offers 100 per cent scholarship on tuition fee. For research programs, the Indian government offers 'Endeavour Scholarships' where the government would spend on students to spend time at Deakin. For the undergraduate and postgraduate students, Deakin offers meritorious scholarships ranging from 10-25 per cent and four 100 per cent scholarships for the best in various fields. We heavily subsidise the education for Indian and South Asian students to encourage them to experience world-class facilities at Deakin University.

CORPORATE BRIEFS

AAI PARTICIPATES IN INDIA-MYANMAR BUSINESS FORUM

The Airports Authority of India (AAI), recently participated in the 'India Myanmar Business Forum' organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) with a focus on bilateral trade and investments in the Rakhine state of Myanmar at the India Habitat Centre in Delhi. AAI officials from business development team headed by the JGM, S D Tiwari along with the AGM, Amit Kumar, attended the event.



NLCIL DECLARES FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR Q2



The NLCIL declared its financial results for the quarter and half year, ended on September 30 where the total revenue of the company stood at ₹3,722.18 Cr as against ₹4,459.09 Cr in the corresponding period of the previous year. For this period, the profit was recorded at ₹647.35 Cr as compared to ₹642.97 Cr earlier, registering a marginal growth. The lignite production stood at 99.41 LT as compared to 101.26 LT previously, and the lignite sale was 15.82 LT as against 6.26 LT in the corresponding period of the previous year. The power sale in this quarter was 8,116.98 MU as against 8,617.76 MU in the corresponding period last year.

MMTC'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVES

The Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation of India (MMTC), declared its financial results for the half year ended on September 30. The company has achieved revenue from operations of ₹12,511 crore as against ₹9,969 crore during the corresponding period last year, registering a growth of 26 per cent over the same period last year on YOY basis. The MMTC has posted a net profit of ₹41.62 crore during the period as compared to ₹29.76 crore during the same period last year, registering an increase of 40 per cent.

ITF BEGINS IN DELHI

The 38th edition of the India International Trade Fair was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State for Culture and Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Dr Mahesh Sharma, at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi in the presence of the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, C R Chaudhary, the chairman of Khadi Gramodyog Board, Government of Jharkhand, Sanjay Seth, the Charge d'affaires, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, HE Mohammad Khairullah Azad, Economic Councillor, Charge d'affaires, Embassy of Nepal, Tirath Rakesh Poudel, the chairman-cum-managing director of ITPO, L C Goyal and the executive director of ITPO, Deepak Kumar.



Lt Gen D Anbu, VCOAS, pays homage to Lance Naik Antony Sebastian KM, who fell to the enemy action during the ceasefire violation along the Line of Control in Poonch on November 12. The mortal remains of the fallen soldier being brought for wreath laying in Palam Technical Area, New Delhi.



MYOXY TO COMBAT HEAVY AIR POLLUTION

With pollution levels in Delhi at an all time high, MyOxy by Gupta Oxygen Private Limited, is an endeavour to help people in the city realise the benefits of fresh oxygen. It is the first and only OXYGEN I.P. in portable cans in India approved by FDA and manufactured under a valid drug license, strictly adhering to the Indian pharmacopoeia standards and measuring 5.9 liters at 1200 kilopascal. MyOxy is a seamless, aluminum, disposable can with inbuilt mask, allowing up to 100-150 inhalations per can and will be available at leading pharmacies including the Apollo pharmacy, medical stores across Delhi/NCR and online pharmacies such as NetMeds. Suitable for all age groups, MyOxy is fit for use by children, expecting and lactating mothers and elderly people. It is available at a competitive price of ₹399 per can.



NSIC PROMOTES ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The NSIC-Technical Services Centre (Howrah) has commenced a six weeks residential Entrepreneurship Development Training Program (EDTP) for 29 trainees from Bangladesh. The programme intends to drive the participants towards entrepreneurship, give an opportunity to acquire skills on basic technical trades and gain exposure in all areas of business operations such as business skill development, identification of appropriate technology, hands on experience on working projects like soya milk extraction, bakery, sock knitting, fashion designing and so on.



MOU TO EXPAND STRATEGIC ENERGY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND UAE

The Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPR) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Abu Dhabi with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) to explore the possibility of storing ADNOC crude oil at ISPR's underground oil storage facility at Padur in Karnataka. Under the MoU, ADNOC is expected to store crude in compartments at Padur. The MoU was signed by the director of marketing for sales and trading at ADNOC, Abdulla Salem Al Dhaheri, and the CEO and MD of ISPR, HPS Ahuja, on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC).

KATHAKAR FROM NOV 16-18

The 8th edition of India's only oral storytelling festival, involving raconteurs from all over the world—Kathakar—is going to be hosted from November 16-18, at the Indira Gandhi Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi. The three-day event, organised by IGNCA in collaboration with Nivesh, will witness immersive storytelling sessions focusing on India's rare art forms as well as native tales from Africa, the UK, Greece, Poland, Russia and Iran. This year, the festival will be inaugurated by Sadhguru, the founder of the Isha Foundation along with the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijju.



Dance with the deer in Manipur

An annual affair, the Manipur Sangai Festival is back this year from November 21 to 30. The Manipur Tourism Corporation is aggressively promoting the festival in various parts of the country to increase awareness about the significance of this grand extravaganza and eventually drive tourist traffic to the state



An unexplored tourism paradise—Manipur, has a lot to offer to every tourist to the state. This year, the state is back with its grandest festival—Manipur Sangai Festival—to celebrate the rich culture, heritage and culture of this pristine land.

An annual affair, the Manipur Sangai Festival is celebrated from November 21 to 30. The festival takes its name from the state's unique, shy and gentle brow-antlered, Sangai deer or the dancing deer. The Sangai deer is found only in Manipur's floating Keibul Lamjao National Park at the Loktak Lake. The festival has great profundity in showcasing its rich art and cultural heritage and celebrating the various ethnic diversities in Manipur.

The chairman of the Tourism Corporation of Manipur Limited, Dr Sapam Ranjan, informed that the festival will be inaugurated at Imphal on November 21. Two other districts of the state—Bishnupur and Senapati, will also play host to the festival and have a line-up of events ranging from half-marathons, water sports and trekking along with other adventure activities. He was speaking at the curtain-raiser of the festival which was recently organised at the Select CityWalk mall at Saket in New Delhi.



The member of parliament and Padma Bhushan awardee Mary Kom, the former boxing world champion and Arjuna awardee Sarita Laishram, along with the former Indian football team captain P Kenedy Singh, marked their presence at the event to promote the festival in the capital. Officials from Manipur Tourism along with its

stakeholders shared updates on the preparations for the largest tourism festival of the state.

"Taking the festival as an opportunity, we are here to connect with our potential stakeholders in the capital city of the country. We wish to invite them to come to our state and enjoy our cultural extravaganza. Manipur holds great many

surprises for every visitor. The profound natural beauty of the state and the unique attractions that we have, like the floating national park of Keibul Lamjao and Sangai are found nowhere else in the world," said Ranjan.

A variety of dance forms of over 34 recognised tribes of Manipur will be the special attraction of this mega tourism event. The main venue of the festival at Hapta Kangiebung, Imphal, entertains visitors with its mesmerising performances of renowned artists from all over the world every evening. The famous Rass Leela dance of Manipur is a must watch amongst the variety of performances by folk dance artists.

"Manipur receives the maximum number of visitors during this time of the year when

we celebrate our biggest tourism festival. The curtain raiser for this festival is organised in Delhi to create awareness amongst potential visitors about the state's offerings as a tourist destination. Manipur is largely unexplored and offers huge opportunities for adventure, culture and rural tourism aficionados," said the tourism director of the state government W Iboh Singh.

The director further added, "Our state presents huge opportunities for adventure tourism and we are exploring opportunities to associate with domestic and international adventure tourism associations. It is the right time for us to inform travellers in the region that our side is ready to welcome them to the Manipur Sangai Festival. The state is considered one of the safest state for women travellers. It has a women's only market where many businesswomen run their small vegetable stalls till late at night."

Started in 2010, the festival has grown by leaps and bounds over the years and has become a platform to boost tourist inflow. The domestic tourist inflow during 2010-11 was recorded at 116,652 which increased to 1,64,483 in 2017-18. Similarly, there has been a manifold increase in foreign tourist figures to the state from 431 in 2010-11 to 3,787 in 2017-18.



PALLADIUM HOTEL' 1ST HOTEL IN COSTA DEL SOL

Spain's famous 'sun coast' and a world-renowned tourist destination of Costa del Sol, is set to welcome a gorgeous new beachfront property—the Palladium Hotel Costa del Sol by the Spanish leading chain-Palladium Hotel Group. Slated to open doors in July 2019, the hotel is the group's first outpost in Spain's Costa del Sol region. The four-star establishment with 330 bright and spacious rooms, will offer spectacular views of the Mediterranean, adopting a contemporary and stylish look and feel. The new hotel will be a mere 20 minutes away from the Malaga airport.

Trend Blazer

Ileana denies quitting Tollywood

Actress ILEANA D'CRUZ, who has made a comeback to the Telugu industry after six years with Sreenu Vatta's *Amar Akbar Anthony*, said that she never quit her career in the south to build one in Bollywood. "People have always had misconceptions about my career. After I signed *Barfi*, I was shocked to read reports that I have quit Telugu cinema for Bollywood. These were baseless allegations and it's time to put them to rest. Why will I give up an industry which has given me an identity," Ileana asked. "It's just that I was getting really good work in Bollywood that I didn't have time for Telugu films," she added. Ileana said that she wants to do films that will be remembered for a long time.



'With the way content is evolving and compelling stories are coming out, there's a great need for stories of and about stronger women. We have

incredible women heroes from the Army and Navy who have done incredible acts in their careers.' —Yami Gautam



Filmmaker ANAND KUMAR, known for directing films like *Delhi Heights* (2007) and *Zila Ghaziabad* (2013), has conceptualised a film around India's ex-captain and football sensation *Bhaichung Bhutia*. He is currently in the process of finalising a director and lead actor for the film. The film's idea hit Anand during this year's football World Cup that was held in Russia. "I'm honoured that people feel my journey is worth capturing to be shown on the big screen. I want my biopic to be close to reality. I am certain that Anand will do justice to my story," said Bhutia.

Pharrell angers Palestinians

Singer PHARRELL WILLIAMS has been bombarded with furious messages on social media after performing at a benefit gig for Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) personnel earlier this month. At the event, Williams performed his number *Happy* giving a speech calling for an end to fighting. However, his presence has angered activists who object to the IDF's actions in the long-running Israel-Palestine conflict. "Dear Pharrell, you contributed in raising \$60 million to a nasty army that has killed hundreds of thousands of my people," a Palestinian campaigner wrote on Twitter. Many accused him of hypocrisy as he had tried to ban US President Trump from playing *Happy* at rallies.



Deep Veer official

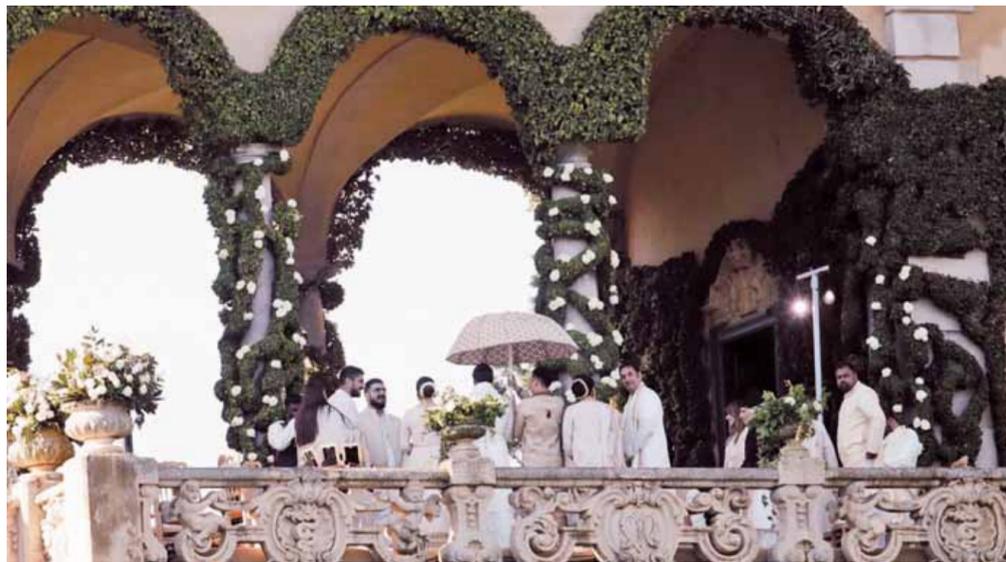
Heavy security shrouds actors' intimate Italian wedding at Lake Como. By TEAM VIVA

After months of speculation, a royal tenor and well-guarded info corridors and spaces, Bollywood actors Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone made vows to each other at a dream-like wedding in Italy's Lake Como with a traditional Konkani ceremony. This will be followed by a Sindh ceremony on November 15.

The wedding took place at the Villa Del Belbianello with only intimate friends and family around. Both Ranveer and Deepika chose Sabyasachi white and gold *Kanjevaram* creations, she a sari, he possibly a *kurtia* or *sherwani*. Both will go for colour at the Sindh rituals, Deepika in bright red and gold to be precise.

Shrouded in privacy, it was a storytellers' day of how the couple were truly magical. As per insider reports, the couple have done away with the idea of gifts and trousseaus, asking their guests to donate it to Deepika's NGO, the Live, Love, Laugh Foundation. Ranveer Singh reportedly went down on his knees to ask for Deepika's hand on the day of *mehendi*, during which they wore colour-coordinated clothes. He also made an emotional speech professing his love for Deepika which made her all teary-eyed. Ranveer then hugged Deepika and the couple exchanged rings soon after. The ring ceremony was attended by 40 guests, and this was followed by a sit-down dinner. There was also Bollywood music to which the guests grooved to at the party which followed. Ranveer apparently performed to his song *Tu Ne Maari Entry..* from the film *Gunday*. Guests surprised them with a mash-up of instrumentals of songs from the duo's films. Ranveer even reportedly strung up their private pictures as a video story.

The *mandap* was done up in white while the massive villa was



Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh at Lake Como's Villa Del Belbianello

AS PER REPORTS, THE COUPLE HAVE DONE AWAY WITH THE IDEA OF GIFTS AND TROUSSEAUS, ASKING THEIR GUESTS TO DONATE IT TO DEEPIKA'S NGO



A file photo

THE MANDAP WAS DONE UP IN WHITE WHILE THE MASSIVE VILLA WAS DECORATED BY MORE THAN 10 FLORISTS FROM ANOTHER SECTION OF ITALY

decorated by more than 10 florists from another section of Italy. The wedding ceremony ended on Wednesday afternoon and was followed by a lunch that would include Indian cuisine. The couple spared no expense and had reportedly flown in Swiss chefs for their wedding cake and desserts.

The villa was wrapped up in tight security to stop paparazzi and the guests were also told about a no-picture policy. So there were no drones, the local boatmen were all paid to not ply other tourists and river patrol was in full swing, the waterway being the preferred mode of transport. Guests were also given identity bands. Invites had QR codes which had to be scanned to enter.

Right after the news of their wedding was announced, their Wikipedia bios were updated to show spouse names.

According to reports, the *sangeet* and *mehendi* rituals, which took place before the engagement, were held on CastalDiva Resort and Villa d'Este, which are close to the wedding venue. The *mehendi* ceremony was followed by a dinner with the family.

At the *sangeet* ceremony, it was reported that Ranveer entered to his *Gunday* song, *Tune Maari Entryyaan*. Singers Harshdeep Kaur and Shubha Mudgal performed at the *mehendi* event. The A-list couple will have two receptions, one in Bengaluru on November 21 and another in Mumbai on November 28. Bollywood congratulated the couple with Nimrat Kaur tweeting, "Huge congratulations @deepikapadukone and @RanveerOfficial!! Here's to the blissful ever after of every step you walk together..." while Karan Johar tweeted "Such a stunning gorgeous and beautiful couple!!! Nazar utar lo! @deepikapadukone and @RanveerOfficial!! Badhai ho!!! Love you both!!! Here's to a lifetime of love and joy!"

Sex education not on agenda

Only one-third of parents with older kids (15-17 years) claimed to be talking to them about it. By TEAM VIVA

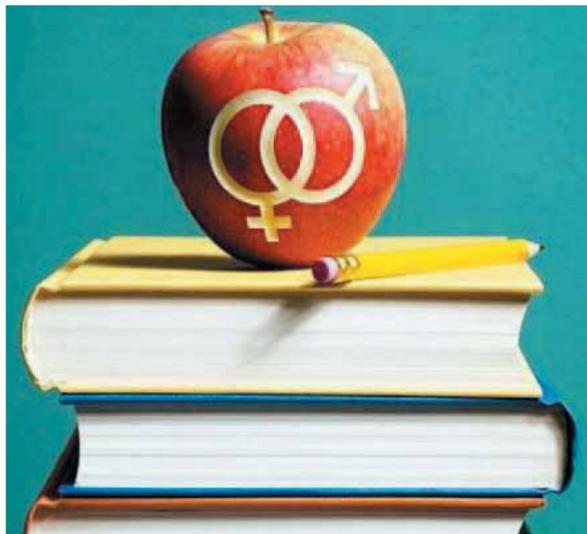
Children's Day may well be celebrated every year on November 14 to commemorate Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru's birth anniversary and increase awareness of rights, care and education of children. But a survey this year shows that we may have well fallen short when it comes to parenting and schooling them about a subject that is sensitive and the knowledge of which would prepare them to face a world of predatory exploitation, that of sex.

A study was conducted across various demographics to understand digital media and its behavioural impact on children recorded some interesting insights. It was found that six out of 10 parents do not talk about sex education with their children. A mere one-third of parents with older kids (15-17 years) claimed to be talking to their kids about sex education, according to a research by a market research and analysis company, Velocity MR. Only one-third of the kids' parents say are exposed to sex education at school.

Seven in every 10 kids across age groups play online games with friends around the world and nine in 10 parents of kids in the age group 6-10 years unanimously agree that the pop-ups expose their child/children to unwanted content. Approximately, one in every two children spends two-three hours daily on the internet. Six in every 10 parents agree that online games have a negative impact on their child's behaviour.

But there are more number of parents who believe that the internet helps in education of the child. As many as nine in every 10 parents believe that. "With the growing presence and usage of digital media, our younger generation has been adopting digital media exponentially. Even though social media may not be a safe place for kids, there is peer pressure for children to have an online identity," said Jasal Shah, managing director of the company. "It's shocking to see that most parents do not talk about sex education with their children. In India, according to our data, 53 per cent of children between the ages of five and 12 have been subjected to some form of sexual abuse. There are numerous misconceptions surrounding sex education in India," he added.

Gone are the days when children loved to indulge in outdoor activities. The influence of technology in the field of gaming continues to grow at a rapid pace. As computer and video games



Mobile phones have become the primary interface to access the internet for children of the current generation and with that comes access to unwanted content that cannot be always monitored

have increased exponentially in popularity over time, they have also caused drastic behavioural changes among the current generation of children. A recent online game called Blue Whale which was causing suicide among children is an example of the adverse effects of online gaming. All these shows that parents must play an active role in monitoring their children online activity.

With access to the internet through multiple points, children are learning to use the internet at a younger age. Close to 55 per cent parents say, their kids started using the internet between six and 10 years of age and three in every

five kids having access to an internet-based TV. But not all parents see the access to be detrimental. Eight of 10 parents of children aged six to 10 years are positive about TV viewing.

Mobile phones have become the primary interface to access the internet and with that comes access to unwanted content that can not be always monitored. Even though three fourth of the parents say that they have never caught their kids watching unwanted content, two third of them use measures to restrict their internet access.

Parents of young kids (six-10 years) tend to monitor their usage of the internet the most; followed by 11-14 years (nine in every 10) and 15-17 year (eight in every 10).

Access to social media has also become prolific with more than eight in every 10 kids having access and using it for maximum of about 3 hours daily. Eight in every 10 parents discuss the usage and dangers of social media with their kids and nine in every 10 of the parents with minor kids with access to social media monitor their social media usage.

The research was conducted on a sample size of 2,268 covering prominent Indian metros including Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, and Pune.

As Russian illusionist ALEXANDER MAGU performs in India, he tells CHAHAK MITTAL how it's all about playing with the mind and pushing its limits



Inside track to tricks

Be it swallowing a 40-centimetre sword through peristalsis, taking rabbits out of a hat, spreading cards on the table and hypnotising the audience to pick the one that the mastermind had already chosen or probably cutting a man into two pieces in a rectangular box and joining him back to perfect shape... In a magician's world miracles are nothing but illusions.

Illusionist Alexander Magu makes a pit stop in India for the second time to stun audience and share stories of what drove him in the first place to play with the human mind. He narrates his story of how as a 17-year-old boy growing up in St Petersburg, he went crazy over a trick his friend once performed and decided to never return from this winding path of wizardry.

"It isn't a profession very highly preferred or chosen. It's all about ideas, imagination and a story-telling capacity to hold the audience," he told us. The initial years were a struggle for Magu whose parents were reluctant about his career choice. Had it not been for magic, he would "have been working in the Russian Railways."

So is it only about playing pranks that could amuse people? "No," he says. "It takes a lot of training and practice to gain expertise in an act. And it is not magic, it is just a play of psychology and mind-counselling techniques."

Today, Magu loves his job that not only lets him explore the world but also "lets me explore the human mind and its numerous possibilities. The beauty of the human mind is that no matter how fearless it might condition itself to be, it is as fearful, unbelievable yet believable. It's amazing how certain things can amaze the mind." He hugely derives inspiration from the masterminds Derren Brown, David Blaine and "of course, David Copperfield."

For Magu, the art is self-taught and as much about being a seeker. He believes that he is a self-made artist. He says, "I learnt from the internet, books, looking at the

other famous illusionists, TV and films. I am all by myself. I have never taken any specific education for this art. With time, I have developed my own techniques."

Magu even does subtle social messaging. While performing in one of his acts previously, he played with a cigarette and a white scarf, making it disappear and reappear at unexpected places like nostrils and wrist. In the end, the cigarette was magically lit and on his lips. The message was to make cigarettes disappear from people's lives forever. However, this moral shift took a sentimental turn when he said that real magic was all about love, friendship and family.

There was a time when magicians offered the audience a sneak peek into their orchestrated and choreographed acts just to keep the spectacle element alive. This was the reason why shows like *Criss Angel Mindfreak*, *Master of Illusions*, *Doug Henning's The Magic Show*, *Breaking the Magician's Code*, *Magi's Biggest Secrets Finally Revealed* became major TV hits. Magu, however, believes that the popularity of magic shows and pranks has still not lessened and "neither it will. It is a very special kind of act that has a lot of future. You can reinvent and push the limit to infinity."

His tricks include mind-reading, telekinesis, levitation and gravitational illusions. While all these are merely "illusions" and not "magic," he explains how an illusionist is different from a magician. "An illusionist might leave your eyes wide open and make your jaw drop but a magician can make miracles happen. That's magic," says he. From goosebumps, mind-reading, comic magic to a complete theatrical experience, Magu's show will play "scary pranks" and "play with your memory," making the impossible seem possible.

(The show will be performed from November 15 to 25, 7 pm to 9 pm, at Upstage, Roseate House, Aerocity.)

OUR FIRST STAR



India has got its first woman Michelin starred chef from Bangkok. Mumbai-born Garima Arora, who opened GAA, is an alum of Le Cordon Bleu and has

worked in Gordon Ramsay and Gagan Anand's kitchens. Anand also maintained his Michelin star in Michelin's guide to Bangkok, Phuket and Phang-nga for 2019.

FEDERER FINDS FORM; NOVAK WINS

Six-time champion Roger upsets Thiem to keep hopes alive; Djokovic eyes semis after dismissing Zverev

AFP ■ LONDON

Roger Federer staved off elimination from the ATP Finals as the six-time champion eased to a 6-2, 6-3 win over Dominic Thiem on Tuesday.

After losing his opening match at London's O2 Arena against Kei Nishikori, Federer would have crashed out if he had been beaten by Thiem.

Only once before has Federer failed to qualify from his group for the knockout rounds in his 15 previous appearances at the prestigious season-ending event.

That lone flop came 10 years ago when the Finals were held in Shanghai and Federer is still in with a chance of avoiding that ignominious fate thanks to his comfortable 66-minute dismissal of Thiem.

Bidding for a record seventh ATP Finals crown and a first in the tournament since 2011 — which would be the 100th singles title of his glittering career — world number three Federer must beat South Africa's Kevin Anderson in his last group match to make the semi-finals.

"It feels good. I am very happy that I showed a reaction after the last match," Federer said.

"Against Kei, instead of seeing things positively, I thought negatively. It was disappointing but it happens.



Roger Federer returns a shot against Dominic Thiem; (right) Novak Djokovic in action against A Zverev AP/ATP



Federer vs Anderson
Live from 1:30am IST
SONY ESPN & ESPN HD

"Today I was more positive and happy on the court. I love playing in London and I had to remind myself what a privilege it is. I hope I showed it."

Since winning his 20th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January, Federer

has been stuck in a prolonged slump by his sky-high standards.

A quarter-final exit at Wimbledon, blowing a two-set lead against Anderson, was followed by a stunning US Open last 16 defeat to Australian journeyman John

opening Finals match against Nishikori on Sunday marked the first time Federer had lost in straight sets in 46 group stage matches.

He responded to that setback by cancelling his practice session on Monday, sparking fears he was seriously hampered

by a hand injury that has troubled him since the grass-court season in June and July.

Having cut a grumpy figure during his error-strewn loss to Nishikori, Federer's spirits were lifted by this solid show, aided by Thiem's 34 unforced errors.

After missing a break point in the opening game, Federer started to find his rhythm and he landed the first break for a 2-1 lead when the world number eight sent a forehand long.

Another break followed in the seventh game as Thiem netted a tame volley as Federer won the first set with ease.

While it wasn't vintage Federer, he was doing enough to take advantage of Thiem's sloppy display as the French Open finalist double-faulted to gift a break in the opening game of the second set.

That was all the encouragement Federer needed as he cruised to the finish line.

ZVEREV IN DILEMMA

Novak Djokovic moved closer to a place in the semi-finals of the ATP Finals as the world number one dispatched Alexander Zverev 6-4, 6-1 on Wednesday.

Djokovic is chasing a sixth ATP Finals title and his first in the prestigious season-

ending event at London's O2 Arena since 2015.

In his 11th appearance at the Finals, the Serb will be guaranteed to reach the last four for the eighth time if John Isner beats Marin Cilic or if Cilic defeats Isner in three sets later on Wednesday.

Djokovic, who beat Isner in his opening group-stage match, has enjoyed a remarkable renaissance in the second half of 2018 and lifting the trophy on the banks of the River Thames would be the perfect way to finish his year.

Djokovic faces Cilic in his last group match on Friday, while Zverev, who defeated Cilic to kick off his Finals campaign, takes on Isner.

The 31-year-old was assailed by claims he had lost his hunger for success and was past his best after injury and personal issues threatened to derail his career in 2017.

But Djokovic has banished his demons in spectacular style, winning the Wimbledon and US Open titles, returning to world number one and becoming the first player to win all nine Masters 1,000 tournaments.

"I found it more difficult than in the first match against John Isner. I played well mid-way through the second set and started to swing through the ball," said Djokovic, who has suffered only two defeats in the Finals since 2012.

Gopi pleased with performance this year

Anand seals blitz title



Kidambi Srikanth in action BWF

MIXED DAY FOR SHUTTLERS

PTI ■ KOWLOON

Olympic Silver medalist P V Sindhu and Sameer Verma notched up contrasting wins on Wednesday to progress to the second round of the

Hong Kong Open World Tour Super 500 tournament.

Sindhu, seeded third, continued her consistent run as she recovered from a mid-game

slump to surpass Thailand's Nitchaon Jindapol 21-15 13-21 in the opening round which lasted a little over an hour.

It was Sindhu's fourth win over the Thai player.

Sindhu, who won three major Silver medals this season — Commonwealth Games, World Championship and Asian Games — will take on Korea's Sung Ji Hyun next.

The 23-year-old from Hyderabad has a superior 8-5 head-to-head record against the Korean.

In the men's singles, Sameer, who clinched the Swiss Open and Hyderabad Open this year, saw off another Thai Suppanyu Avihingsanon 21-17 21-14 to set up a clash with China's Olympic champion Chen Long.

However, former Singapore Open champion B Sai Praneeth was stunned by Khosit Phetpradab of Thailand in a 62-minute opener.

Praneeth had a 3-0 record against Khosit ahead of the match but it didn't matter as he went down fighting 21-16, 11-21, 15-21 to bow out of the tournament.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand termed the year gone by as a "tough" one, but expressed satisfaction that the target to do well in major events was achieved.

"Overall it's been a tough year for us. We hardly had any time for preparation. Overall we had the Commonwealth Games, the Asian Games and World Championships — the big events," Gopichand told reporters on Wednesday.

"And whatever time we had was not enough to really work end-to-end on the mistake. But having said that we still have (Kidambi) Srikanth ranked high, (P V) Sindhu ranked high.

"We have had medals at the major events, whether it's the Asian Games, CWG or World Championships. So I am happy with the performances (of the shuttlers) and looking forward to the coming year," the chief national coach explained.

Srikanth is currently ranked ninth among men in the world, while Rio Olympics Silver medalist Sindhu is ranked second among the women.

"In this year, we had the major events- Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and World Championships- and we have been successful (in those) and that was our target for this year. And I'm happy that at the end of the year they (players) are able to maintain their rankings," added Gopichand.

Another top shuttler Saina Nehwal won the CWG Gold in April defeating compatriot Sindhu in the final.

The Indian team also clinched the Gold medal in the team championship at CWG held in Gold Coast, Australia.

Gopichand also stressed that extra effort was needed to be done in all the areas.

"Every area needs work. If you look at the way Srikanth has played, he has lost to a couple of them (players) quite frequently, whether it is

(Kento) Momoto (Japan) or Chou Tien Chen (Chinese Taipei).

There have been a few losses there which have been consistent, but if you have to win the big ones, you have to beat them and you have to prepare for them, he said.

"And unfortunately we had back-to-back (tournaments), we had a week after the Asian Games, came back after two tournaments. We had another week now, so this is not enough time for the preparation and I would like to see a little longer stint," the former All England champion said.

Asked whether it was important for top shuttlers to pick and choose events, Gopichand replied, "This year was a tough one, with the Commonwealth and Asian Games. It was tough to pick. And also players in the top 15 have to play a mandatory number of event. So that makes it even more tough. It's easier said than done."

SINGLES

DILSHAN JOINS RAJAPAKSA'S PARTY

COLOMBO: Former Sri Lankan cricketer Tillakaratne Dilshan on Wednesday joined the party of Mahinda Rajapaksa, on a day when the premier's controversial government lost a no-confidence motion in Parliament. Dilshan, 42, became a member of Rajapaksa's newly-formed Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP). The former Sri Lankan captain has obtained the SLPP membership, party secretary Sagara Kariyawasam announced. Dilshan is to run for a seat in Parliament from the southwestern Kalutara district, SLPP sources said. Rajapaksa was named by President Maithripala Sirisena as prime minister in October following the shock sacking of Ranil Wickremesinghe as premier. After weeks of political turmoil in which Wickremesinghe refused to quit, Rajapaksa lost the trust vote earlier on Wednesday.

RANIERI TO RESCUE FULHAM

LONDON: Fulham appointed Italian veteran Claudio Ranieri as manager on Wednesday after sacking Slavisa Jokanovic in a bid to beat the drop from England's Premier League. Jokanovic led Fulham back into England's top flight in May 2018 but the 50-year-old Serbian has struggled to adapt to life in the Premier League. After 12 games, Fulham sit bottom of the pile with just five points and one win from 12 games. Jokanovic becomes the first managerial casualty of the season in the Premier League. Ranieri, who famously led Leicester to a fairytale Premier League title in 2016, was a free agent after being sacked by French Ligue 1 club Nantes one game before the end of last season. He will take charge of his first game in 10 days' time when Fulham welcome fellow strugglers Southampton to Craven Cottage.

ATHLETE COMMITS SUICIDE AT JLN

NEW DELHI: Palinder Chaudhary, an 18-year-old athlete who represented India at international level, committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan at the capital's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, prompting the Sports Authority of India to order a "departmental inquiry". Hailing from Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh, the athlete was brain dead by the time he was rushed to the Safdarjung Hospital, and could not be revived. "We have ordered a departmental inquiry as the incident happened in our premises. The inquiry will be headed by Secretary SAI Swarn Singh Chakra and it should be completed within a week," SAI Director General Neelam Kapur said. A senior police officer said no suicide note has been recovered and they probing the reason for such an extreme step.

CROATIA POSE MAJOR TEST FOR SPAIN

MADRID: The Spanish national team faces an important UEFA Nations League tie away in Croatia on Thursday as they look to assure that they finish on top of their qualifying group. Things looked to be progressing well for Spain coach Luis Enrique after wins in his first three games, but a shock 2-3 defeat to England in their last Nations League match has left them with work to do in Croatia. The Spanish need a win to assure they finish top of the group and the Croatians are likely to prove tougher opposition than the team they beat 6-0 in September.

Agencies

Mary eyes sixth Gold as World C'ship begins today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Celebrated boxer M C Mary Kom will aim for a historic sixth Gold at the AIBA Women's World Championships, the build up of which has been marred by a row over lone Kosovan boxer's participation and poor quality air in the national capital.

The 10th edition of the championships, set to be the biggest ever with more than 300 participants from 72 countries, is being held in the backdrop of boxing's uncertain Olympic future in the aftermath of controversial Uzbek businessman Gafur Rakhimov's election as President.

Commensurate with its status as global power in women's boxing with the third most number of medals in the history of the event, India is hosting the championships for the second time after 2006 when

Mary at World Amateur Boxing C'ships		
Gold	2002 Antalya	45kg
Gold	2005 Podolsk	46kg
Gold	2006 New Delh	46kg
Gold	2008 Ningbo City	46kg
Gold	2010 Bridgetown	48kg
Silver	2001 Scranton	48kg

the country topped the table with eight medals (4 Gold, 1 Silver, 3 Bronze).

The 10-member Indian team, which is a mix of seasoned and young boxers, is unlikely to repeat the 2006 feat but is expecting at least three medals, including a Gold.

The 35-year-old Mary Kom, who is India's biggest hope, is tied with Katie Taylor on five Gold medals and one more will make her the most successful woman boxer in history since the Irish pugilist has turned a Pro.

The 'Magnificent Mary', who will fight in the 48 kg, will also look to win her second Gold in front of the home crowd.

She has enjoyed a stellar year so far, claiming Gold medals at the Commonwealth Games, the inaugural India Open and the International Tournament in Poland.

However, the 2012 Olympics Bronze medalist is aware that the road to Gold will not be easy.

"There are boxers who are still playing in my category since 2001. I know them very well. The new boxers are tougher and smarter, they are faster. I will use my experience. The past boxers are more or less the same, I know them,"



Mary Kom trains ahead of AIBA World C'ship PTI

MARY, SARITA GET 1ST ROUND BYES

NEW DELHI: Kosovo boxer Donjeta Sadiku's chances of competing at the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship are virtually over since her name does not figure in the draw, released on Wednesday. Sadiku, who has not got a visa to travel to the national capital since India does not recognise Kosovo, was to compete in the 60kg category.

Seasoned MC Mary Kom and L Sarita Devi were among seven Indian boxers, who got first round byes even as none of the home boxers will be in action on the opening day of the event, beginning Thursday. Apart from Mary Kom (48kg) and Sarita Devi (60kg), getting the first round byes were Pinky Rani (51kg), Sonia (57kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (69 Kg), Saweety Boora (75 Kg), Bhagyabati Kachari (81 Kg) and Seema Poonia (+81kg). Manisha (54kg) and Kachari Bhagyabati (81kg) will compete with Dina Zholamyan and Irina Nociletta on November 16 and 18 respectively. Seema will clash with China's Xiaoli Yang, who also got a bye in the opening round in the +81kg.

Mary Kom, who is bidding for a historic sixth World title, will be seen in action on Sunday. She awaits winner of first round bout between American JazelleBobadilla and Algerim Kassenayeva.

PTI

Mary Kom said.

Another veteran who will be seeking her second Gold at the championships will be Mary Kom's Manipur statemate L Sarita Devi who will feature in 60kg. She has five Asian titles besides winning Gold in 2006 here.

The other eight in the team are Pinky Jangra (51 Kg), Manisha Maun (54 Kg), Sonia (57 Kg), Simranjit Kaur (64 Kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69 Kg), Saweety Boora (75 Kg), Bhagyabati Kachari (81 Kg) and Seema Poonia (+81 Kg).

The 10-day championships, which run till November 24, will feature a host of Olympic and World Championship medalists.

India eye semifinals spot in Women's World T20



PTI ■ GUYANA

Eyeing a semi-finals berth, overwhelming favourites India will have to guard against complacency when they play Ireland in their third Group B match of the ICC Women's World T20 here on Thursday.

India are on a roll having convincingly won their first two matches, including against arch-rivals Pakistan two days ago. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur declared open the tournament with her blazing hundred against New Zealand at the Providence, the same venue where India will face Ireland.

Ireland, on the other hand, have lost to both Australia and Pakistan.

India will enter the game against the Irish as overwhelming favourites but Kaur is aware that her team cannot afford to take things for granted in this mega-event.

Ireland cricket is known for its fighting abilities and taking them lightly will not be the way to go for India, with qualification to the last-four knocking on their doors.

Having eased past Pakistan a couple of days after the big win against the New Zealanders, India will nevertheless fancy their chances at the Providence.

If Kaur was the star of the opening win, the team's most experienced campaigner, Mithali Raj, showed the way in the seven-wicket win over Pakistan.

While Jemimah Rodrigues started her T20 career with a fine half-century, the likes of Smriti Mandhana and Veda Krishnamurthy will look to score some runs against Ireland.

In bowling, off-break bowler Dyalan Hemalatha and leg-spinner Poonam Yadav



India vs Ireland
Live from 8:30pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 & 1 HD

shone with 10 wickets among them so far, and the seamers will look to get going in the coming games.

SQUADS

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (capt), Smriti Mandhana, Mithali Raj, Jemimah Rodrigues, Veda Krishnamurthy, Deepti Sharma, Taniya Bhatia, Poonam Yadav, Radha Yadav, Anuja Patil, Ekta Bisht, Dayalan Hemalatha, Mansi Joshi, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy
Ireland: Laura Delany (capt), Kim Garth, Cecelia Joyce, Isobel Joyce, Shauna Kavanagh, Amy Kenealy, Gaby Lewis, Lara Maritz, Ciara Metcalfe, Lucy O'Reilly, Celeste Raack, Eimear Richardson, Clare Shillington, Rebecca Stokell, Mary Waldron.

'AUSTRALIA WILL BE BIGGER CHALLENGE FOR INDIAN PACERS'

Nehra feels tough conditions in Thunder Down Under will create obstacles for visitors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian pace attack has been a revelation this year during overseas tours but tougher conditions in Australia will make it a very challenging series for the fast bowlers, reckons former speedster Ashish Nehra.

Nehra, who was a part of the Indian squad that drew 1-1 during the 2003-04 series in Australia, felt the current attack "has the ability" to succeed but conditions will be different than what they got in England and South Africa.

"Australian team is going through a massive restructuring and this is India's best chance without doubt. We have the bowling attack to beat them. But we need to be mindful that conditions will be much tougher Down Under where the wickets will be flat and weather would be on warmer side," the 39-year-old Nehra said.

"In Australia, you will get extra bounce but there will only be lateral movement till the kookaburra seam doesn't flatten. It won't be like England where the ball swings all day. Once you get adjusted to the bounce, batsmen can hit you all day," said Nehra, who has played 17 Tests and 120 ODIs apart from 27 Twenty20 Internationals.

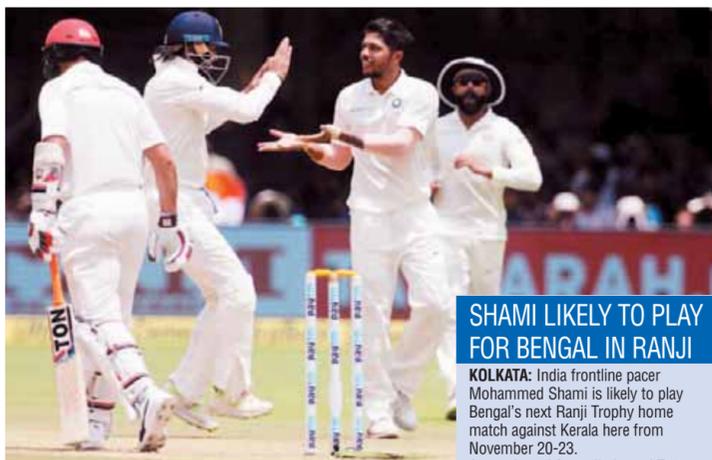
According to Nehra, it will be Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and one between Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav, who will be starting in Adelaide. "I don't see Bhuvni starting in the first Test at least. He can struggle a bit with the old kookaburra as it will neither swing or seam unlike Dukes or SG Test," Nehra opined.

Nehra said that Umesh Yadav's supreme fitness and good skill sets should make him an asset in the Australian conditions.

"I still believe that Umesh is not a finished product after eight years but someone who has incredible skill sets. He is a strong lad and the fittest among all Indian pacers. A testimony to that is his performances in Indian conditions when he can reverse the 65-70 overs old ball at a good speed. You need both skill and strength for that. He should feature sometime," Nehra said.

It will be Bumrah's first Test tour of Australia and Nehra is confident that Australians will find it difficult to play him.

"Jasprit Bumrah is much more skilful red-ball bowler than what he is perceived to be.



Umesh Yadav celebrates after dismissing opposition batsman PTI/File Picture

'Aus without Smith, Warner is like India not having Kohli, Rohit'

KOLKATA: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday said that Indian team under Virat Kohli is the "best chance to beat Australia" in absence of their premier players Steve Smith and David Warner.

Cricket Australia's board has resolved to respond to the call to lift the bans on Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft by next week, but all indications are they are not ready to bring the trio back to international cricket early.

"This is like the Indian team not having Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. It's a huge factor," Ganguly said.

"It's a great moment for Indian cricket. This is their best opportunity to beat Australia," the former India captain added. Having suffered defeats in their earlier overseas Test series in South Africa and England, the Virat Kohli and Co will salvage pride winning in Australia.

India will play four Test matches against Australia with the first five-day contest commencing in Adelaide on December 6.

The Indian pace attack had impressed in England in their 1-4 series loss and Ganguly said: "I have seen in England that they (bowlers) have taken 20 wickets in almost every Test."

Ganguly however warned the Indian team stay cautious. "But you also have to keep in mind that Australia in Australia are a different kettle of fish. Many feel that they are a weak outfit but I don't think so," Ganguly added. PTI

SHAMI LIKELY TO PLAY FOR BENGAL IN RANJI

KOLKATA: India frontline pacer Mohammed Shami is likely to play Bengal's next Ranji Trophy home match against Kerala here from November 20-23.

A member of Australia-bound Test squad, Shami will leave for the tour Down Under after playing the Ranji Trophy third round match at the Eden Gardens.

"Shami has expressed his interest to play. If he plays, it's good for the Bengal side," CAB president Sourav Ganguly said.

Bengal opened their Ranji Trophy campaign with first innings lead in Himachal and currently facing Madhya Pradesh at home.

"We had written a letter before the first match as well to play him but he had few fitness issues for which he had to undergo rehabilitation. If he plays, it's great," Ganguly added. PTI

His yorkers will come in very handy with old kookaburra. Any batsman, who has not played Bumrah before can find it difficult to counter the awkward angle that his delivery creates.

"And in England, I found out that he can now get the ball to straighten consistently after pitching. So Bumrah is not a one-dimensional bowler," he concluded.

RANJI TROPHY

UP ON VERGE OF WIN

Bhubaneswar: Uttar Pradesh needed three more wickets for the second consecutive win on the last day of their Ranji Trophy Group match against Odisha at KIIT Cricket Stadium in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. UP added 76 runs to its overnight score of 361, taking a massive lead of 181 runs. In its second innings, Odisha were struggling for 180/7 in 63.4 overs, still trailing by a run.

BRIEF SCORES:

Odisha: 256 and 180/7 (Sandeep Pattnaik 46, Shivam Mavi 3-43) UP: 437 all out (Aksh Deep Nath 159, Basant Mohanty 6-62).

SHOREY'S TON BOOST DELHI'S HOPE

New Delhi: Dhruv Shorey's fourth first-class century put Delhi firmly in sight of an outright victory against Himachal Pradesh in an opening round group B encounter. Shorey scored his fourth first-class hundred — 106 not out off 177 balls as Delhi declared their second innings at 281 for 4, leaving HP with a stiff target of 376. Earlier, Delhi dismissed HP for 223 in their first innings taking a first innings lead of 94 runs and also ensuring at least three points. At stumps on the third day, Himachal were 44 for 1 with their best bet Prashant Chopra being dismissed by Ishant Sharma (1/14 in 5 overs). With 332 needed on the final day, it will be more about how Himachal survive against left-arm spin duo of Vikas Mishra and Varun Sood on a fourth day track with considerable wear and tear. In the morning, after quickly disposing off the remaining two HP batsmen for an addition of seven runs, Delhi got off to a brisk start courtesy Gautam Gambhir (49, 52 balls) and Hiten Dalal (25, 32 balls), who added 64 in only 10.5 overs. Once Dalal and Gambhir were gone, Shorey and skipper Nitish Rana (32) added 62 for the third wicket. Shorey then added 50 with Himmat Singh (26), who hit three sixes and 67 for the unbroken fifth wicket stand with wicketkeeper Anuj Rawat (21 no) as Delhi finished with an overall lead of 375.

MUKUND'S TON LEADS TN REPLY

Tirunelveli: Test discard Abhinav Mukund led Tamil Nadu's riposte to Hyderabad's massive first innings total of 565 for 8 declared with a superb ton (101 batting) as the host reached 163 for 2 at stumps on day three of the Elite Group 'B' match. Hyderabad skipper P Akshath Reddy could add only two runs to his overnight score of 248 and the team declared at 565 after C V Milind (33 not out) and Mehdi Hasan (14 not out) put on 27 runs for the ninth wicket. Left-handed opener Mukund looked in fine form, striking the ball all round the wicket. He and fellow opener M Kaushik Gandhi (21 off 117 balls, 1X4) put on 80 runs to set the platform for Tamil Nadu. Mukund, who has so far hit 15 fifties, and captain B Indrajith (24 batting) added 69 runs and saw the team through to close of play without any further slip-ups.

J&K TRAIL GOA BY 222 RUNS

Porvornir: Jammu and Kashmir have a mountain to climb as they trail Goa by 222 runs at stumps on day 3 of their Elite Group C game. Asked to bat first, Goa rode on a century by opener Snehil Kauthankar (130) to post a mammoth 468/9 (declared) in their first innings. Kauthankar, batting at his overnight score of 106, added another 24 runs to his tally and remained unbeaten. He laced his knock with 24 boundaries. Jammu and Kashmir had an uphill task to gain a first-innings lead, but they slumped to 246/7 at stumps on the penultimate day of the four-day game. For J&K, their opener Shubham Khajuria (53) struck a half-century, but three other top-order batsmen, Ahmad Omar Bandey (25), Ian Chauhan (37) and Paras Sharma (22), failed to convert their starts into big scores. But all-rounder and skipper Irfan Pathan, who came in at number 7, remained unbeaten on 42 and will look to hold the fort on the last day.

RAILWAYS LEAD SAURASHTRA BY 130 RUNS

Rajkot: Riding on an unbeaten fifty by young Harsh Tyagi, Railways lead Saurashtra by 130 runs at stumps on the penultimate day of the four-day game against hosts Saurashtra. For Railways, Tyagi was impressive in the second outing with his unbeaten innings of 73 in 182-balls. While all others batters failed, 18-year-old Tyagi kept the score-board ticking. His knock ensured that Railways managed to get past the 250-run mark and ended the third day on 278/8. After opting to bat, Railways were bowled out for 200 in their first outing. Saurashtra then took a crucial 148-run first-innings lead with Ravindra Jadeja remaining unbeaten on 178 as they posted 348 on the board.

MP REACH 254/5 COURTESY OJHA VS BENGAL

Kolkata: Skipper Naman Ojha cracked a patient half-century with Madhya Pradesh making a strong reply against Bengal in their Elite Group B fixture. Ojha held their innings together with his 151-ball 74 before getting out to part-time leg-spinner Anustup Majumdar, who took two wickets in two overs (2/20) to raise hopes of another three points. At close on the penultimate day, MP were 254/5, trailing Bengal by 256 runs. Yash Dube (20*) and Ankit Sharma (9*) were at the crease. Earlier Bengal pacer Ashok Dinda (2/42) dismissed both the MP openers, Arjman Birla (12) and Ankit Dane (38), as MP were 65/2 inside the first hour's play. But Ojha stayed on, stitching two fifty-plus partnerships with Rajat Patidar (49) and Shubham Sharma (45) in the first and second sessions respectively.

SIKKIM, UK SECURE SUCCESSIVE WINS

Dehradun: Deepak Dhapola returned with a match haul of 13 wickets as Uttarakhand secured their second straight victory in the Plate Group beating Manipur by eight wickets. In Dimapur, Sikkim also registered their second win in their debut season beating hosts Nagaland by nine wickets. Sikkim have 13 points along with Uttarakhand but the former occupy the pole position in the Plate Group on the basis of better net run-rate.

KOLKATA DUMP STARC VIA TEXT MESSAGE

PTI ■ SYDNEY

A text message is all what Australian pacer Mitchell Starc received from the IPL side Kolkata Knight Riders on his removal from the squad for the 2019 edition.

One of the costliest buys in the 2018 auction, Starc was forced to miss the entire season due to stress fracture in his right leg.

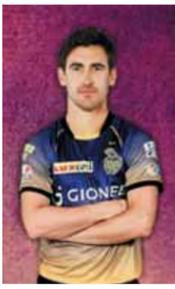
"I got a text message two days ago from the owners of Kolkata, saying I've been released from my contract. At the moment I'll be home in April," Starc told reporters.

The exact reason for Starc's release is not yet known but it is being believed that it could be because of the uncertainty around his availability for the 2019 season.

Starc, grabbed by KKR for 1.8 million Australian dollars, was replaced by England pacer Tom Curran.

"I obviously didn't go last year with my tibia injury and it was a great opportunity to freshen the body up, let everything heal by itself. I guess barring a little niggle in my hammy I've felt pretty good with my body and my strength and the rest of it. That little period of time has really paid off for the body," the 28-year-old said.

IPL auction for the 2019 season is likely to be held on December 16 in Jaipur but it seems the left-arm pacer may not make himself available.



Curran and Buttler save Eng against spin

AFP ■ KANDY

Sri Lanka's spinners claimed some Sbig-name England wickets on the first day of the second Test on Wednesday before Jos Buttler and Sam Curran rescued the innings.

Buttler's 63 and a crucial 64 from Curran at the end lifted England to 285 all out after they had been struggling on 89-4 on the turning Pallekelle stadium pitch. Curran, fast becoming an England hero, said reaching near 300 was a "massive" achievement.

England spinner Jack Leach then strengthened England's position, dismissing opener Kaushal Silva in the 12 overs Sri Lanka faced as the home side reached 26 for one at the close.

A day that saw Ben Stokes, batting at the key number three position, become the latest to fail also reinforced Buttler and Curran's standing lower down the order.

England were in trouble against spinners Dilruwan Perera who took four wickets, Malinda Pushpakumara (three) and Akila Dananjaya (two) when Buttler came in to counter-attack with five boundaries and a crucial 45-run stand with Adil Rashid who made 31.

Buttler's 63 off 67 deliveries ensured Sri Lanka did not convert a good position into a dominant one, as he swept and reverse swept furiously and effectively. He was eventually out top-edging a reverse sweep off left-arm spinner Pushpakumara, playing his first Test for more than a year.

Curran was even more important, taking 50 balls to reach double figures before he tore into the Sri Lankan bowling. He hit six sixes and a four off the spinners and his last wicket partnership of 60 with Jimmy Anderson was the best of the innings.

"It was crucial. You saw in the evening how much it spun. Getting close to 300 was massive for us," said Curran.

"Me and Jimmy had quite a bit of fun out there. He was probably the



Sam Curran plays a shot during his 64 run innings against Sri Lanka in first day of 2nd Test AP

one telling me to calm down and trust him."

Stokes, who batted at number five in his team's opening win last week, was boosted by the order in the latest bid to find a solid number three. Off-spinner Perera successfully reviewed an lbw decision against Stokes after the on-field umpire had turned down an appeal. He was out for 19.

England captain Joe Root, who scored 35 and three in the first Test, was bowled by Pushpakumara in the 18th over for 14 and opener Rory Burns (43) soon followed as England lost regular wickets on the dry, crumbling surface.

There were several near misses during the 12 overs Sri Lanka faced, with Karunaratne edging a ball just low and wide of slip off the bowling of Ali when he was on 12.

Leach then made the breakthrough at the other end, getting a ball to break sharply off the surface and beat Kaushal Silva's forward defence, to rattle off stump — the batsman dismissed for 6.

Nightwatchman Pushpakumara then survived the 15 balls he faced before stumps.

B'desh reduce Zim to 76-2

AP ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh reduced Zimbabwe to 76-2 Wednesday on the fourth day of the second Test.

Zimbabwe still needs 367 runs or to survive a full day to win its first test series victory since 2011 after the hosts set an improbable target of 443 runs.

Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah was instrumental in leaving Zimbabwe a record chase, hitting his second century as the hosts declared the second innings on 224-6.

Mahmudullah, who completed his century in the last ball before the tea session, was not out on 101 and shared two important partnerships to take the side on the verge of winning the test and drawing the series.

Despite a lead of 218 runs, dismissing Zimbabwe for 304 in its first innings on Day 3, Bangladesh decided not to enforce the follow-on. But Zimbabwe fast bowlers Kyle Jarvis (2-27) and Donald Tiripano (2-31) rocked the top order to leave the hosts at 25-4.

With Zimbabwe raising the hopes to hit back, Mithun and Mahmudullah resisted further damage to keep the side on course for a sizeable lead.

The duo combined for a 118-run partnership for the fifth wicket to restore its dominance.



Offspinner Sikandar Raza removed Mithun for 67, his maiden fifty in his maiden test following zero in the first innings.

Left-arm spinner Sean Williams dismissed Ariful Haque (4) cheaply but Mahmudullah and Hasan (27 not out) shared 73 off 70 balls in an unbroken seventh wicket partnership to set an improbable target for the visitors.

Zimbabwe's highest successful chase in the fourth innings is 162 against Pakistan in Peshawar in 1998. "The first hour will be very key," Zimbabwe coach Lalchand Rajput said. "If Brendan (Taylor) and Sean

Williams can bat through, then the pressure will be on the fielding side.

The tourists made a decent start with skipper Hamilton Masakadza and Brian Chari sharing 68 runs.

Hasan (1-16) gave Bangladesh the first breakthrough after Masakadza spooned a catch at short-leg for 25.

Two overs later, left-arm spinner Tajul Islam (1-34) dismissed Brian Chari (43), who tried to paddle sweep against a turning delivery. Chari reviewed in vain.

Brendan Taylor (4) and Sean Williams (2) were batting before the fourth day's game came to an end.

'Chhetri's absence against Jordan clash is a big blow'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The "irreplaceable" Sunil Chhetri's absence from the friendly against Jordan is a huge blow, Indian football coach Stephen Constantine said on Wednesday, staring at a bleak future upfront with his talismanic striker starting to grey.

The 34-year-old Chhetri has been ruled out of the November 17 friendly owing to an ankle injury. Constantine expressed concerns at the dearth of promising strikers and the void the country's all-time leading scorer's absence can cause.

"Sunil missing for the clash against Jordan is a big blow for us. He is a great player and has been fantastic for us in the last four years. He is one of those players that is irreplaceable but somebody has to take his place for the match against Jordan. Sunil is no spring chicken," Constantine said.

"However it is a great opportunity for young players to step up and although you cannot find a player of his calibre and class, we need to see if the young player step up and take this opportunity."

The match is in preparation for the Asian Cup, scheduled to be held in the UAE early in January-February 2019.

"We need to find somebody who will be there when we don't have Sunil Chhetri so that there is no void left in the team,"



Constantine said. "I am trying to cover all the bases and I don't want my best players to remain injured and one of them right now is Sunil," he added.

The match at Amman is another opportunity for the coach to experiment tactics and gain valuable experience going into the mega competition next year.

"We want to do well in our preparation for the AFC Asian Cup and the clash against Jordan will aid us in that as Jordan are a good side and they have a number of good players in their ranks," Constantine said.

CSK release Wood, Kshitiz, Kanishk

CHENNAI: Reigning IPL champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on Wednesday announced it has retained 22 players for the 2019 season, releasing only three members from the title-winning squad.

CSK, which returned to the IPL fold after serving a two-year suspension, won the 2018 tournament, beating Sunrisers Hyderabad in the final.

England fast bowler Mark Wood and uncapped Indian players Kanishk Seth and Kshitiz Sharma have been released.

Franchisees were required to inform the IPL Governing Council by November 15 about their retentions and release of players for the 2019 player auction to be held next month.

England bowler David Willey, who was picked as a replacement for the injured Kedar Jadhav has been retained along with the all-rounder . Wood featured only in one match while Sharma and Seth didn't feature in any game.

The team didn't seek a replacement for Kiwi all-rounder Mitchell Santner, who was injured and he would come back into the squad, according to CSK sources. PTI