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USUAL SUSPECTS
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Bottled up feeling triggered CAA stir

The term 'tyranny of distance' has come to define what is peddled as news, what is regarded as important and what is relegated to a footnote. In simple terms, it means that happenings in the metros – and more specifically, Delhi – is accorded exceptional treatment while those in the hinterland gets pushed to the margins. There is also a regional bias: North India and the Hindi belt gets more attention than the rest of the country. For example, the quantum of coverage of elections in Uttar Pradesh and, maybe, Bihar is disproportionate.

This particular feature of what is disseminated as news and what determines the hierarchy of news has a large bearing on how the recent wave of protests against the changes in the Citizenship Act and a yet-to-be-defined National Register of Citizens is being perceived.

Chronology may serve as an important guide. The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill cleared its final parliamentary hurdle on the evening of December 11, 2019. Even while the debate was underway in Parliament there were protests against the CAB in different parts of Assam and the North-East. Although the protests were by and large peaceful, they were also anticipated. Even during the sittings of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the CAB in 2018, the most vocal opposition to the measure had come from civil society groups in Assam, Meghalaya and even Arunachal Pradesh. Their concerns centred broadly on two themes: The reality of demographic change triggered by the influx from East Pakistan/Bangladesh and concerns over the cultural and linguistic identities of the region. Many of these concerns were addressed by the exemptions to the CAB in the modified legislation passed by Parliament. However, some misgivings persisted although the attempts by some radical leaders to exploit these to create civil unrest were firmly nipped in the bud. Today, Assam and the North-East are gradually returning to normal. Last week there was even a large pro-CAB rally in Assam organised by Assam's Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma.

Triple talaq, Article 370, apex court verdict for construction of Ram temple among other issues have triggered this explosion

However, the protests took a very different turn on December 13 when the epicentre shifted to West Bengal. There are suggestions that this wave of protests were either instigated or organised by the Trinamool Congress. However, even if it is conceded that the role of the TMC was tangential and the protests were either spontaneous or stemmed from community organisations, some features were clear. Beginning from December 13 when crowds blocked the streets in and around Kolkata after the Friday prayers, the protests became large Muslim in character. This was also the pattern on the next two days when mobs in the districts vandalised railway property and burnt more than a dozen buses playing on the highways. The police response to the attacks was either feeble or non-existent and it was soon clear that the TMC had little control over the crowds. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a large part of the crowds that engaged in vandalism was made up of Muslims who had settled in the areas over the past two decades.

Whether the protests in West Bengal was the trigger for the next round of protests in Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia and the Aligarh Muslim University is still uncertain. My guess is that the same networks that operated in West Bengal got to work in these two institutions that are predominantly Muslim in character. However, while the administration in West Bengal chose to not confront the protesters, the Delhi Police went overboard and probably overdid things, quite impervious to the fact that everything gets filmed these days and is disproportionately covered by the media. That being the case, the police action in Jamia became the focus for a larger mobilisation that now included liberals, Left radicals and sundry others looking for a stick to beat the Government with.

This shift is important to note. What began as a Muslim protest and still remains essentially a Muslim protest against its growing political irrelevance under the Narendra Modi dispensation was embellished by the inclusion of all those who were smarting from the devastating defeat in the general elections of 2019. It is interesting to note that the notables and media activists who have taken the lead in fanning the flames and conferring respectability to a sectarian uprising are exactly those who were in the forefront of the anti-Modi campaign during the general election. There is no difference and no new social groups have been added to the protesters.

Where the liberals and Left activists are in short supply as in Kanpur, Gorakhpur and Mangalore – note, all the areas located in States where the BJP controls State Governments – the protests have been concentrated in Muslim areas. This is not to suggest that the Government's response should only be dictated by political calculations. However, it is best to also acknowledge the real nature of the protests. It is principally one community taking out its anger on a State that it is detached from emotionally and politically. It is also prudent to also recognise that the Citizenship Act changes or even the fear of a future NRC constitute the only grievance. There is a bottled up feeling inside the Muslim community over its helplessness to thwart the changes in the Muslim Personal Law after the Triple Talaq legislation, the abrogation of Kashmir's special status and the Supreme Court's sanction for the construction of the Ram temple. All these issues have come together in the past week to trigger this explosion.

How the Government proposes to tackle this volatile situation is worth a serious consideration. There are also issues centred on any future NRC that warrants rigorous exploration. However, any approach cannot ignore the grim and awkward reality of India's largest minority group having taken to the streets, expressing anger at their loss of their strategic importance in national life. This is a matter between the Government and the Muslim community; the liberals are incidental extras, those Lenin once dubbed the 'useful idiots.'

Citizenship stir toll at 15 in UP

Police post torched in Kanpur, 57 cops receive gunshot injuries; internet curbs extended in 15 dists till Monday



A vehicle torched by protesters during a demonstration against the Citizenship Amendment Act, in Kanpur on Saturday PTI

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The death toll in continuing clashes during protests in Uttar Pradesh against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) rose to 15, including an eight-year-old, on Saturday even as violence erupted in Rampur and Kanpur. The Yogi Adityanath Government, for its part, initiated the process of identifying those guilty of damaging public property in Lucknow and tasked four Upper District Magistrates with the disposal of cases related to the losses.

UP DGP, OP Singh, reiterated that the police did not open fire anywhere in the State and claimed all deaths were due to cross-firing between the

protesters. "Women and children were used as shields by the protesters. If anyone died due to our fire we will conduct a judicial enquiry and take action. But nothing happened from our side," the DGP said. IG (Law and Order) Praveen Kumar said over 260 policemen were also injured, of whom 57 received gunshot wounds. "Since December 10, when the protests erupted in the State, 705 people have been arrested and around 4,500 persons were released after preventive arrest. Fifteen casualties have happened," he said.

Politics over the CAA, however, continued with the Trinamool Congress announcing the visit of a four-member

party delegation to meet the families of those who were killed in violence that broke out during the protest in Lucknow.

The Home Department extended internet restrictions till Monday noon in 15 districts of Lucknow, Saharanpur, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Agra, Aligarh, Bareilly, Mau, Azamgarh, Agra, Sambhal, Kanpur, Unnao, Moradabad, and Prayagraj. In 12 other districts where internet was stopped, a decision to further restrict the services would be taken by respective District Magistrates.

The bandobast and UP CM's renewed appeal for peace notwithstanding, protesters set ablaze Yatimkhana police

post in Kanpur and indulged in heavy brickbating, leading to injuries to many people including policemen. Police used canecharge and tear gas to chase them away. Clashes were also reported from Rampur district.

Samajwadi Party MLA Amitabh Bajpai and former MLA and SP leader Kamlesh Tewari have been arrested as a precautionary measure and their vehicles have also been seized. On the composition of protesters, the UP DGP said, "I myself saw women and young girls present during protests at Parivartan Chowk in Lucknow and asked them to go. A child died in a stampede in Varanasi where children were present with the protesters when police lathi charged them. These children do not know what citizenship is and they were present with stones."

Sonia, RaGa to sit on dharna at Rajghat today

New Delhi: On a day when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to address a rally in Ramlila Maidan on Sunday, the Congress will stage a silent protest (satyagrah dharna) at Rajghat against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC). Congress president Sonia Gandhi along with Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other senior leaders will participate in the "satyagraha dharna" till the evening. **PNS**

Rail, traffic disruption, vandalism mark Bihar Bandh called by RJD



Protesters take part in a demonstration against NRC and Citizenship Amendment Act in Patna on Saturday PTI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After Uttar Pradesh, it was Bihar's turn to witness large-scale vandalism and disruption of rail and road traffic on Saturday. Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) supporters blocked roads and disrupted movement of trains at different places in the State during the "Bihar Bandh" call given by it against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register for Citizens (NRC). West Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya were relatively peaceful.

Hundreds of RJD supporters – among whom children of not more than 10-15 years of age and some of the agitators in their underwear – could also be seen carrying bamboo sticks and party flags. The bandh supporters gathered at bus stands, railway tracks and other vantage points

in all districts of the State since the crack of dawn, unfazed by the winter fog and chilly winds.

They sat down on railway tracks and blocked bus terminuses at various places to enforce the day-long bandh.

In Patna, the protesters reached Dak Bungalow "chowraha" (intersection) and blocked traffic while raising anti-Government slogans. The supporters also pelted stones at Government buses, breaking glass windows.

The protesters smashed windshields of taxis and three-wheelers and damaged cycle-rickshaws that plied on the roads in defiance of the call for the shutdown in Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and outskirts of Patna. Schools, colleges and most government offices remained closed as it was a Saturday.

Support pours in for Act: Over 1K 'academics' sign statement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 1,100 academicians and research scholars from various universities across India and abroad as well as prominent persons released a statement in support of the amended Citizenship Act on Saturday.

The signatories to the statement include Rajya Sabha member Swapan Dasgupta, IIM Shillong Chairman Shishir Bajoria, Nalanda University Vice-Chancellor Sunaina Singh, JNU professor Ainal Hasan, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies Senior Fellow Abhijit Iyer-Mitra and journalist Kanchan Gupta.

The statement comes in the midst of countrywide protests against the new citizenship law.

BJP plans outreach to expose 'Opp lies'

Will contact over 3 cr families, hold rallies in every dist over next 10 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of a countrywide protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the BJP on Saturday announced a massive public outreach to expose the "lies" spread by Opposition parties and apprise the people of the details about the legislation. The BJP will contact over 3 crore families and hold rallies in every district over the next 10 days.

The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by BJP working president JP Nadda and convened to formulate the party's strategy over the issue

amid protests in various parts of the country against the new provision in the Citizenship Act and the proposed creation of a National Register of Citizens.

Party general secretary Bhupender Yadav told reporters that the BJP within next 10 days will contact more than three crore families, organise rallies in every district and hold over 250 Press conferences across the country to inform masses about the new law.

The new law seeks to give citizenship to minorities from three neighbouring countries, who arrived in India before December 2014 due to religious persecution. He also accused Opposition parties, especially the Congress, of spreading misinformation in a bid to disturb peace across the country during recent protests which have claimed several lives.

CM Baghel stresses on inclusive development to boost economy

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday suggested that emphasis should be given on inclusive development for accelerating the pace of economy.

Addressing the 92nd annual convention of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) in New Delhi, the Chief Minister said that the target of making India a 5 trillion dollar economy could be beneficial only if basic needs of each citizen get fulfilled.

Speaking on the subject 'India: Roadmap to a 5 trillion dollar economy', he said farmers in the country should be given a profitable value for their yield to ensure that demand in the market does not fall. He added that activities related to farming and animal husbandry should



also be encouraged.

He said alternative methods should be adopted for use of foodgrains and stubble. He also listed various measures that can be taken such as permission for making ethanol from stubble, setting up food processing units, establishing food parks, capital grant, interest grant and relief from GST. He added that there is an

urgent need to give emphasis on rural industry, processing of minor forest produce, processing and marketing of medicinal plants. Inviting industrialists to set up industries in Chhattisgarh, the Chief Minister said that the State has flexible and supportive industrial policy.

On the problem of Naxalism, Baghel said that his Government has succeeded in winning the trust of locals in the affected areas, resulting in 50 per cent decline in the problem.

The CM said the State has potential in tourism sector and his Government has been working hard in this direction.

He added that action plans have been made for development of eco-tourism and Ram Van Gaman Path. Work is in progress in developing tourism in Sarguja, Bastar and Koriya districts, he said.

HC orders re-postmortem of 4 Hyd vet rape-murder accused

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Saturday directed the State Government to hold a re-postmortem on the bodies of the four accused who were killed in an alleged encounter on December 6 in the veterinarian's gang-rape and murder case. The HC set December 23 as the deadline for the conduct of the second autopsy and submission of the report to the Registrar General of the High Court.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice RS Chauhan and Justice A Abhishek Reddy directed Telangana's Principal Secretary,



Medical and Health Department, to request the Director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi to constitute a medical team with three expert forensic specialists to conduct the second post-mortem. While it asked the State Government to videograph the entire process, it

advised the doctors to express an independent view on the basis of the evidence collected by them.

The bodies of the four accused are currently preserved in the State-run Gandhi Hospital here as per earlier orders of the High Court, following the filing of some PILs alleging extra-judicial killing of the men and claiming it was a fake encounter among others. The medical Superintendent of Gandhi Hospital Dr Shrivani Kumar told the High Court that the dead bodies of the accused were 50 per cent decomposed and would be decomposed completely in another week's time.

Rapist-killer of Ranchi's Nirbhaya gets death

MRIJUNJAY KUMAR ■ RANCHI

Ranchi's Nirbhaya, a 19-year-old engineering student, who was brutally raped and killed by a "serial killer" in 2016, finally got justice on Saturday as a Special Court of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) awarded death sentence to the killer Rahul Raj. The court also imposed a fine of ₹20,000 on the convict.

After escaping from investigating agencies for two and a half years, Raj was arrested by the CBI and after a 19-month of hearing, the special CBI court on Saturday sentenced him to death. The accused



Rahul Raj being taken away from a Special CBI court in Ranchi on Saturday Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

Rahul Kumar alias Rahul Raj was produced in the court and the Judge announced his verdict in the presence of the accused.

Special CBI Judge AK Mishra convicted Raj on Friday.

CAPSULE

UDDHAV WAIVES FARM LOANS OF UP TO ₹2L
Nagpur: The Maharashtra Govt announced a loan waiver of up to ₹2 lakh for farmers, with a cut off date of September 30, 2019.

PM REVIEWS MINISTERS' WORK IN LAST 6 MONTHS
New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi on Saturday asked Ministers and bureaucrats to formulate various sectoral policies, including those of infrastructure and agriculture, of international standards.

NORTH INDIA REELS UNDER COLD WAVE
New Delhi: Intense cold wave conditions gripped north India, including Kashmir where snowfall in the upper reaches of the valley marked the beginning of "Chillai-Kalan" — the 40-day period of harsh winter.



SHOW TIME

Not a patch on the original



DABANGG 3
*ing: Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha, Kichcha Sudeep, Saiee Manjrekar, Arbaaz Khan, Pramod Khanna
Rated: 6/10

A lot is always expected when the film has Salman Khan. The audience expects him to be OTT and better himself with each of his projects. This is more so when it comes to the *Dabangg* series that began in 2010. In these nine years, people have come to expect that Bhai will not only be better with each of the sequels.

This means that each film has to have better action, better songs, better story, better item number and most importantly a better Salman Khan who will show his swagger that will appeal to the masses. One of course, can't forget that Bhai has to take off his shirt!

Dabangg 3 manages to deliver on some count and on some counts it fails miserably. Let's see the good first. The item song — *Munna badnaam hua* — will definitely bring

back the reverse song to which Malaika Arora had taken a patent. Salman Khan's hand continues to down the baddies with just a single punch. His signature Chulbul Pandey grin is still there. The other good is that he has lost weight and the leaner meaner look is good. Even Sonakshi Sinha has lost weight and looks good. Pramod Khanna who stepped into Vinod Khanna's shoes as Prajapati Pandey makes one nostalgic.

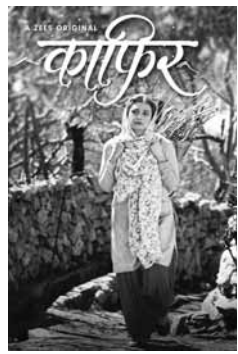
What is not good is Kichcha Sudeep as the villain. He is not a patch on Sonu Sood. Then there is a back story that drags for almost half hour; it film could have done without it.

The other songs in the movie are not worth humming. There are some glaring bloopers. We all know that Pandey's relationship only got better towards the very end of *Dabangg*. Here, they show that the two are best buddies in the back story. One can't have glaring mistakes in a *Dabangg* franchise. Sadly, this one is not a patch on the original. Is there a *Dabangg 4* Maybe.

— Shalini Saksena

Rewind 2019

Kaafir: A ZEE5 original Series starring Dia Mirza and Mohit Raina is based on a true story and it encompasses the journey of a young Pakistani mother who comes to India under unusual circumstances and is unable to go back home. The series revolves around the relationship between this woman, accused of militancy, and her lawyer who makes her justice his sole objective.



Auto Shankar: Auto Shankar a Tamil Original Series starring Sarath Appani, Selvapandian, Rajesh Dev, Vasudha and others. The story is based on horrifying true incidents that happened between 1985-1995 in Chennai, still remembered as Once upon a time in Madras.

Barot House: Again a ZEE5 original film starring Amit Sadh, Manjari Fadnis, and Aaryan Menghji. Inspired by real-life events, the story revolves around the loving Barot family whose happiness is short-lived after their daughter is found brutally murdered in the house, under mysterious circumstances.



Hope you tuned in

The Final Call: A ZEE5 original thriller series starring Arjun Rampal, Neeraj Kabi, Javed Jaffrey, Sakshi Tanwar, Anupriya Goenka and Vipin Sharma. When Captain Karan Sachdev, the pilot of Skyline flight 502, decides to end his life by committing suicide, he puts the lives of over 250 passengers in danger. Airline officer Kiran Mirza, along with the AT's team, swing into action to save the passengers on board.

Mere Dad Ki Dulhan: Introducing a progressive content, the show revolves around an unconventional father-daughter duo in a relatable coming-of-age story, where a daughter is on a mission to find a companion for her single father. The hits for the show, which garnered maximum impression, was the comeback of Shweta Tiwari after three years on Indian TV. Another feather on the cap of the show was the fresh pair of veterans — Varun Badola and Shweta Tiwari, along with the introduction of the talented debutante Anjali Tatrari.



Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein: Another clutter breaking show, Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein, successfully made its way for its concept driven content, which portrayed the story of a hearing-impaired boy named Yogi. What makes Yogi unique is not his hearing impairment, but his normalcy in maneuvering life's daily humdrums enthusiastically,

with a smile on his face. The hit for the show was coupling veteran actors — Sulbha Arya, Sudhir Pandey, Kiran Karmarkar, Swati Shah with fresh faces- Mudrit Nayar, Simran Pareenja and Debattama Saha.

Brooklyn Nine-Nine: The show that put Comedy Central on the top of the charts, is one of the best shows of streaming on the channel. Packed with a truckload of laughter and bag full of fun, the police department of the 99th precinct won our hearts. Amy and Jonah's beautiful wedding gave all the fans the moment they were waiting for. With a new season coming up soon, there is so much more this show has to offer to its fans.



The Big Bang Theory: While it all started with the four geeky scientists arguing about their credibility, it ended with Howard as a father, Sheldon winning the Nobel prize, penny announcing she's pregnant and Raj breaking up with his fiancé. But finds someone he can reignite his romantic side with as the iconic broken elevator is finally fixed! Airing on Comedy Central, the show has broken the record of the longest running sitcom and won our hearts with their unusual charm.

Suits: Giving us countless memories and also a royal wedding, the show has been a delight for the fans of all age groups. With characters that

will remind you of people from your own workplace, Mike and Harvey showcased a friendship we all crave for in our lives. While it broke our hearts when Meghan left the show to get married, her becoming a member of the Royal family made us equally happy and a little hopeful of seeing her again in the finale. Though the final season that aired on Colors Infinity did not include her, it gave us the wedding we all anticipated every season since the beginning.

Friends: The iconic show that started 25 years ago, is still loved across ages. The show that has earned the love of millions around the globe, celebrated its 25th anniversary with Comedy Central India. No matter who you are, you'll always find a part of you that resembles with either of the six famous friends. Whether it is Joey's love for food, Chandler's jokes, Rachel's fashion or Monica's cleaning OCD. We all have a friend or friends just like them whom we can never let go.

Batwoman: The much-awaited show premiered on Colors Infinity right after the international premier and created a buzz around it. The show garnered positive reviews and a fan following like no other new show on television. After the infamous vigilante hero, Batman, takes off, Kate Kane, his cousin returns and takes over. She becomes the symbol of hope as Batwoman for the citizens of Gotham.



NEW FACES ON BLOCK



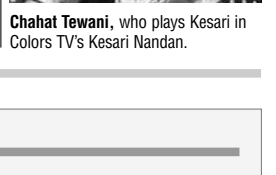
Kamna Pathak who plays Rajesh, wife of daroga Hattu Singh in Hattu Ki Ulatan Paltan.



Megha Ray who plays Kajal in Zee TV's Dil Yeh Ziddi Hai.



Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia, who plays Meher in Colors TV's Choti Sarrdaarni.



Chahat Tewani, who plays Kesari in Colors TV's Kesari Nandan.

'Karishma was my grandfather's favourite'

Celebrating the 100 episodes of *The Kapil Sharma Show*, the upcoming weekend will see Bollywood's eminent superstars and the cast of *Good Newwz* — Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor, Diljit Dosanjh, and Kiara Advani taking the entertainment quotient of the show a few notches higher. While all the other actors have experienced the show previously, Kareena however marked her presence for the very first time. Being a first timer, Kareena ensured a heavy dose of laughter with a comebacks and confessions.

In a candid conversation Kapil mentioned that Raj Kapoor sir was very fond of mangoes and used to keep them hidden in a room — did Kareena manage to get her hands on them? To which Kareena went down the memory lane recalling how her grandfather used to keep the mangoes locked in his room and didn't give them to anyone. She shared: "We used to try to get our hands on these mangoes secretly, but we never got an opportunity. My grandfather was so particular that he used to keep the mangoes in the cabinets and lock them (laughs). But Karishma always managed to get the mangoes. In fact, Karishma was my grandfather's favorite grandchild. He used to dote on her and was



obsessed with her. I used to try and get my hands on Karishma's share and hide in the garden and eat it."

Continuing the conversation Kareena further added: "Whenever Karishma used to ask him for mangoes he used to say *lo beta lo lo*" Akshay couldn't resist himself and

passed a quirky comment: "Maybe that's why she is addressed as Lolo (laughs)" to which Kareena replied, "I think I need to definitely check this with my mom on this."

Further in the conversation Kapil revealed that Taimur Ali Khan's doctor and his daughter's doctor was the same.

Vignaharta Ganesh completes 600 episodes

Sony Entertainment Television's *Vignaharta Ganesh* has made its mark in the minds of the viewers through its mythological content engaging the people in pure devotion. Audiences have showered their love on the show since its inception and it isn't surprising at all that the show has completed the new milestone of 600 episodes and the team decided to celebrate it with cutting a cake with the entire cast and crew of the show.

The show is among the most popular television shows and has been approved by all parents and grandparents for their kids as a source of mythological learning. The current track of the show revolves around one of the biggest fables of India, that is Ramayana and actors like Arun Mandola, Vishal Kotian can be seen in various characters of Ramayana. The upcoming track would tell the story of Ayyappa and Sabrimala temple. Lord Ayyappa was born from Shiva and Mohini (avatar of Shiva) to kill Mahisasur's sister Mahishi.

As Malkhan Singh, Akanksha Puri and Nishkarsh Dixit continues to impress the audiences through their life-like depiction of Shiva, Parvati and Ganesh respectively, expressed their thorough gratitude for the love the show has been getting. The entire cast was seen



celebrating as they gathered together for the cake cutting. Malkhan Singh aka Shiva said: "It feels great that the show has been able to get so much love from the audience and I would love to thank everyone for their support. This milestone feels big but as we shot together it never feels like it has been so long. There is a great bonding among all the actors and the crew and we are working our best to deliver the world-class to the audience."

Adding on to Malkhan, Akanksha Puri aka Parvati said: "We share a great bond amongst ourselves and the cast and crew has now become a family. The show has achieved a big honor of completing 600 episodes. For us it's yet a start and we see a long journey ahead."

Dabangg 3 cast on TKSS

Completing its 100 episodes with a bang this week, *The Kapil Sharma Show* promises biggest laughter riot with blockbuster Bollywood celebs Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha, Prabhudeva, Sai Majrekar, Sudeep Kichcha and Arbaaz Khan. While in conversation with Kapil Sharma, cast of *Dabangg 3* will be seen having a ball promoting their upcoming release *Dabangg 3* and playing show's popular game 'Ke Bhai Crorepati'. Salman Khan will take the show's energy a notch higher as he will be seen grooving on his recently released popular song 'Munna Badnam'.

As he heard the song's interesting title, Kapil asked about how this song came into being. Recalling the incident Arbaaz narrates, "We were looking for an item song for *Dabangg 3* like we had *Munni Badnam* in *Dabangg 1* and *Fevicol* in *Dabangg 2*. We were on a hunt to find a tod for *Munni Badnam* to put in *Dabangg 3*. Salman called me at 1:30am in the night asking to rush and meet him. He said he got the perfect solution (tod) for *Munni badnam*". After having an hour's conversation with Arbaaz Salam spilled the beans on his masterpiece. Arbaaz adds, "Salman said *Munna Badnam* is the perfect song and we should go for this. Initially, I objected his idea saying we can brainstorm more and come up with some original rather than curating the older one."

Arbaaz mentioned that he was convinced for the title when Salman promised him that they will keep the song only if the outcome turns out well. He adds, "The idea was shared with Lalit ji as he sang *Munni Badnam* and as a second option Sajid Wajid was also given a chance. Both the songs turned out very beautifully but Sajid Wajid's song was finally selected for the movie. After *Munni Badnam* in *Dabangg 1*, *Fevicol* in *Dabangg 2*, *Munna Badnam* seemed perfect in *Dabangg 3*."

TELLYTALE

NEW SHOW



In 1992, a storm descended on India's financial circle, when the biggest securities scam was exposed by financial journalist Sucheta Dalal. *Scam 1992 - The Harshad Mehta Story* is the tale of a seminal moment in a seminal decade in Indian history. Applause Entertainment, the content studio from the Aditya Birla group is creating this white-collar-crime financial thriller, based on Debashis Basu and Sucheta Dalal's best-selling book *The Scam*. The series is being directed by National Award winning director Hansal Mehta and is produced by Studio Next for Applause Entertainment.

Celebrated theatre and movie actor Pratik Gandhi, who is known for his work in Gujarati theatre and cinema, portrays the role of one of the most controversial stock brokers of all times — Harshad Mehta. Shreya Dhanwanthary, who has been in the news for her performance in recent shows like *The Family Man* and *The Reunion*, will be seen playing the role of the fierce journalist and whistle-blower Sucheta Dalal.

The protagonist Harshad Mehta actually entered the stock market by chance in the late 70s. He had a natural gift for speculation and entrepreneurship, and an eye for loopholes. This ingenuity coupled with brash self-confidence made him the Big Bull of BSE — often called 'Amitabh Bachchan' and 'Einstein' of the stock market. Soon Harshad became the common man's hero, and his clients were investing less in the stocks and more in Harshad himself.

Ace casting director, Mukesh Chhabra along with Hansal Mehta discovered the talented Pratik Gandhi for this character. The series boasts over 30 featured parts representing colourful, real life characters played by actors like Satish Kaushik, Anant Mahadevan, Rajat Kapoor, Nikhil Dwivedi, K K Raina, Lalit Parimoo and many others. The book has been brilliantly adapted for screenplay and dialogue writers Sumit Purohit, Saurav Dey, Vaibhav Vishal and Karan Vyas.

WEDDING BELLS

Wedding bells ahead in Sony SAB's *Aladdin: NaamTohSunaHoga*. A new woman has entered Aladdin's life. This highly revered show is set to witness a grand union between Aladdin and Queen of Misr, Sultana Adaya, played by the immensely talented, Pal John. While the

beloved duo of Sony SAB, Aladdin (Siddharth Nigam) and Yasmine (Anneet Kaur), were seen coming closer to each other, the journey of Alasmine has taken a shocking turn. The upcoming episodes reveal Aladdin's decision to marry Sultana Adaya and Yasmine's reaction to it.

Recently, the viewers witnessed Alasminekalshqnama as Prince Ali finally revealed his true identity as Aladdin to the love of his life, Yasmine. The duo post their reunion, joined hands to get Ginoo (Raashul Tandon) back from Zafar's (Aamir Dalvi) control. While they successfully turn Ginoo to his good old self, things take a rather serious turn as Baghdad is hit with a violent snow storm.

Aladdin and his toli find out that the only way to save Baghdad was to find a device which will help divert the snow storm and the only person who has the device is the Queen of Misr, Sultana Adaya. On a quest



to save Baghdad, Aladdin, Zafar, Yasmine and the entire toli reach Misr and as they enter the palace, Ali is mistaken as the Sultan of Misr. Sultana Adaya fascinated by Ali, announces that he will indeed be her Sultan and announces their marriage.

The story takes a jaw dropping twist as Ali agrees to the proposal in front of Yasmine.

GAUTAM TO BE SEEN IN BHAKARWADI

Bhakharwadi, the slice of life show of Sony SAB will soon be witnessing the entry of a new man in Gayatri and Abhishek's life. The show continues to gain immense appreciation and support for its relatable and gripping storyline essayed by a phenomenal star cast. Adding to this star cast will be the television heart-throb and immensely talented Gautam Rode. *Bhakharwadi* will mark Gautam's debut in the comedy genre.

Gautam will be essaying the role of Abhijeet, a businessman with a 7 year old son. Abhijeet is a humble man with a charming personality. Whoever meets him, is taken in by his endearing and modest nature. Being a single parent, his only priority is his child's happiness, which makes him take the decision to re-marry someday, so that his child has a mother.

Thrilled about his entry in the show, Gautam Rode said, "I really like the show, *Bhakharwadi* on Sony SAB as it is different from what goes on television these days. I like the writing, the screenplay and the



storyline of this show. I am also fond of both Pares (Ganatra) bhai and Deven (Bhojani) bhai. Secondly, J.D. (Majethia) bhai and Aatish (Kapadia) bhai are like things take a rather serious turn as Baghdad is hit with a violent snow storm. Aladdin and his toli find out that the only way to save Baghdad was to find a device which will help divert the snow storm and the only person who has the device is the Queen of Misr, Sultana Adaya. On a quest

Gautam further added, "My role Abhijeet is a special appearance in the show and he is a perfect guy who will be loved by everyone from kids to young girls to elderly people."

WALK DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

The legendary singer Kishore Kumar was an evergreen personality who will be always remembered for his mesmerising



songs. Sony Entertainment Television's most loved singing reality show *Indian Idol Season 11* will be giving a tribute to the late Kishore Kumar this weekend. The upcoming episode of the show will see Kishore Kumar's wife Laena Chandavarkar and his son Amit and Sumit Kumar having amazing time revisiting Kishore Kumar's memories when they will be listening our top Indian Idol contestants.

The rockstar of the show Rishabh Chaturvedi performed on songs *Aise na mujhe tum dekho* and *Aake seedhi lagi dil pe*. His performance made everyone go gala over him. The special judges Amit Kumar couldn't stop praising Rishabh for singing both the songs so beautifully especially the second song *Aake seedhi lagi dil pe* as it has to be sung in two voices. He also told this song had to be sung as a duet with Lata ji and Late Kishore Kumar but because of some emergency Lata ji couldn't make it. Then Kishore Kumar only suggested that I can sing in a voice of a lady and that's how Kishore *da* gave one of the most iconic songs of his life.

66.41% voting recorded in C'garh civic-body polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

In Chhattisgarh's three-tier civic-body elections, conducted through ballot paper, a tentative 66.41 percent votes were cast.

The polling was by and large peaceful, barring minor incidents which were resolved at the local level, said State Election Commissioner, Chhattisgarh Thakur Ram Singh while briefing the media on Saturday.

There will be re-polling in one of the wards under limits of Raipur Municipal Corporation due to reports of bogus voting. Reports of Raipur District Election Officer are awaited based on which the final decision would be taken, Commissioner added.



He said polling was held in 151 civic bodies, out of which 10 are Municipal Corporation, 38 Municipal Councils and 103 Nagar Panchayat while by-poll was held at one ward of Municipal Corporation Birgaon and two wards (3 and 10) of Municipal Corporation Bhalai. Singh said in six wards no polling was held as candidates were elected unopposed. They are Municipal Council Dipka (Ward 8) and

Kondagaon (Ward 11), Municipal Corporation Jagdalpur (ward 11), Nagar Panchayat Saragaon (Ward 3), Lakhanpur (Ward 7) and Kotba (Ward 10).

Additional to it, in Nagar Panchayat (NP) Chikhalksa (Balod District) in ward number 1, 14, 15 no nomination was filed, while in NP Dondhi in ward 15 and Municipal Council Bachel (Dantewada district) ward 8, all nomination papers were withdrawn and so there was no polling there. Similarly, in Ward 14 of Sukma district one candidate died due to which the election has been deferred, he pointed out.

He further said thus polling was held in 2831 wards through 5427 polling centres against the nominations filed in 2843 wards.

Repoll in RMC ward 32 on Dec 23

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The repolling at Maharishi Valmiki Ward number 32 polling centre will be held on December 23 from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm as per a decision taken by the State Election Commission, Chhattisgarh based on the report of Raipur District Election Officer and Collector on Saturday.

The counting is scheduled on December 24. As per report, the electors

whose name were deleted from the polling centre were allowed to cast their vote. After the sector officer brought the matter to the notice of higher authorities, the DEO conducted the necessary inquiry. Based on the report, SEC had declared the polling invalid. It then ordered for repolling on December 23.

The SEC has made an appeal to all the electors of the ward to cast their vote on December 23.



Glimpses of political bigwigs and senior bureaucrats exercising franchise at different polling booths in their respective urban body wards. Civic body polls were held across the state on Saturday.

Pioneer Photo

Beautification work of Kaushalya temple to commence today

It is a part of tourist spots of Rama Van Path Gaman

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will on Sunday inaugurate the beautification and renovation work of temple of Kaushalya, the mother of lord Rama in Chandrakhuri of the district. With this, the state government will start the development of tourist spots of Rama Van Gaman Path.



present on this occasion. Among the total 51 places identified as spots from where Lord Rama travelled during his exile, eight of the places would be developed in the first phase. These eight places comprise Sitamadhi-Harchowka (Koria), Ramgarh (Surguja), Sheorinarayan (Janjgir-Champa), Turturia (Balodabazar-Bhatapara), Chandrakhuri (Raipur), Rajim (Gariaband), Sihava (Dhamtari) and Jagdalpur (Bastar).

Under the development of these earmarked places government would facilitate them with better connectivity and electrification along with arranging other amenities required for a tourist place.

Action initiated on two model code violation complaints

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

State Election Commissioner, Chhattisgarh Thakur Ram Singh said action has been initiated on two complaints, which were found to be serious out of 200 complaints received.

One is regarding a liquor-slip related complaint and another is pertaining to issuance of fishing lease during the model code of conduct. The report has been submitted in one case and has been forwarded to the state government for necessary action.

At Baloda Bazar, three vehicles, used for carrying electors by candidates, were seized.

Regarding the polling day, he said in Nagar Panchayat Pendra polling centre 11, serial number 431 of electoral roll, name of Gagan Agrawal son of Poonam Chand was registered but Bacharwar resident Vikas Sahu (20 years) had carried out the voting due to which under IPC 1860 section 171C, he has been handed over to police for further action.

The Commissioner denied receiving any complaint from Kanker about fake notes distribution or of bogus polling from any part of the state. But he said on receipt of reports from respective district electoral officers, necessary action will be initiated.

Singh claimed that for the first time the online voter slip facilities were extended to the electors, which has been utilized by electors across the state.

The Commission had developed the software within three days. He claimed that suggestions have been forwarded to utilize same in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections so as to avoid the distribution of slips by political parties.

He also said that the differently-abled and senior citizens also registered their participation in the polling with enthusiasm as all facilities were extended to them. In this regard, he cited that even a 102-year-old senior citizen had cast her vote in Mahasamund district.

No violation of norms in ballot paper printing: SEC

All the necessary precaution was taken in the printing of the ballot papers and the entire process was as per the set norms, the official said



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

State Election Commissioner Thakur Ram Singh on Saturday denied that there was any violation of norms in printing ballot papers for urban-body elections in the state. Clarifying on the

allegations of former minister and senior BJP leader Rajesh Munat, he said printing ballot papers in a private printing press is not unprecedented. Special precautions were taken and the printing was done amid tight security, he further said. All the necessary precaution was taken in the

printing of the ballot papers and the entire process was as per the set norms, the official claimed. Singh also refuted the charges that there was irregularity in the process of selecting private printing press and said the entire tendering process was transparent.

Jamia students lead protests outside varsity, citizens' support pours in

New Delhi: The Jamia Millia Islamia students on Saturday staged a demonstration yet again outside the varsity campus against amendments in the citizenship law, days after violent clashes between police and agitators in its vicinity.

The demonstration was led by woman students of the central varsity and was later joined by its male students as well as alumni and "outsiders".

The slogans like "Ladke lenge azadi" (will get independence after fighting) and "Inquilab Zindabad" that echoed in a group of around 50 students initially turned into mass protests in few hours leading to more than 500 persons joining the protests.

As protesting crowd swelled by minutes, the women students specifically asked them not to use

abusive or unparliamentary language during the protest.

The protesters vent out their anger shouting slogans like "Modi-Shah go back to school" holding placards which read: "Donate a book to needy students; Book's name Indian Constitution, Student's name: Amit Shah" and "Jab jab Modi darta hai, police ko aage karta hai".

The varsity has been at the forefront of the protest against the citizenship law.

Participating in the protest, 76-year-old JMI alumnus Nafiz Ikram said, "You all are leading a movement against what is wrong. Don't step back. Don't get scared of police. You are the real police who are fighting to protect our Constitution".

A protester who came from Bihar to join the protest said,

"The rich have proof of their identity or they will procure it somehow. How will the labourers and workers, who migrate from UP and Bihar, manage to get the proofs?"

The students also took out a march against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. Some former students of the university came to the spot with their children holding posters for demonstration.

Salim Ahmed from Okhla said, "I am with students of this country. What happened at Jamia Millia last week was unpardonable. My son is here carrying a poster and I want my son to grow up in a secular nation and not a biased country, who had brought his five-year-old son to the protest venue."

The women gathered in larger numbers as the protests



gathered momentum. The women flocked from Okhla, Shaheen Bagh, Jasola and neighbouring areas to support the students.

Hand, a 73-year-old woman from Okhla said, "I can't imagine what the mothers of those kids went through who got injured."

"I am a mother and my son

studied in Delhi. I know whenever students have held protests on a subject, they have put up a strong fight against wrong practices in India."

Her poster read "My kids are not alone."

A small group of students sang parodies on the present situation of the Indian government. The students from Aligarh Muslim University had also joined the protests.

Imran Khan from AMU said, "We are leading the protests in AMU and also helping our fellow student in Jamia and other universities to raise their voice against this draconian law."

"Our friends have been detained by Delhi Police but we will not get demoralised by it and continue with our protests," he added.

Waseem Khan, LL.M student from Jamia who was spearheading the protests said, "The CAA is biased on the basis of religion and each of us are fighting for something erroneous we have observed in the CAA. No students ever protest

violently. We have been protesting shouting slogans since a week and never initiated violence."

Several groups of people lent their support to protesters and distributed food, water and tea to the agitators sitting outside Gate no 7 of Jamia for long.

Various groups, including some women supporters, had brought biryani, samosas and other food items and distributed tea, biscuits and toast to protesters urging them to eat and protest with full vigour.

The Delhi police had entered the varsity campus on December 15 to look for 'outsiders', who were involved in violence and arson during a protest against the CAA, a few metres away from the campus. **PTI**

Uncles sexually assaulted me since childhood: Haryana woman

IANS ■ CHANDIGARH

A village woman in Haryana's Hisar district has accused her three uncles of sexually assaulting her with the consent of her parents when she was a child, police said on Saturday.

She told the police that she now dared to lodge a complaint as she came to know the same crime was being committed with her younger sister too.

Acting on her complaint, the police in Agroha registered a case under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Section 8 of the POCSO Act against her parents and the accused uncles on December 19.

The victim said she was sexually assaulted many times when she was 14-15 years old. On her complaints to the parents, they used to thrash her, as per her complaint to the police. She got married in 2017.

Investigating officer Kamla Devi told IANS over phone that she got the medical examination of both the complainant and her sister.

"We have summoned the accused and the complainant for questioning," she added.

AAP known for work; BJP can't communalise politics, says Kejriwal

New Delhi:

Aam Aadmi Party's National Convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said his party has changed the political narrative of the national capital as the BJP is "unable to do Hindu-Muslim politics."

Addressing AAP's National Council meeting, he said the party's full strength should be utilized for the Assembly elections due early next year as the target was "even bigger" this time.

"We became the first party to seek votes for the works done and not on the basis on religion. We brought about a major change in the political discourse."

"The BJP sought votes in Haryana in the name of Jats and non-jats. In Gujarat and other parts of the country, they seek votes in the name of Hindu-Muslims. But when they come to Delhi, they talk about the unauthorised colonies. They (BJP) are not able to do the Hindu-Muslim politics in Delhi," Kejriwal said.

"For us, people said it was just a wave and would end in a few days. But we saw major successes. Winning the election was a struggle, but the journey was more difficult after that."



People said numerous things about us. But now after being in power for five years, even the opposition believes that we are running a very good government." He said the party's target is even bigger this time. "Last time we got 67 seats, this time it should not be less than that."

"We have to channel all our energies. After the Delhi elections are over, we will plan our next move." **IANS**

MP water crisis deepens despite crores spent on river projects

Bhopal:

Madhya Pradesh is in the grip of a serious water crisis. Crores of rupees are being spent on major rivers but their condition worsens with each passing year.

While the government's expenditure is increasing, the number of water resources is decreasing. The question is that even after spending crores of rupees, neither new water structures are taking shape nor rivers are flowing, so who is benefitting?

The Kshipra River, which flows in the holy city of Ujjain, is considered to be a "Mokshadayani" river (river of salvation). The plight of this river has its own story. For a few months in a year, after the rains, the river's water becomes fit for bathing.

However, in December, the river water becomes muddy.

With the aim to make this river flow, the water of the Narmada River was brought at a cost of Rs 571 crore but to no avail.

In January last year, Chief Minister Kamal Nath removed the then Divisional Commissioner and Collector over the devotees having to bathe in the muddy water of the river during the Shanishvari Amavasya.

Former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had launched a "Narmada Samagra Abhiyaan" to give new life to the Narmada river.

However, the condition of the river is worse than before.

In the last two and a half decades there was a "Jal Bachao" campaign during Digvijaya Singh's tenure, whereas the "Jalabhishek" campaign and the "Narmada Samagra Abhiyaan" gained momentum during the BJP's 15-year rule.

Hundreds of crores of rupees were spent on these campaigns, but the situation did not improve.

The water crisis has worsened. Rs 1,600 crore was given for a special package to resolve the water crisis in Bundelkhand -- a drought-prone area of the state.

During the BJP rule, the Jan Abhiyan Parishad campaigned to make the water sources full, the rivers flowing cleanly, but not a single river could be revived.

The council itself had revealed that more than 330 rivers of the state have been lost.

The Kamal Nath-government has waged a campaign to revive 31 rivers. The question

is whether these rivers will be revived or their fate will be the same as during the previous campaigns.

Amulya Nidhi, Co-convenor of the "Save Zindagi Abhiyan" campaign, said, "The previous governments have spent a lot of money to make the rivers flow in the state and revive the water infrastructure."

"The rivers are still dry. The present government should work on a new strategy keeping in mind the mistakes and challenges of the past, and that the work should be entrusted to the people whose intentions are clear. Their work experience should be evaluated," Nidhi added.

Social activist Pawan Ghuwara, who fought against the misuse of the Bundelkhand package, said, "The governments approve the funds. However, the officials misuse it and the public keeps on longing for water."

The Kamal Nath-government is now enacting the Right to Water Act. Besides, a campaign is underway to resolve the water crisis.

"The budget sanctioned for water should be spent on water," Ghuwara added. **IANS**

Artistes try to crush each other nowadays: Pt. Ajay Pohankar

Gwalior:

"You see, I was a child prodigy. My musical career started at the age of eight when I was invited by some of the greatest classical musicians like Ustad Amir Ali Khan and Bhimsen Joshi. In case you don't know," says vocalist Pt. Ajay Pohankar with all the innocence. And with a straight face.

A few hours before his performance at the five-day Tansen Samaroh, one of the oldest Indian music festivals being held in Gwalior (December 17 to 21), the Sangeet Natak Akademi and Tansen Samman winning musician, who lent his voice to the album "Piya Bavari" composed by his son Abhijit Pohankar insists that there was a certain honesty about the era he grew up in.

"Artists did have a killer instinct, but never tried to crush each other, like we see today. Lobbies and groups rule the roost today and organisers have their own politics. This was something unthinkable in the classical circles during my growing-up years."

Remembering how he would be invited by the likes of Ustad Amir Ali Khan and Bhimsen Joshi to perform at different concerts across the country at the age of nine, he adds, "There were times I would fall asleep backstage waiting for my turn, and would be carried in the arms to sing. Best part being, neither those legends nor the audiences looked at me as a child, but in fact a musician."

In fact, once when Begum Akhtar visited his hometown of Jabalpur, she sent a message for him to sing for her before her concert began. "After I concluded, she said I must sing one of her ghazals when I grew up. On my 60th birthday, I recorded 'Aye Mohabbat'."

Insisting that he is thoroughly enjoying working with contemporary artists on fusions, the musician adds, "I sing

fusions with as much integrity as thumri and khyala. If you are honest towards what you are delivering, there is no scope of confusion. Also, I believe that those who can sing classical should not have any problem delving into light-classical."

Pohankar however feels that many young artistes today are depending way too much on PR and social media instead of striving for musical excellence. "The problem is that they are looking for immediate fame and that can be dangerous."

The vocalist, born to a landlord and lawyer father, and mother who held a doctorate degree holder in Music stresses that his early exposure to some of the best musicians ensured that he made that world his own. "I was always encouraged to interact with them."

Despite being immersed in music from an early age, Pohankar's parents ensured that academics never took a back seat. "I have a Master's degree in two subjects. Education not only broadens your horizons but also lends a certain confidence. Knowing the finer nuances of your art completes you," he says.

Recalling how he felt let down by the makers of the film 'Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam', the musician elaborates, "They would narrate sequences of the film and ask me to suggest songs. For a particular one, I had told them to include 'Albela Sajan'. It was decided that I would sing it. However, soon I came to know that Sultan Khan was roped in. This really disappointed me and I decided never to associate myself with films."

Though pleased that the corporate sector was supporting more classical concerts and festivals now, he adds, "However, the problem remains that the organisers tend to showcase only those five-six names... Sometimes it seems to be more like a racket." **IANS**

Nightmare for Punjab job seekers in Russia

PNS ■ PHAGWARA

Twenty-four men from Punjab's Doaba region, who have returned home after being held up in Russia for months, complained on Friday that they were made to "work like slaves" and given inadequate food only once a day by their employers for a fortnight.

They narrated their ordeal when they came to record their statement with police against two travel agents, who allegedly duped them by promising them lucrative jobs at a Russian company. The External Affairs Ministry and its mission in Russia helped the men return home on Dec 16.

A total of 26 men were stranded in Russia but one of them, Malkiat Singh alias Sonu (25), died of an unspecified illness allegedly after the company did not provide him medical aid in time. The body was brought back by his friend Joginderpal, who did not return to Russia.

Residents of Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Nawanshar districts, 13 of the men are aged between 21-25 years and unmarried, while the rest 12 are married and between 30-40 years of age. They said they were happy to reunite with their families. "For 15 days, we were given meal only once a day and we had to work like slaves," Pinku Ram, a resident of Narang Shahpur, said. "We were not given salary for six months as the company said it had deducted the amount paid for our tickets and visas from their salary," said Dharminder of Rasulpur village.

According to the agreement, the travel agents — Surinder Singh and Daljit Singh — had promised them a monthly salary of Rs 35,000 and additional pay for overtime. "But nothing of the sort happened and we had to slug it out like slaves for more than 8 hours and even on Sundays at far less salary than promised," Rakesh Kumar of Mandhali village said.

Chandigarh gets Centre, Pb & Hry backing for flyover project

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Amid apprehensions over the implementation of the contentious Tribune Flyover project, the Chandigarh Administration on Friday got the backing of Union Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways and Governments of Punjab and Haryana for the project.

The meeting of senior officers of UT Administration, Union Ministry, Punjab and Haryana was held here following the directions of Punjab and Haryana High Court on the issue of flyover project.

The High Court (HC) had last month stayed the transplanting and axing of 473 trees for the Tribune flyover project, on an NGO's plea.

"Senior officers from the Union Ministry, Haryana and Punjab Governments have fully supported the UT Administration for the implementation of the Tribune flyover project," said Manoj Parida, Advisor to UT Administrator, after presiding over the meeting.

The Advisor said that it has been concluded that there is no alternative but to construct the

flyover to address the problem of traffic congestion on this major junction.

Now, public hearing will be held on December 23, when the aggrieved parties and those who have reservations about this project have been invited to share their views, he added.

During the meeting, the representatives from Union Ministry, Punjab and Haryana were apprized about the project through a presentation.

On the aspect of impact on skyline of the city due to the construction of flyover, it was concluded that there is no other

alternative to reduce the traffic congestion in the area. It was also informed that earlier, it was proposed to cut around 700 trees for the project but it was later reduced to around 400 to ensure less impact on environment for the implementation of project.

It was also discussed that the city was designed for a population of five lakh only but the population has more than doubled now and the decisions related to developmental project cannot be taken considering retaining the original vision or character of the city.

dialect and customs and to showcase this Haryana State Council for Child Welfare has organized State Level Bal Mahotsav at Kingdom of Dreams at Gurugram

said this festival is a platform that makes children's imagination come true. He also praised the programs presented by the children and

Haryana Minister hails Bal Mahotsav in Gurugram

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Lauding the efforts being done by the Haryana State Council for Child Welfare in organizing a State-Level Bal Mahotsav at Kingdom of Dreams at Gurugram, Haryana Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma on Saturday announced an amount of Rs 5

lakh for the Council.

The Transport Minister said that the State-level Bal Mahotsav which is being organised by the Haryana State Council for Child Welfare has given an outstanding platform for the children to not only showcase their talent but also spread a message of unity in diversity of culture of the coun-

try and the State. He said that this festival is no less than a Maha Kumbh where children from various parts of the State will be showcasing their talent.

The Minister said that the culture of Haryana state has a different identity on the world map. He said that in Haryana after every 20 kilometers, one can see change in culture,

Secretary, Haryana State Council for Child Welfare Krishan Dhull, said that great enthusiasm for children is being seen at the Mahotsav and every day maximum children are reaching here to participate and it is expected that by December 23, about one lakh children will ensure their participation.

From folktales to unexplored places, here's how to explore 'Hidden Himachal'

Shimla: The 17th century-town of Bilaspur, considered to be amongst the first planned towns in the hills of India was also submerged in the water of the Satluj river with the construction of the Bhakra Dam in 1962.

A cemetery in Dagshai, which grew under the rule of British India, holds the grave of Mary Rebecca Weston. Some consider this to be the most elegant of graves in the country. A strange superstition grew around the grave. Childless women believed that they would conceive if they swallowed a bit of tombstone.

Like these, many other tales and stories of Himachal Pradesh were penned by city-based Shimla-based writer-cum-historian Raaja Bhasin in a 115-

page coffee table book "Hidden Himachal" for Himachal Tourism.

It was released by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur this week.

Divided in three sections, the first talks about those places that have ease of accessibility from the primary tourist destinations and yet are not very well known.

In the second section, the places with a little more difficulty level of accessibility, and the third covers some of the most difficult areas like the Great Himalayan National Park in Kullu district and some of the high mountain passes.

Dhami and Arki are two small towns that date back to the time when there were numerous princely states in Himachal Pradesh.

Both of these are fairly close to Shimla and both, while relatively off the normal tourist circuit, have substantial natural beauty and examples of fine architecture.

In terms of heritage and his-



tory of Bilaspur town, some 120 km from the state capital, the most significant loss in the submergence was of the 28 large and small temples.

According to Bhasin, most of these were built in the classical "nagara" style.

by the waters of Maharana Pratap Sagar, Daba Siba, which lied close to Punjab border, holds a rare architectural and art marvel in the shape of striking temple of Radha Krishna that dates back to 1835.

At a height of some 6,000 feet, Dagshai was a barren hill that in 1847 was transferred by the Maharaja of Patiala to the British for the purpose of creating a military station or cantonment.

Inner and outer Seraj are not well known as nearby Kullu or Manali, but are woven with a rich culture that is fairly distinct from that of the Beas Valley.

For rural charm, undisturbed woods, exquisite temples and simple lifestyle, the Seraj region is a great area for the off-beat travellers.

A major portion of inner Seraj is taken up by the Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary that is contiguous to the Great Himalayan National Park -- part of one of the largest flora and fauna reserves in the Himalayas.

For some 1,400 years Naggar was the seat of the erstwhile princely state of Kullu.

Naggar, which boasts of the famed International Roerich Memorial Trust, is home to age-old shrines, including the pagoda-shaped temple of Tripura Devi.

The lesser known destinations showcased in the coffee table book include the shrine of Mata Kunal Pathri located on the outskirts of Dharamsala town.

The shrine is dedicated to Devi Sati, the consort of Lord

Shiva, which has a huge following in the Kangra region.

One of the most remarkable of Spiti's monasteries is located in Hikkam village. This is one of two Buddhist monasteries in Spiti under the Sakya-pa order.

Unlike the second, which is of relatively recent order and located in Kaza, the one at Hikkam, some 350 km from Shimla, is believed to date back to at least the 14th century.

The Pangti Valley, lies between the Pir Panjal ranges and the Greater Himalaya, and may well be considered to one of Himachal's best kept secrets.

For eight months, Pangti remained locked within itself. It is true that when Pangti was part of formerly state of Chamba, officials posted there were given a "funeral allowance". **IANS**

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DECADES-LONG BOUNDARY ISSUE

India, China agree to maintain peace

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sharing a disputed boundary for decades, India and China on Saturday agreed to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas and stressed on approaching the boundary issue from the strategic perspective of bilateral ties.

The two sides also resolved to intensify efforts to achieve fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary or Line of Actual Control (LAC) question during the talks between National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi here.

They held parleys under the Special Representatives framework. This was the 22nd round of talks to resolve the disputed boundary of more than 3,500 km LAC stretching from Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand to Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

The Ministry of External Affairs later said the talks were constructive with focus on taking forward bilateral developmental partnership. There was consensus that both sides should respect each other's sensitivities and concerns, the Ministry said in a statement. Wang arrived here on Friday for the talks.

Both sides agreed that it is important to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas and underlined the importance of approaching the boundary issue from strategic perspective of India-China ties, it said. The two sides agreed that early settlement of boundary issue serves fundamental interests of both countries, the Ministry said. Officials said various dimensions of the boundary issue were discussed at the talks.

It is the first high-level visit from China to India after Prime



Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held the second informal summit in Mamallapuram in October as well as after New Delhi pulled out of the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Doval and Wang are the designated Special Representatives of the two countries for the boundary talks.

Wang was to visit India for the talks in September but the trip was postponed then.

The India-China border dispute covers 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet while India contests it.

Both sides have been asserting that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it is necessary to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas.

India and China fought a war in 1962 and the subsequent years have not seen any major conflagration along the LAC. However, transgressions take place by the Chinese Army claiming the specified sector to be in China. The Indian Army has repeatedly prevented such transgressions leading to a stand-off with the Chinese Army in Doklam near Sikkim in 2017.

Army Chief General Bipin

Rawat had said on Friday here India is optimistic that the situation along the LAC will further improve with the two armies actively working to reduce and manage troop confrontations after the Doklam face-off in 2017.

The first informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping at Wuhan in April 2018 had led to "strategic guidance" to the two militaries to actively defuse troop confrontations during patrolling in accordance with existing protocols and mechanisms.

"Post Wuhan, the strategic guidance from the highest-level and understanding of the nuances of the working mechanism at the functional level has enabled management of challenges along the LAC," said Rawat on Friday.

The statement came even as the eighth edition of the "Hand-in-Hand" exercise between the Indian and Chinese armies, a confidence-building measure, concluded at Umroi in Meghalaya on Friday.

"The exercise was aimed at practicing joint drills of counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban terrain under the UN mandate. The two armies have gained from each other's expertise and experience in conduct of counter-terror and company-level operations. Troops of both the contingents departed on a healthy note of mutual informal respect and goodwill."

Bilateral border tensions have certainly reduced since the 73-day face-off in Doklam as both the countries have evolved mechanisms, especially at battalion commander-level, to ensure there are lesser confrontations along the LAC stretching from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

TO BEAT PAK IN NARRATIVE WARFARE

Armed forces need unified PR command: Cyber Security chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's cyber security chief on Saturday said the separate public relations wings of the three armed forces are "going in different ways" and made a strong pitch for a unified PR command for the three services. Pakistan is ahead of India in this aspect as its Director General Inter Services Public Relations (DGISPR) serves as the spokesperson for the Pakistan Armed Forces.

National Cyber Security

Coordinator Lieutenant General Rajesh Pant (ret) said the unified PR command was needed to ensure an upper hand in the narrative warfare with Pakistan, which, he opined, has "got its act together" through its Director General Inter Services Public Relations (DG-ISRPR).

"When we go to have our own equivalent of the DGISPR because the (Indian armed forces) services have their own PRs and they are going in different ways? Somebody at the national level

now has to look at the narrative warfare and how to implement it in various domains," he said.

Talking about the Director General Inter Services Public Relations (DGISPR), which serves as the spokesperson for the Pakistan Armed Forces, Pant said the neighbouring country got its act together in narrative warfare through the agency.

"What we are finding from the other side — from the western border — that since the time they have created the

DGISPR, they have got their act together," he said here at a seminar.

According to official handle @OfficialDGISPR, Major General Asif Ghafoor is serving the post since December 2016.

Lt Gen (Retd) Rajesh Pant added, "When they (DGISPR) conduct a narrative warfare, let's say in the case of Kashmir, the message they send to Europe is that human rights are being infringed." While when they engage

with Islamic nations they tell them that Islam is under threat, noted Pant, adding, "What they told the southeast Asia is that there is a regional instability," said Pant adding "So, they seem to have got their act together."

It is important to clarify what the three services of Indian armed forces imply and mean by 'information warfare', he said. "They should come out with the definition because now they are using the terms - as you are aware - like 'narrative warfare', he said.

ED attaches land valued at ₹77.7L belonging to wildlife smuggler under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached a land measuring 11.5752 Decimal (5042 sq.ft) in Kolkata valuing ₹77.7 lakhs under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) belonging to a notorious smuggler of wild life Supradip Guha in a case related to illegal trading and smuggling of Wild Life in Eastern India. In a first of its kind case, the ED had attached three Chimpanzees, four Marmosets and other precious birds of Indian and foreign origin from his premises. At present, Guha is absconding and a look out circular has been issued for him.

"Accused Guha a resident of Baguiati, Kolkata was involved in large scale illegal trade of wild life in West Bengal since long," it said in a statement. The ED said its probe found Guha was "running an organised wildlife smuggling racket". He is a clever criminal and recorded contradictory statements before the customs authorities and wildlife authorities to evade action from both the departments, it alleged.

According to the ED, seven animals are valued at ₹81 lakh, with each chimpanzee worth ₹25 lakh and a

marmoset, a species of small long-tailed South American monkeys, about ₹1.5 lakh.

ED sources said that investigation was initiated under PMLA on receipt of information from the Wild Life Department of West Bengal regarding seizure of prohibited Wildlife under Indian Wildlife protection Act 1972.

Investigation also revealed that the accused had also procured fake transportation certificate for illegally transporting scheduled and protected Indian Birds for which a separate FIR No. 86/2019 was registered against him by PS North Bidhannagar of WB Police.

Investigations under PMLA revealed that accused Supradip Guha had deposited illegally earned money into 8 bank accounts owned by him in his name and in the name of his family member and his firms. Investigation also revealed that the accused was running an organised racket dealing in illegal wild life trade and the proceeds of crime so earned by him run into more than three crores. The agency said the first-of-its-kind attachment under the PMLA "enabled" the zoo authorities to retain the animals as the smuggler was making attempts to take them away.

Jaishankar on 2-day visit to Iran: To meet counterpart, Rouhani

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the US provided a rare exemption to India from sanctions on the Chabahar port, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar will on Sunday embark on a two-day visit to Iran, where he will co-chair the 19th Joint Commission Meeting with his Iranian counterpart, Javed Zarif. Jaishankar is also expected to call upon Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, the external affairs ministry said on Saturday.

The meeting comes days after the US exemption to India from sanctions on the Chabahar port in Iran as Washington said it recognised that the strategic project was a lifeline for war-torn Afghanistan to get humanitarian supplies from India.

The Chabahar port -- jointly being developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan -- is considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade with central Asian nations by the three countries. It is located on the Indian Ocean in the Sistan and Baluchistan province of Iran.

Jaishankar will also be visiting Oman from December 23 to 25 at the invitation of Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, the External Affairs



Ministry said in another statement. "During his visit, EAM, in addition to meeting his counterpart, will hold meetings with other ministers to discuss matters of mutual interest. An agreement for cooperation in the field of maritime transport will be signed during the visit. EAM will also interact with the Indian community in Muscat during the visit," the statement said.

This will be Jaishankar's first visit to Oman after the second term of the Modi government began in May. "The visit is in pursuit of India's objective of enhanced engagement with the Gulf region, which is in India's extended neighbourhood."

It will provide an opportunity to hold in-depth discussions with the political leadership on a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues and will advance India's growing engagement with Oman and the region," the statement said.

Press Association condemns 'attack' on scribes during protests

New Delhi: The Press Association, a leading body of journalists, on Saturday strongly condemned "attack and unnecessary harassment" of journalists during coverage of protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

In a statement, the Association said, it was also concerned over incidents of burning of media OB vans during the protests and appealed to all sections to realise the need of a free and fair press and the importance of media during incidents of national importance.

The Association said attack on journalists on their line of duty in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala, Karnataka and Punjab is an assault on media freedom.

It urged authorities concerned to ensure full security to the media in the discharge of their duties as the Fourth Estate.

The statement, issued by Association president Jaishankar Gupta and general secretary CK Nayak, said it has taken a serious note of the detention of Omar Rashid, a journalist of The Hindu in Lucknow, detention of seven scribes in Mangalore and attack on a reporter and a video journalist of Mathrubhumi News - Arun Shankar and Vaisakh - in Delhi when they were doing their duties.

ANI Reporter Ujjwal Roy and Cameraperson Sarabjeet Singh were assaulted while covering protests near Jamia Milia Islamia, it said.

Earlier, two journalists — Dinesh R and Wasim Sayeed of Asianet News, a prominent Malayalam news channel — were also attacked in the national capital during the coverage of the protests by Jamia Milia Islamia students against

the Citizenship Amendment Act.

Wasim was seriously injured during stone-pelting and had to be admitted to a hospital, the Association said.

Also an attempt was made to allegedly manhandle a video journalist of Zee News, Jaideep, camera of a news channel was damaged while another's was taken but not returned as yet, it said, adding journalists were attacked in Sambhal and media OB vans were torched in Lucknow too.

In a separate incident, armed men shot dead electronic media journalist, Jobanpreet Singh and Gurchet Singh, working for a vernacular daily in Moga in Punjab.

The Association is anguished over such incidents and demands speedy investigation to deter perpetrators of such crimes, the statement said. PTI

Tight security for PM's rally: CCTV on all routes leading to venue, snipers atop buildings

New Delhi: Elaborate security arrangements have been made for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally on Sunday at Delhi's Ramlika Maidan, which is a little over a kilometre away from Old Delhi's Daryaganj that was hit by violence on Friday during the protest against the amended Citizenship Act.

According to sources, senior officials remained in huddle till 5 am on Saturday to discuss the security arrangements. In the meeting, among other things, it was decided that social media should be monitored to stop rumour-mongering, especially in the wake of ongoing protests against the contentious legislation.

Checking of vehicles has been stepped up on border areas to ensure that "unscrupulous" elements do not enter the national capital to disrupt the rally, sources said.

A multilevel security arrangement will be in place on

Sunday, with CCTV surveillance of all the routes leading to the venue and snipers being positioned atop buildings to ensure security, they said.

The Delhi Police is in close touch with the SPG and the Bharatiya Janata Party for the security arrangements during the programme. The Delhi BJP has also deployed volunteers as part of its security arrangements for the rally.

In a statement, senior BJP leader Vijay Goel said preparations for the rally, which is being organised to thank PM Modi for giving ownership rights to 40 lakh residents of 1731 unauthorised colonies, are in full swing.

A total of 11 lakh signatures by residents of unauthorised colonies will be handed over to Prime Minister Modi as a thank you gesture, he said.

Goel, the convener of arrangements at the venue, said more than two lakh people are

expected to attend the rally which will be dominated by youths and women.

Cutouts of PM Modi, BJP president and Home Minister Amit Shah and Working President JP Nadda have been put up around Ramlika Maidan. "This rally will also symbolise that after winning seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, the BJP is in full-swing in preparations for Delhi Legislative Assembly elections as well," Goel said.

He said that LED screens have been installed at several places. Outside the premises, people from Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh will be playing dhool.

The BJP has majorly focused on unauthorised colonies in this rally because this will become a big issue in upcoming Delhi elections. A tableau of unauthorised colony has been installed too. PTI

Sharad Pawar silent on whether Ajit will become Dy CM

Pune: NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday kept mum on whether senior party leader and his nephew Ajit Pawar would become deputy chief minister in the Maha Vikas Aghadi in Maharashtra.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray would soon take decision on cabinet expansion, Pawar said at a press conference here.

Asked about Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut's reported statement that Ajit Pawar would become deputy CM in the Shiv Sena-Congress-NCP government in the state when the cabinet is expanded, the NCP chief refused to make any clarification. "I have read Raut's statement. But I am the president of my party, so I know who will take oath in the expansion," he

said cryptically. The state Anti-Corruption Bureau reiterated before the High Court on Friday that it found no evidence against Ajit Pawar in an alleged irrigation scam. Amid a deadlock over government formation after Assembly elections, Ajit had sprung a surprise and joined BJP-led government as deputy chief minister last month, but the government lasted for only 80 hours. When asked if it was taking longer than usual for cabinet expansion, Sharad Pawar replied in negative. "We are running an alliance government and we have already made allotment of portfolios. The chief minister may announce expansion after the winter session of Assembly (which ended on Saturday)," he said. PTI

10 adivasis diagnosed with Kala-azar in WB village

Balurghat (South Dinajpur): At least 10 people of an adivasi village in South Dinajpur district's Kushmandi block have been infected with Kala-azar, officials said.

Kala-azar is a form of the disease leishmaniasis marked by emaciation, anaemia, fever, and enlargement of the liver and spleen.

The disease is caused by the bite of infected female phlebotomine sandflies, an official said.

The health department has started spraying insecticides in the village in an effort to stop the disease from spreading.

"Workers of the health department have started visiting village to give medicines to the infected persons and their families," the Block Medical Officer of Health (BMOH) of Kushmandi, Amit Das, said.

They have also started an awareness camp in the village, he said.

"We are keeping a close watch on the families," the Block Development Officer (BDO) of Kushmandi, Saipa Lama, said. A total of 46 families live in the adivasi village which is known as Namvyle. PTI



Jadavpur, Presidency and other college and university students break the barricade in front of State BJP headquarter during their protest rally against CAA(Citizen Amendment Act) and NRC in Kolkata on Saturday

Govt committed to overall development of Vidarbha: Maha CM

Nagpur: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said his Government was determined to bring about overall development of Vidarbha, with focus on farmers by giving impetus to cotton, rice and orange production in the region.

He said projects like the Nagpur- Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway, MIHAN, cancer institute in Chandrapur as well as wildlife and tourism initiatives will be speeded up.

Thackeray said the state government will take steps to bring investment in the Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN).

State minister Subhash Desai said 'krishi prakriya kendra' would be set up to increase rice production in Vidarbha.

Rice is grown over large areas in Gondia, Bhandara, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur districts in the region.

He said cotton production would be given a fillip by developing a "farm to fibre, fibre to fabric and fabric to fashion" chain.

Small scale industries will be given priority in cotton processing units by giving them financial assistance in a phase-wise manner over three years, he added.

Similarly, a special programme will be implemented to increase orange production, the minister said.

Speaking on irrigation projects, he said, "Work on 123 irrigation projects (in Vidarbha) are in progress, including six big ones under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana. All pending irrigation projects will be completed by 2022, including Gosikhurd."

Gosikhurd is an earthfill dam on Wainganga river in Bhandara district in Vidarbha. PTI

Two get life term, one acquitted in 2007 twin bomb blasts in Faizabad court

Faizabad (UP): A special anti-terror court has sentenced two persons to life imprisonment for their alleged roles in the November 2007 twin blast case in the district court premises here in which five people were killed and 24 were injured.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Ashok Kumar, heading the special court set up under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, pronounced the quantum of sentence amid tight security in the special courtroom in the Faizabad jail.

"The special court sentenced two persons to life imprisonment and acquitted one on Friday in the 2007 district court serial blast case," Faizabad Bar Association president Vijay Bahadur Singh told PTI on Saturday.

The two who were sentenced are tariq Quasim and Mohammad Akhtar while the third accused in the case, Sajjad Ur Rahman, was acquitted due to lack of evidence.

A fourth accused, Khalid Mujahid, had died in the police custody under suspicious conditions.

Twelve years ago on November 23, 2007, the Faizabad district court had been rocked by two simultaneous bomb blasts in which five people, including a lawyer, were killed and 24 others were injured, seven of them critically.

The case was lodged on the complaint of erstwhile Faizabad Bar Association secretary Mansur Ilahi and the case was probed by the anti terrorist squad of Uttar Pradesh police.

The police had nabbed four persons for their alleged involvement in the case. It had sent up three of them, barring one who died in police custody, for the trial in the case.

The trial in the case was held in a courtroom in Faizabad jail premises as the Faizabad district bar association had decided neither to represent any of the accused in the blast case, nor let any other lawyer represent them. PTI

NOT ALL IS GLOOMY! SBI chairman nudges industry to borrow and invest in economy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar on Saturday nudged industry leaders to enrich their borrowing capacity so as to boost investment in the economy, asserting there is no dearth of funds and most of the banks will be in a better position by March-end as far as stressed assets are concerned. He also said that the State Bank of India (SBI) is under-utilising its loan sanction limits as there is not enough credit demand from the industry. "If India has to achieve its goal of \$5 trillion economy then it cannot happen unless there is investment in the economy. Today the outstanding banking credit is ₹96 lakh crore. So for a \$5 trillion economy, we would at least need to double it," Kumar said at the 92nd Annual Convention of industry body FICCI here.

He further said that it is a very good business opportunity for the banks.

The gross capital formation rate which is at about 30 per cent at present also needs to go up to at least 37-38 per cent, Kumar added.

Stressing that there is an adequate availability of funds with the banking system, Kumar said: "I don't find enough projects where investment is being sought. Our first indication is that we are the largest financier of projects, we have a very big team for project finance and currently it is under-utilised."

He said even if there are projects, those are mainly in solar, city gas projects and to some extent in roads sector.

"Last year, we did only two financial closures which can be said to be large tickets. One was HPCL refinery in Rajasthan where the project



size is almost ₹50,000 crore and the other was Mumbai Nagpur Super Communication Expressway where the project size is again ₹50,000 crore and half of the money has come from the bankers. "Other than that, I don't have a project where funding

demand is more than Rs 2,000 to ₹2,500 crore today. So I want to ask you (industry), where are the projects? And if there are no projects then how do I lend and to whom I lend?" Kumar asked the industrialists present at the convention. The State Bank today has

loan sanction limits of up to Rs 8 lakh crore, but the utilisation (demand) is of only ₹5.5-6 lakh crore, the SBI chairman said.

He further said the industry keeps on complaining that banks are not lending and lenders are saying that "we are ready with funds, you are not borrowing".

On the Centre's infra development push, Kumar said, "When we talk about \$1.5 trillion to be invested in infrastructure sector, there is an opportunity for everyone. I don't think government can meet more than 25 per cent of this requirement. So 75 per cent will still be an opportunity for investors as well as the banks and the foreign capital."

On NPAs and liquidity situation, he said banks now have become extra cautious in lending than they used to be earlier and the risks have increased

due to defaults.

Talking about reforms such as IBC (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code), Kumar said in the current scenario there is ample liquidity available and the recent judgement by the Supreme Court on Essar Steel will matter a lot.

"Many large ticket stressed assets are getting resolved and by March 31, we are going to be in a very good position as far as most of the banks are concerned where at least the NPA (non-performing asset) ratio and stressed assets hopefully will come down," he said.

"And in such scenario, the opportunities which we (SBI) are seeing definitely is infrastructure, consumer lending... There is apparently a demand slowdown, but still our housing loan portfolio, which is a large portfolio, (in that) we are still growing at 16 per cent," the SBI chief claimed.

Among others, unsecured loans (such as credit against salaries) are growing at 25 per cent and there is good demand from housing sector also, he said.

"For housing sector, geographies may differ, you may have problem in NCR but it is not all India problem. We may have some problem in some residential markets but office market is doing quite well in certain cities like Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai — all these markets are doing well and we have seen huge investment interest from all the private equity investors," he added.

Replying to a question on lending to the telecom sector in the next round of spectrum auctions, he said, "For us lending for spectrum is completely unsecured. On paper, it is secured as the auction is to be done by government but prac-

tically it is totally unsecured."

"So in such circumstances, banks will have to evaluate carefully before lending to the sector as the probability of default is very high," Kumar said. Nevertheless, at a time when India is witnessing a demand slowdown from consumers and slowdown in economic growth, he said the scenario is not "all that gloomy" as it looks like to be as the country is undergoing a transition phase due to ongoing reforms process.

Also "the mindset with which people do business, the way we live our lives, everything is undergoing a transition phase. I think we are undergoing through a pain due to this transition... The country is full of opportunities. That have not disappeared. So I think we should not be disheartened by the current scenario," Kumar said.

Industry captains discuss road map for \$5 trillion economy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

From policy stability to emphasis on exports of local goods, key industry players on Saturday discussed and suggested measures for making India a \$5 trillion economy.

SAIL Chairman Anil Kumar Chaudhary, ITC Chairman and Managing Director Sanjiv Puri, Cadila Healthcare Chairman Pankaj R Patel, Bharti Enterprises Vice Chairman Rajan Bharti Mittal and JK Paper Vice Chairman and Managing Director Harsh Pati Singhania took part in the discussion during a session on 'India: Roadmap to a \$5 trillion economy' organised by industry chamber FICCI here.

The executives stressed on the need for Indian manufacturing to become globally competitive and join global value

chain as the key ingredients for becoming a \$5 trillion economy.

"If we have to reach the level of \$5 trillion economy by the next five years, we have to be globally competitive. India also needs to increase its exports of steel and other manufactured items," SAIL Chairman Chaudhary said.

Cadila Healthcare Chairman Patel said that policy stability is required for any business to grow. "Without policy stability it becomes impossible for industry to plan long-term goals."

"We all know that manufacturing is not something we can decide today and begin the production tomorrow. It takes time. Besides, innovation has the most important role to play for any industry to survive," he said.

Bharti Enterprises' Rajan

Mittal suggested that the government should focus on strengthening the digital backbone of the country.

Industry has been disrupted, he said adding that government's intervention is needed. JK Paper's Singhania said the country's manufacturing sector first needs to become internally competitive as several factors are still holding it back including the multiplicity of regulations from different regulators.

ITC CMD Puri said that "farming is a large employer. Lots of jobs were created in the post-harvest management".

"Even the food processing segment has the largest employment to capital ratio. We need to plug into the global value chains in value-added agricultural products," he added.

Govt taking measures to address challenges in steel sector, says SAIL chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic steel sector is facing challenges in form of high input costs and unavailability of coking coal in the country, SAIL chairman AK Chaudhary said on Saturday, and conveyed that the government is aware of the issues and taking appropriate measures to resolve them.

He was speaking at a session on 'India: Roadmap to a \$5 trillion economy' organised by industry chamber FICCI here.

High input cost is a concern for the industry, the Steel Authority of India Ltd chairman said adding that the production cost of steel in India is the highest at present. One of the major factors contributing to high production cost is

tax, he said.

"However, the Government is well aware of the issues and is taking appropriate steps and measures to overcome these challenges," Chaudhary said.

The royalty is close to 20 per cent on the input material, whether it is coal or iron ore and freight cost is higher than what is being paid in other countries, the SAIL chairman said adding that electricity also adds to the high production cost.

"In India, average production cost of per tonne steel is about \$450, whereas in China it is as low as \$350 where players get benefit of low tax and incentives," he emphasised.

Coking coal and iron ore are the two key raw materials

Railways tests new BOXNS freight wagons at 110 kmph

ANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Railways has conducted speed trial — up to 110 kmph — of the new BOXNS wagons with the 25-tonne axle load on the newly built 193 km Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) on Friday.

A senior Railway Ministry official said, here on Saturday, the Research Design and Standards Organisation of the Railways conducted the trial on the Western DFC — Phulera to Ateli.

During the trial, the train attained an average speed of 86 kmph. The official termed it a big breakthrough and said the railways had to wait for the last 40 years "ever since we got the Casnub bogie design for the freight wagons".

He said the BOXNS wag-

The DFC is expected to complement the Indian economy with an increased number of freight trains in eastern and western sectors

ons cleared 100 kmph in both loaded and empty condition on the DFC. According to railway officials, the freight wagons normally run at 60 kmph with 22.9-tonne axle load and at 45 kmph with 25-tonne axle load on few routes.

The Railways is constructing the DFC equipped for heavy-haul train operation. The ₹81,459 crore project received the Cabinet's nod in 2006 and has since then missed several deadlines due reasons, like procedural wrangles, land acquisition and environment

clearances.

Passing through nine states and 60 districts, the project is divided in Western and Eastern corridors.

The DFC will have 48 stations/junctions along the Western DFC and 58 on the Eastern DFC. The Western DFC covers 1,504 km from the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust near Navi Mumbai to Dadri in UP, traversing through Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Palanpur, Phulera and Rewari. The Eastern DFC covers 1,856 km from Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni, near Kolkata, in West Bengal, and will travel through Haryana, UP, Bihar and Jharkhand.

The DFC is expected to complement the Indian economy with an increased number of freight trains in eastern and western sectors.

No need to declare religion for opening bank accounts: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar on Saturday denied the "baseless rumours" that Indian citizens need to declare their religion for opening of bank accounts and KYC purpose.

The clarification comes after a news report suggested

that Indian banks may ask depositors and customers to list their religion.

"There is no requirement for #Indian citizens to declare their religion for opening/ existing #Bank account or for #KYC. Do not fall for baseless rumours about any such move by Banks," Kumar said in a late evening tweet.

Stagflation knocking at our doors: Mitra

PTI ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Finance minister Amit Mitra on Saturday said that India is facing the prospects of a possible stagflation due to low growth and high inflation.

"Stagflation is knocking at our doors. This is due to stagnation following low growth and high inflation", Mitra said at an event organised by West Bengal Garment Manufacturers and Dealers Association here. He said that as per new data, India's GDP growth rate is likely to be 4.6 per cent for the current financial year.

Fitch Ratings on Friday has cut its growth forecast from previous estimation of 5.6 per cent to 4.6 per cent for the financial year 2019-20. Mitra said that when India's growth rate is nose-

diving, West Bengal's growth rate is on an upward trend, coupled with low levels of poverty and rising employment rates.

Talking about the textiles industry in the state, he said that the sector should target an annual revenue of ₹one lakh crore by 2023. He said that the sector provides direct employment to 20 lakh people and indirect employment to 50 lakh.

Mitra said that the state is in process of setting up seven textile parks in and around the city, the largest one being at Nungi on the western fringes of the metropolis where the Government would invest ₹400 crore for building 11 lakh square feet of space. According to him, bank loans to the MSME sector of the state is likely to cross ₹70,000 crore during the current fiscal.

Jaypee loses 1,000 hectare land that has F1 Circuit

PTI ■ NOIDA

The Yamuna Expressway Authority on Saturday cancelled the allotment of 1,000 hectares of land to Jaypee group on which India's only Formula One motor racing circuit is built in Greater Noida over non-payment of dues, officials said.

The decision was taken by the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) during its 66th board meeting.

"A thousand hectare land was allotted to Jaypee Sports Limited, an affiliate of Jaypee group, in YEIDA's special economic zone. Jaypee Sports Limited has been defaulting on payments to YEIDA and not completing projects promised to buyers," YEIDA CEO Arunvir Singh said. The embattled business group defaulted on payments of over ₹500 crore, he added. The Jaypee group had sub-leased plots to 11 builders on the allocated land and separately had taken around ₹2,000 crore from homebuyers in 10 projects but not delivered it, he said. PTI

After Google, Twitter warns Indian users about data breach

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In an extremely stressful year for social media users who have been bugged several times this year, Twitter on Saturday admitted a malicious code was inserted into its app by a bad actor that could have compromised several Android users' information worldwide, including in India.

Some users in India woke up to an email from Twitter, warning them to update the app for Android and immediately change the password.

The vulnerability within Twitter for Android could allow the bad actor to see non-public account information or to control your account (send Tweets or Direct Messages), said an apologetic Twitter.

"Prior to the fix, through a complicated process involving the insertion of malicious code into restricted storage areas of the Twitter app, it may have been possible for a bad actor to access information (Direct Messages, protected Tweets, location information) from the app," Twitter said in a state-

ment. The company said it does not have direct evidence that malicious code was inserted into the app or that this vulnerability was exploited, but it can't be completely sure.

Twitter, however, did not divulge the number of affected users.

"We have taken steps to fix this issue and are directly notifying people who could have been exposed to this vulnerability either through the Twitter app or by email with specific instructions to keep them safe". The company recommended updating to the latest version for Android as the issue did not impact "Twitter for iOS".

"We're sorry this happened and will continue working to keep your information secure on Twitter," said the company in the email sent to the Indian users, adding that those affected can also reach out to Twitter's Office of Data Protection, requesting information regarding their account security. IANS

Japan lifts curbs on export of key chip material to South Korea

PTI ■ TOKYO

Japan has lifted curbs on the export of a key microchip material to South Korea, news reports said Saturday, days before the leaders of both countries meet in their first formal talks for more than a year.

The ministry of economy, trade and industry on Friday removed photoresists — used to coat semiconductor circuit boards — from Tokyo's export restrictions against Seoul, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper and other reports said.

Japan tightened export controls on three materials essential to key products of South Korean tech companies such as Samsung in July after a series of South Korean court rulings ordered Japanese firms to compensate war-time forced labour victims. The move infuriated Tokyo, which insists the matter was settled in a 1965 treaty normalising diplomatic relations between the two countries, which included significant reparations. AFP

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

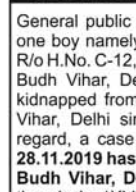


General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Nisha**, D/o: **Hubu Lal**, R/o: Ganga Shahay's house, Gurudware wall Gali, Punjab Khod, Delhi has been missing/ kidnapped since **09.11.2019** from the area of P. S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 456/19** dated **18.11.2019** has been registered at P. S.

Kanjhawala, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: **Age:** 15 years, **6 months**, **Height:** 5' 3", **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Wearing:** Red colour suit, black colour pajami, blue colour hawai sleeper in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/3526/RD/19

SHO P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi
Tel.No. 011-25951486, 7065036125

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that one boy named **Samrat S/o Sewaram** R/o H.No. C-12, gali no.-05, Harsh Vihar, Budh Vihar, Delhi, has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of P.S. Budh Vihar, Delhi since **24.11.2019**. In this regard, a case **FIR No. 316/19** dated **28.11.2019** has been registered at P.S. Budh Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing/ Kidnapped boy is as under.

Age: 03 Years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5 feet, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Green T-Shirt & brown colour pant and Red colour sweater sleeper in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out him but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing boy then please inform P.S. Budh Vihar, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
Sd/- S.H.O. P.S. Budh Vihar, Delhi
DP/3525/RD/19

Ph: 011-27052772

Punjab and Sind Bank ਪੰਜਾਬ ਐਂਡ ਸਿੰਧ ਬੈਂਕ

Zonal Office Noida, C - Block, Sector 63, Noida - 201301

NOTICE
Dear Customer, As per RBI mandate, customers whose periodic KYC is due, requested to update their KYC/PAN/ Form 60/61 with home branch immediately otherwise their account will be frozen

Zonal Manager
प्रिय ग्राहक, RBI के आदेश के अनुसार, जिन ग्राहकों की आवधिक KYC देय है, उनसे अनुरोध किया गया है उनके केवाईसी / फॉर्म / 60/61 से होम ब्रांच के साथ तुरंत अपडेट करें अन्यथा उनके खाते को फ्रीज कर दिया जाएगा
आंचलिक प्रबंधक

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/Esst/SPL-TRG/Sikhon-Puthi/LP and UP/452/2019/10799 Date :21.12.2019
Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission (Samgra Shiksha), Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed offset printing presses having Web Offset Machine/ Sheet Offset Machine for printing and supply of Sikhon Puthi- LP and UP.

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 1000/- (Rupees one thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/ Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/- Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE MECHANICAL DIVISION UDHAMPUR

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
E-NIT PHE/UDHR/ 62 OF 2019-20 DATED 14-12-2019

Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical Division, Udhampur, on behalf of the governor of J&K State, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from registered firms who have sufficient experience in the relevant field of electro-mechanical/ electrical works.

S. No. 1, Name of Work :- Procurement, installation, testing and commissioning of pumping machinery with other electro-mechanical components under WSS Billaspur Dist.

Qty :- 01 job, Name of Division :- PHE Mech. Division Udhampur, Cost of Tender Document / Tender Fee (in Rs) :- Rs. 200/- Earnest money (in Rs) :- Rs. 12000.00 (Rs.56000/- for DIC/ SSI Registered Firms) of J&K in the shape of CDR/ FDR Addressed to the Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical Division Udhampur, Validity of Rates :- 90 days, Bid Validity :- 90 days

Position of funds : Demanded

1. Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 16-12-2019 (10:30 AM).

2. The Bids shall be deposited on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 17-12-2019 (01:00 PM) to 06-01-2020 (3:00 PM)

Sd/- Executive Engineer PHE Mech. Division Udhampur

WESTERN RAILWAY BULK ADVERTISEMENT RIGHTS				
Sr. No.	Tender Notice No. & Date	WORK AND LOCATION	Approx. Tender Value for 5 years	EMD in ₹
1	CA_11 Bulk Station_PIB BCT, 2019 dttd 19.12.2019	Tender for Bulk Advertising Rights for display of Advertisements at Passengers Information System for a period of 5 years over Mumbai Division of Western Railway	₹ 12919353/-	₹ 258400/-
2	CA_11 Bulk Station_KILE 2019 dttd 19.12.2019	Tender for Bulk Advertising Rights for display of Advertisements at Kandivali station for a period of 5 years over Mumbai Division of Western Railway	₹ 16282183/-	₹ 325700/-
3	CA_11 Bulk Station_MEEL 2019 dttd 19.12.2019	Tender for Bulk Advertising Rights for display of Advertisements at Marine Lines station for a period of 5 years over Mumbai Division of Western Railway	₹ 5991406/-	₹ 119900/-

Sr. No. : 1 to 3 ; Date & Time of Opening : 16.01.2020. Regarding detailed tender conditions please visit www.ireps.gov.in Manual offers will not be considered.

ireps.gov.in | Facebook.com/WesternRly | Follow us on | Twitter.com/WesternRly

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender No. ERCON20192020, dated 19.12.2019. Chief Administrative Officer/Construction/Eastern Railway/Kolkata invites e-tender, uploaded on 12.12.2019 on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in for supply of the following items from RDSO approved sources for the tendered item(s) : **Tender Title :** Fabrication and supply of 10125 mm Overriding Curved Switches 1 in 12, BG 60 Kg to RDSO Drg No. T-4219, Alt 6 and IRS Specification : T-10-2000 Fabricated Switches with Corrugation No. 1 of Dec-2016. **Item Description(s) :** Detail description of the tendered item are available in e-Tender Notice and e-Tender Document (Chapter-III at page-26) uploaded on www.ireps.gov.in **Tendered Quantity :** 68 Sets. **Consignee :** DSK/Con/Asansol (West Bengal). **Approx Tender Value :** Rs. 1,23,93,544/- **Earnest Money :** Rs. 2,47,880/- **Date & Time of Closing/Opening of the Tender :** 03.01.2020 at 14.30 hrs. Interested tenderers may visit website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> In no case manual tender for the tendered item(s) will be accepted. CON-130/2019-20

Tender Notices are also available at Website www.e.railindiarailways.gov.in

Hong Kong police: Suspect fired shot during arrest

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong police on Saturday said an armed suspect fired a live round at officers as they tried to arrest him in an operation linked to the months of pro-democracy protests engulfing the city.

Police said a 19-year-old man pulled a semi-automatic pistol from his waistband as officers approached him in Tai Po district on Friday evening.

The shot did not hit anyone and the man was subdued. A subsequent search of a nearby flat uncovered an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and more than 250 rounds of ammunition.

Police said they believed the man and the newly discovered weapons were linked to a group arrested earlier this month who were also allegedly found in possession of a pistol and were plotting to attack officers.

"The firearms we discovered matched the intelligence we had collected which indicated that some people hoped to use firearms in some public assemblies to wound some others, including police officers on duty," Senior Superintendent Lee Kwai-wah told reporters on Saturday.

However, Lee said the suspect was also facing ongoing firearms charges from an arrest last year before the protests. Riot police had to be called in to back up the officers as local residents began heckling police, with at least two tear gas rounds fired to disperse them, the South China Morning Post



reported. Semi-autonomous Hong Kong has been shaken for six months by increasingly violent pro-democracy protests.

They were initially sparked by a now-abandoned attempt to allow extradition to the authoritarian mainland but have since morphed into a popular revolt against Beijing's rule, with spiralling fears that the city is losing some of its unique liberties.

Millions have marched peacefully in multiple rallies, with Beijing and local leader Carrie Lam digging their heels in. But a newly radicalised youth armed with petrol bombs, bricks and sometimes bows and arrows has added a dangerous layer to the movement, leading to increasingly violent battles with riot police.

Over the last six months, police have fired more than 16,000 rounds of tear gas and 10,000 rubber bullets. Some 6,000 people have been arrested, with 1,000 charged, a large chunk of them students.

In recent weeks, police have made arrests indicating some protesters may be plotting more drastic action. Alongside the arrest earlier this month of a group of peo-

ple in possession of a pistol, police said they also discovered two homemade nail bombs that had been stored in the grounds of a school.

Both Lam and the Hong Kong police force's reputation have taken a hammering during the protests but Beijing has publicly backed both.

The South China Morning Post published a new poll on Sunday which found 73 percent of respondents felt the police's handling of the protest had eroded trust in the force.

Among the demands being made by protesters is an independent inquiry into the police, amnesty for those arrested and fully free elections. In the last month, the frequency of protests has declined as well as the level of violence after pro-democracy candidates won a landslide at local elections. But Lam and Beijing have given no sign of budging.

On Saturday afternoon, small groups of a few dozen masked protesters held flash-mob rallies in shopping malls.

One group vandalised a restaurant owned by a conglomerate that is deemed to be pro-Beijing before police arrived on scene and the protesters dispersed.

Trump adviser: Expect more aggressive poll watching in 2020

Madison: One of President Donald Trump's top reelection advisers told influential Republicans in swing State Wisconsin that the party has "traditionally" relied on voter suppression to compete in battleground States, according to an audio recording of a private event obtained by The Associated Press.

The adviser said later that his remarks referred to frequent and false accusations that Republicans employ such tactics.

Justin Clark, a senior political adviser and senior counsel to Trump's reelection campaign, made the remarks on November 21 as part of a wide-ranging discussion about strategies in the 2020 campaign, including more aggressive use of Election Day monitoring of polling places.

"Traditionally it's always been Republicans suppressing votes in places," Clark said at the event.

"Let's start protecting our voters. We know where they are... Let's start playing offense a little bit. That's what you're going to see in 2020. It's going to be a much bigger program, a much more aggressive program, a much better-funded program."

Asked about the remarks by AP, Clark said he was referring to false accusations that the GOP engages in voter suppression.

"As should be clear from the context of my remarks, my point was that Republicans historically have been falsely accused of voter suppression and that it is time we stood up



to defend our own voters," Clark said.

"Neither I nor anyone I know or work with would condone anyone's vote being threatened or diluted and our efforts will be focused on preventing just that."

Clark made the comments November 21 in a meeting of the Republican National Lawyers Association's Wisconsin chapter.

Attendees included the state Senate's top Republican, Scott Fitzgerald, along with the executive director of the Wisconsin Republican Party.

Audio of the event at a country club in Madison obtained by the liberal group American Bridge was provided to AP by One Wisconsin Now, a Madison-based liberal advocacy group.

The roughly 20-minute audio offers an insider's glimpse of Trump's reelection strategy, showing the campaign focusing on voting locations in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, which form the so-called "blue wall" of traditional Democratic strength that Trump broke through to win in 2016.

Both parties are pouring millions of dollars into the States, anticipating they'll be

just as critical in the 2020 presidential contest.

Republican officials publicly signalled plans to step up their Election Day monitoring after a judge in 2018 lifted a consent decree in place since 1982 that barred the Republican National Committee from voter verification and other "ballot security" efforts.

Critics have argued the tactics amount to voter intimidation.

The consent decree was put in place after the Democratic National Committee sued its Republican counterpart, alleging the RNC helped intimidate black voters in New Jersey's election for Governor.

The federal lawsuit claimed the RNC and the state GOP had off-duty police stand at polling places in urban areas wearing armbands that read "National Ballot Security Task Force," with guns visible on some.

Without acknowledging any wrongdoing, the RNC agreed to the consent decree, which restricted its ability to engage in activities related to ballot security.

Lifting of the consent decree allows the RNC to "play by the same rules" as Democrats, said RNC communications director Michael Ahrens.

"Now the RNC can work more closely with state parties and campaigns to do what we do best, ensure that more people vote through our unmatched field program," Ahrens said. AP

Challenged by China, Russia, US builds force for future space wars

Washington: The United States has met a mounting 21st century strategic challenge from Russia and China with the creation of a full-fledged US Space Force within the Department of Defense.

Acting on an ambition by President Donald Trump that had met resistance at first, the White House signalled its determination to not cede superiority in a Star Wars-like future of killer satellites and satellite-killer weapons.

Trump made the Space Force's creation real with the signing of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, which set the initial budget for a Pentagon force that will stand equally with the military's five other branches.

"Going to be a lot of things happening in space, because space is the world's newest warfighting domain," Trump told members of the military gathered for the signing.

The Space Force will be the sixth formal force of the US military, after the Army, Air Force, Navy Marines, and Coast Guard.

"Our reliance on space-based capabilities has grown dramatically, and today outer space has evolved into a warfighting domain of its own," said Secretary of Defense Mark Esper on Friday.

"Maintaining American dominance in that domain is now the mission of the United States Space Force," Esper compared the Space Force's creation to the landmark creation of a separate US Air Force in 1947,

hived off from the Army after World War II in recognition that aerial war fighting was indeed a separate domain that would be important in the future.

Now that recognition is extended to space, a crucial venue for both military spy and communications satellites which will be targeted by adversaries in any conflict, and the possibility of outer-space launch platforms for destructive weapons.

The Defense Intelligence Agency warned in a report early this year that China and Russia have both developed "robust and capable" space services for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

"China and Russia, in particular, are developing a variety of means to exploit perceived US reliance on space-based systems and challenge the US position in space," it said.

China already demonstrated it could shoot down a satellite with a ground-based missile in 2007.

"Both states are developing jamming and cyberspace capabilities, directed energy weapons, on-orbit capabilities, and ground-based antisatellite missiles that can achieve a range of reversible to nonreversible effects," it said.

Iran and North Korea, too, are increasingly able to extend their military activities into space, jamming the communications of adversaries and developing ballistic missile technologies, it noted. AFP

Trump approves Russia-Europe gas pipeline sanctions

Washington: President Donald Trump on Friday signed off on US sanctions against companies building a Russian natural gas pipeline to Germany that Congress fears will give the Kremlin dangerous leverage over European allies.

The sanctions, which are opposed by the European Union, were included in a sprawling defense spending bill Trump signed at a ceremony on Joint Base Andrews, an air force installation outside Washington, DC.

They target companies building the nearly USD 11 billion Nord Stream 2 pipeline under the Baltic Sea with the aim of doubling deliveries of Russian natural gas to Europe's leading economy, Germany.

US lawmakers have warned the pipeline would enrich a hostile Russian Government and vastly increase President Vladimir Putin's influence in Europe at a time of heightened tension across the continent.

Both houses of Congress

overwhelmingly approved the sanctions, with the Senate voting Tuesday to send the measure to Trump's desk.

Trump, who has been accused by Democratic opponents of being soft on Putin, had little choice but to give his approval.

The sanctions were inserted into a much wider USD 738 billion annual Pentagon funding bill and, given the level of congressional support, a veto would likely have been overturned.

The US measures have angered Moscow and the European Union, which says it should be able to decide its own energy policies.

Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas, discussed the issue during a phone call Friday with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortogus said.

Pompeo expressed "strong opposition" to the project, Ortogus said in a statement.

The German-Russian

Chamber of Commerce insisted last week that the pipeline was important for energy security and urged retaliatory sanctions against the United States if the bill passes.

The US sanctions target pipe-laying vessels for Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream, a Russia-Turkey pipeline, and include asset freezes and revocation of US visas for the contractors.

One major contractor that could be hit is Swiss-based Allseas, which has been hired by Russia's state-owned energy giant Gazprom to build the offshore section.

The power of Gazprom, which is closely integrated with the Russian State, is at the center of concerns about the pipeline in the United States, and also in eastern and central European countries.

Senator Ted Cruz, a Republican ally of Trump, said that halting Nord Stream 2 should be a major security priority for the United States and Europe alike. AFP

Germany, EU condemn US sanctions on gas pipeline

Berlin: Germany accused the US of interfering in its internal affairs on Saturday for imposing sanctions on companies working on a major project to supply Western Europe with Russian gas.

Moscow and the European Union also issued statements criticising the sanctions, a day after President Donald Trump signed off on asset freezes and visa restrictions on those involved in the Nord Stream 2 project.

US lawmakers are seeking to stymie what they regard as an increasing reliance on Russian energy in Western Europe by targeting the project, which aims to double deliveries of Russian natural gas to Germany via a pipeline under the Baltic Sea.

The sanctions target contractors working to lay pipes

Brexit coins ordered again for new Jan 2020

PTI ■ LONDON The UK Government has ordered a new set of commemorative coins to mark the latest Brexit deadline of January 31, 2020 after having to melt down thousands with missed deadlines this year.

The Royal Mint had commissioned special coins to mark the UK's scheduled exit from the European Union (EU) first by March 29 this year and then October 31 this year, both deadlines which were missed amid parliamentary deadlock.

After being forced into a meltdown of those coins, the UK Treasury has now commissioned a new set for the latest deadline — which looks more promising after MPs voted decisively in favour of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's withdrawal agreement in the House of Commons on Friday. Following a meeting of

European Union. This coin will be introduced into circulation on the day the UK leaves the EU, a UK Treasury spokesperson said.

The special coins are expected to be aimed at collectors rather than wider general circulation.

The Royal Mint has previously said all the older version will be recycled rather than sold to collectors keen to acquire the coins that reflect the missed Brexit deadlines.

Recycled coins are sent to a scrap yard, sorted, shredded, melted in a large furnace, and then purified to be reused.

The Royal Mint would be hoping to be third time lucky following Johnson's landslide win in the December 12 General Election, which was seen as a strong backing for his version of getting Brexit done.



royal advisers known as the Privy Council this week, Queen Elizabeth II gave her formal consent to minting the new "gold, silver and cupro-nickel coins" featuring the updated exit deadline of January 31.

Plans for the new 50-pence coins, which will feature the phrase "peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations", were announced in the London Gazette.

"We will produce a coin to mark our departure from the

Dozens of ISIS members detained: Afghan official

Kabul: The Afghan Government said Saturday it has arrested or surrounded up to 700 Islamic State group fighters and family members in eastern Afghanistan over the past six months.

The Afghan intelligence service, the National Directorate for Security, said at least 75 women and 159 children, most of them from foreign countries, are in custody. There was no way to independently confirm that the prisoners the Government presented to reporters are affiliated with the Islamic State group.

Most of the arrested IS members are from Pakistan, Jordan and Central Asian countries, said an NDS officer who asked that his name not be used as the rules of the agency don't allow him to be identified.

As many as 277 foreigners are among the arrested militants, he said. Washington's peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad tweeted earlier this month that IS in eastern Afghanistan has been weakened by operations carried out not just by the US and Afghan forces, but by the Taliban as well. US Sen. Lindsey Graham said last week that President Donald Trump may announce an American troop drawdown from Afghanistan before the year's end, which would likely begin next year. AP

ICC to probe 'war crimes' in Palestinian territories

The Hague: The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor said she wanted to open a full investigation into alleged war crimes in the Palestinian territories, sparking a furious reaction from Israel and condemnation from the United States.

The Palestinians welcomed the move by the ICC as a "long overdue step" following a nearly five-year preliminary probe by the prosecutor into the situation since the 2014 war in Gaza.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the decision made the Hague-based court, which Israel has refused to sign up to since its creation in 2002, a "political tool" against the Jewish State.

"I am satisfied that there is a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation into the situation in Palestine," ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said in a statement on Friday.

"In brief, I am satisfied that war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip," she added, without specifying the perpetrators of the alleged crimes.

She said that before opening a full probe, she would ask the ICC to rule on the territory over which it has jurisdiction because of the "unique and highly contested legal and factual issues attaching to this situation."

"Specifically, I have sought confirmation that the territory over which the Court may exercise its jurisdiction, and which I may subject to investigation, comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza."

The prosecutor added however that she did not require any authorisation from judges to open a probe as there had been a referral from the Palestinians, who joined the court in 2015.

"We firmly oppose this and any other action that seeks to target Israel unfairly," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said of Washington's top ally in the region.

"We do not believe the Palestinians qualify as a sovereign State, and they therefore are not qualified to obtain full membership, or participate as a state in international organizations, entities, or conferences, including the ICC."

The issue is highly sensitive, with former White House national security adviser John Bolton threatening last year to arrest ICC judges if they moved against Israel or the United States.

Both countries have refused to sign up to the court, which was set up in 2002 to be the only global tribunal trying the world's worst crimes, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Bensouda launched

a preliminary probe in January 2015 into allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Israel and the Palestinian territories, in the wake of the 2014 Gaza war. AFP

US 'firmly' opposes ICC probe into alleged Israeli war crimes: Pompeo

Washington: The United States is "firmly" opposed to an International Criminal Court probe into alleged Israeli war crimes, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday.

A move by the court's chief prosecutor to open a full investigation into alleged war crimes in the Palestinian territories has sparked a furious reaction from Israel, Washington's top ally in the region.

"We firmly oppose this and any other action that seeks to target Israel unfairly," Pompeo said. "We do not believe the Palestinians qualify as a sovereign state, and they therefore are not qualified to obtain full membership, or participate as a state in international organizations, entities, or conferences,

Table with 2 columns: S.No. and Particulars. Title: FORM G - INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST. Includes details about the resolution process for corporate persons.

गजियाबाद विकास प्राधिकरण. विज्ञापन संख्या: 333/4/ई.डी. जॉन-8/2019-20. दिनांक: 17.12.2019. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना.

Notice Inviting e-Tender. No.SSA/Estt/Sp1.Trig/Evaluation Workbook/LP/UP/454/2019/10800 Date: 21.12.2019. Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission (Samagra Shiksha), Kahilpara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed Manufacturer of Exercise Book for supply of Evaluation Workbook LP and UP.

India look to end on high

Men in Blue search for 10th consecutive bilateral series win against Windies in decider today

PTI ■ CUTTACK

India have everything going their way as they head into the third and final ODI against West Indies at the Barabati stadium today eyeing a 10th straight bilateral series win over the Caribbean side.

The West Indies took the home side by surprise in the opening ODI in Chennai to go one-up in the three-match series. But India, riding an all-round display, came back strongly to restore parity in the second match.

Barring a rare duck from skipper Virat Kohli, the Indian top-order fired in unison at Visakhapatnam, before hat-trick hero Kuldeep Yadav sliced through the West Indies line-up for a comprehensive 107-run victory.

Three days after his blazing 159, Rohit Sharma stood just nine runs short of eclipsing former Sri Lankan captain Sanath Jayasuriya's 22-year-old record of being the highest run-scorer as an opener across all the formats.

K L Rahul also struck a sublime century in a 220-run opening stand to firmly stake his claim as a long-term opener for India.

Then the duo of Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant chipped in with brisk knocks, and they would like to end the year on a positive note.

In bowling, Delhi pacer Navdeep Saini is in line to make his ODI debut in the absence of the injured Deepak Chahar, who was ruled out of the match with a lower back problem.

The fielding, though, has failed to match the high standards India have set in recent years.

While Iyer's effort to dismiss Shimron Hetmyer was eye-catching, Chahar dropped a sitter off Nicholas Pooran and grassed Shai Hope for a duck at the slip cordon, something that attracted Kohli's attention.

The pitch at Barabati is going to be similar to the one in Visakhapatnam, offering plenty of runs.

The left-right combination of Hetmyer and Hope plotted India's downfall in Chennai and had it not been for a brilliant throw from Iyer to run out the former in Vizag, the Windies would have put up a strong fight in the second ODI.

Hetmyer, who struck a career-best 139 in Chennai, was over the moon and danced in excitement after being bought for ₹7.75 crore by Delhi Capitals in the IPL auction. His teammate Sheldon Cottrell also took home a hefty paycheck after the left-arm pacer was bought for ₹8.5 crore by Kings XI Punjab, and the Windies duo will



Indian captain Virat Kohli, center, gestures during a training session ahead of final ODI between Indian and West Indies at Barabati stadium in Cuttack

AP

be bolstered by that.

Hope, who is second only to Rohit in the run chart this year, will look to make a statement after the wicketkeeper-batsman went unsold at the auction.

Kieron Pollard's team had no hesitation in chasing after winning the toss in the first two ODIs but come today, the teams will be thinking twice before bowling second keeping the dew factor in mind.

The West Indies, at the same time, will be keen to end a 13-year long wait to win against India in a bilateral ODI series. While the hosts, who lost to Australia 2-3 in their last bilateral series in March, will have their reputation at stake.

They have not lost two consecutive bilateral ODI series at home in the last 15 years. The last time an ODI was played here more than two years ago, India had pipped England by 15 runs while defending an imposing 382.

Series outcome won't influence WI path

PTI ■ CUTTACK

West Indies head coach Phil Simmons feels his team's "best show" may not be enough to beat India in the series-decider but the outcome of the game won't "influence" the direction the Caribbean outfit has taken under his guidance.

Simmons, a former player, was reappointed as West Indies coach in October.

"I think all the guys know we want to play our best tomorrow (on Sunday) and even though we play our best,



Windies players chat during team's practice session at Barabati stadium

gone without a win in 16 bilateral ODI series since August 2014.

"The thing is we are trying to build something and the game tomorrow (on Sunday) does not influence the direction in which we are going... But we are trying to build something and will continue to be in direction we are going."

However there's a positivity in the camp with their top-ranked batsman in the ICC ODI rankings, Shai Hope in fine form along with Shimron Hetmyer.

we might not win," Simmons widened in the last decade or so as the West Indies, barring their 3-0 sweep over Afghanistan last month, have



Abid Ali celebrates with Shan Masood after scoring hundred

Openers put Pak on top

AFP ■ KARACHI

Abid Ali and Shan Masood became only the third opening pair for Pakistan to hit centuries in the same innings as Pakistan turned the tables on Sri Lanka in the second and final Test in Karachi on Saturday.

Abid, nicknamed "legend" in Pakistan's dressing room, hit 174 for his second hundred in as many Tests — becoming the first Pakistani and ninth batsman overall to score two centuries in his first two Tests.

When the third day's play ended Pakistan were in a strong position with 395-2, having an overall lead of 815 after conceding an 80-run lead in the first innings.

Skipper Azhar Ali was unbeaten on 57 —

his first fifty in 14 innings — and Babar Azam on 22 not out. It was a day of batsmen's dominance as Pakistan added 338 runs after resuming at 57-0 on a National stadium pitch which dried up to help batting.

Masood blasted 135 for his second century in 19th Test as the duo put on 278 for the opening wicket, just 20 short of equalling the highest opening stand for Pakistan of 298.

Masood batted for nearly five hours for his 135, which included three sixes and seven fours. Abid struck 21 boundaries and a six in his 398-minute batting.

Abid, 32, completed his century with a sweep off-spinner Lasith Embuldeniya for two to follow his 109 in the drawn first Test in Rawalpindi — his debut.

I know my game really well now: Iyer

PTI ■ CUTTACK

Shreyas Iyer on Saturday said he was flamboyant but not responsible in the beginning of his career, a far cry from the present day matured man who is displaying both in equal measure while solving India's number four conundrum.

The 25-year-old is gradually settling into the critical number four position in a team that has struggled to find one for the longest time.

The Mumbaier showed his worth with half centuries in the first two ODIs against the West Indies.

"I think that comes with maturity and responsibility. I was a flamboyant player when I started playing first-class cricket. I never used to take responsibility. I just used to back my instincts and go with the flow," Iyer told reporters.

"Lately, I've realised that once you play at the highest level, you got to take that maturity to another stage. I can even play strokes and I



can even nudge the ball and take single, so I know my game really well right now and I can play accordingly."

Asked about his sedate 88-ball 70, which he scored in the series opener on a day the top-order failed, he said, "You have to play according to what the team demands. And that's what I did the other day. The team didn't demand me to score big shots at that time, we just needed a big partnership."

"We just needed the scoreboard to keep going. And that's what I did I and I feel that whatever the situation demands, you got to play accordingly. And I'm really happy about what I did in the first game."

Three days later, batting at number five, Iyer was at his explosive best as he smashed a 32-ball 53 to consolidate India's innings in Visakhapatnam.

"I batted at No 5 in the previous ODI. I'm flexible that way. It's just that you got to play according to the situation and what the team demands. And that's what I did. And I know that I can play in both flows."

AFP ■ HOFFENHEIM

Season of giving

BVB gift Hoffenheim win with late collapse

Reus ruled out until January with a muscular problem Dortmund coach Lucien Favre named Goetze in attack.

The hosts made four changes from the midweek victory at Union Berlin, a first win in five games, as Norway's Havard Nordtveit made his first start for the club in more than a year at centre-back.

Dortmund led after 16 minutes of play as Achraf Hakimi found acres of space down the right wing.

The Morocco wing-back, on loan from Real Madrid, pulled back a low cross into the box and Goetze tapped home from short range despite Sebastian Rudy's goal-line efforts.

With six minutes left of the half Thorgan Hazard was denied a chance to double Dortmund's lead following a superb Oliver Baumann save.

Despite Dortmund dominating the game and having

10 shots on goal, Hoffenheim were level with 11 minutes to play.

Manuel Akanji made a messy attempt at a clearance and Armenia winger Adamany equalised.

The unexpected comeback was complete when Kramaric beat Roman Buerki with a spinning header four minutes from time.



Roma solidify CL push

MILAN: Aleksandar Kolarov scored a magnificent free-kick as Roma bolstered their Champions League credentials in Italy with a 4-1 victory away to Fiorentina on Friday.

Edin Dzeko's seventh goal of the season put Roma ahead on 19 minutes in Florence against a side without a win at home since October 6.

Former Manchester City defender Kolarov curled in a terrific 20-yard strike to double Roma's lead before Milan Badelj pulled one back just past the half-hour.

Roma ensured they put some pressure on local rivals Lazio as Lorenzo Pellegrini's first-time effort from a Dzeko lay-off restored their two-goal cushion on 73 minutes.

The Bosnian forward then released Nicolò Zaniolo just inside the Fiorentina half, allowing the Italy international to sweep in a late fourth after a long run.

Paulo Fonseca's Roma have lost just once in Serie A since late September and a fourth win in five moved them six points clear of Cagliari in the race for the final Champions League spot.



Mohd Shami celebrates after taking wicket

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South African pace great Dale Steyn on Saturday rated the current Indian fast bowling unit as the best in world cricket.

Steyn, who was bought by Royal Challengers Bangalore at the 2020 IPL auction, responded to a variety of questions during an interactive session with his fans on social networking site Twitter.

When a user asked which bowling line-up he feels is currently the best in the world, Steyn said India.

The 36-year-old, who is looking forward to the IPL's upcoming edition, was reminded about his battle with the legendary Sachin Tendulkar in 2010. He termed the dual with the Indian great as "haunting."

Steyn, who has played

92 matches in the IPL, is just four short of reaching 100 wickets in the T20 league.

Asked about his best bowling effort, he picked the 7-51 against India in Nagpur in 2010.

When asked if South Africa have a chance against England with the new coaching staff, he sounded optimistic.

"Big chance... England weren't convincing in New Zealand, that's not to say they are not good. I'm just saying they didn't look the part. Under Bouch (head coach Mark Boucher) I feel we have it covered, but it's going to be exciting," said Steyn, whose favourite fast bowler at the moment is Pat Cummins, who became the most expensive foreign buy in IPL history.

Curran excited to pick Dhoni, Fleming's brains

PTI ■ CHENNAI

England all-rounder Sam Curran is looking at his entry into the Chennai Super Kings setup as an "opportunity to pick the brains" of seasoned captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and coach Stephen Fleming.

"Can't wait to come to Chennai and meet all my new teammates, playing under MS Dhoni our captain and our coach Stephen Fleming. It's obviously going to be a great opportunity for me to pick their brains and, hopefully, we can bring the trophy home to Chennai," Curran said in a video uploaded by his

new franchise. Curran had a fairly successful outing for Kings XI Punjab in the last edition and is now looking forward to turn out for three-time winners CSK.

"Super excited to be joining the Chennai Super Kings for next season of IPL. A massive thank you to the coach, management staff."

"Just want to say I can't wait to play in front of the home fans in Chennai. I felt some amazing things, I was lucky enough to play last year against Chennai, and to play in front of the home fans this year is going to be really special. Hopefully, we can put in some great performances for the fans," he signed off.



Score	Partners	Opp	Venue	Season
298	Aamer Sohail/Ijaz Ahmed	WI	Karachi	1997-98
278	Abid Ali/Shan Masood	SL	Karachi	2019-20
249	Abdul Kadir/Khalid Ibadulla	AUS	Karachi	1964-65
219	Imran Nazir/Mohd Wasim	WI	Bridgetown	1999-00
215	Azhar Ali/Sami Aslam	WI	Dubai	2016-17

FAISAL FEATURES

agenda

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FROM THE INSIDE

Don't ever give up. Never ever listen to anyone, when they try to discourage you, because they do that, believe me!
— Mariah Carey



Path to spiritual awakening

Tap into your spiritual consciousness to experience all-consciousness, love, peace, unity, bliss and freedom from fear



No shortcut to fixing issues

Instead of expecting external intervention, better put in conscious efforts to make necessary amends

The variety of lentils available in India has the potential to make our everyday food much more nutritious and bring a wider flavour profile to our plate, writes SANGEETA KHANNA

Lentils and pakodas



If you have lived in a metro city all your life, you are most likely to have missed some of the best choices in food. The glut of imported vegetables and fruits in urban markets make for a good eye-wash and most of us are aware of this already. The day the urban markets start stocking wild purslane and wild fiddle head fern in season, we would know our choices have improved. We don't realise how much we can control the food system and the market just by making the right choices and being aware in the first place. We end up consuming a very narrow range of produce even though there is a vast variety available and remains undervalued. For example, India is the leading manufacturer of lentils and we still need to import lentils from other countries because most of us consume only two to three types of lentils as staples and a large variety of lentils remain undervalued.

Just think of the lentils you can recognise by taste and if all you can come up with is *kali dal* and *peeli dal* and may be *sambar*, you need to educate yourself better. The amazing variety of lentils available in India has a potential to make our everyday food much more nutritious and bring a wider flavour profile to our plate.

In fact, the awareness about the variety of real foods and ingredients available around us can be instrumental in bringing a desired change in our own health management and the environment of the planet. The regional variety of foods within the country is mind boggling and when I see people lugging gluten free flours from the west, I wonder when and how would we market our millets better. Recently, when I moved to Dehradun, I was most excited about the local seasonal vegetables, lentils and

beans I now have access to. But when I heard a Maharashtrian neighbour lamenting about the unavailability of *moth* lentils in the town and another Keralaite neighbour complain about how difficult it was to bring *ragi* flour from her native place, I figured it was time to introduce them to local produce as replacements. I took them to the *kirana* shop across the road and introduced them to the *naurangi dal* and *mandue ka atta*. In the bargain, I made friends with the *kirana* shop owner, who got me local hemp seeds. This kind of personal connect with ingredients wouldn't have been possible at the supermarket a couple of kilometres away. Ah, we surely need to realign our food compass a little bit to see clearly.

I am reminded of a story my grandmother used to tell me when I was little. It is a story of a little birdie who used to go searching for lentil grits in the *chakki* of each home and how she once tried to pick a lentil and half of the split lentil got stuck in the *chakki*. The birdie lamented about how she didn't get enough food for her *pardes* (foreign) travel. It was possibly a migratory bird who needed all the food for the long distance travel and the hand operated stone-mill in the homes was the best place to pick on them. Several folk tales and ancient sayings had lentils as a central theme in India. This just goes to say that lentils have been an important part of our food system.

Interestingly, the hand-operated stone mill has been instrumental in the ways lentils have been used in India, the largest producer and consumer of lentils on earth. In fact, the black lentil or *urad dal* and black chickpeas or black gram are native to India and have been used in various ways since the time recorded. *Mung* beans have been known to have originated

from black lentils, hence the genus of both remains the same, that is *vigna mungo*. Various other lentils came to India through spice routes and other trade routes and have become naturalised ever since. The most interesting occurrence of the readiness with which Indians adapted each lentil to suit the palate and gut both, as some of these lentils were not tasty, most of them not easily digestible, some had a very hard seed coat and some were hard to crack.

The hand-operated *chakki* came handy to process the lentils in the most usable form. The traditional domestic *chakki* used to have small wooden pegs to adjust to the size of grain or lentil being milled and if the lentils needed to be split or ground into flour to make *besan* or *sattu*. In many small town homes till about four decades ago, the *besan* or *sattu* used to be made fresh whenever needed, much like we use the mixer or coffee grinder today.

There were byproducts of the stone grinding process and those were never wasted. While the husk or bran went to cattle feed, the grits were used to make different types of steamed dumplings or deep fried *pakodas* or the sun dried *badis* that were flavour bombs to be added to curries. While women of the house had to handle all this milling, sorting, winnowing, *badi* making and sun drying and then cooking as well, they found ways to entertain and bond over these chores.

In fact stone grinders and cooking techniques from different regions of the country give a fair idea of how the kitchen gadgets and ways of cooking have evolved with the kind of produce in a specific geographic region. For instance, in the mountain state of Uttarakhand, the variety of lentils and beans is quite huge but most of them are hard to grind and take hours to cook. In



Pakodas
The Snack for All Seasons

The book explores the regional *pakoda* variants that are deep fried, shallow fried and even steamed or poached in water. There are *pakodas* made of lentils, cereals, millets, roots, shoots, leaves and even flowers, some are made of wild foraged herbs and some even medicinal.

Such is the rich heritage of Indian cuisine that each geographical region with a specific set of produce has a bunch of special *pakodas* or deep fried foods that are absolutely healthy if made the right way.

The book also offers tips and tricks, methods to make the *pakodas* in healthier way, using the right kind of cooking fats, the appropriate frying temperature, as well as the most suitable utensils to make *pakodas*.

the mountains, high altitude also plays a role in cooking time. The harder the lentils, the more difficult they are to digest. This is also the reason the most popular lentil recipes of Uttarakhand are well adjusted to their hardness, cooking time and digestibility.

Lentil recipes like *Phanu*, *Chainsu*, *Dubka* and *Ras* are elaborate Uttarakhand recipes where the lentils are first roasted and then cooked whole or after grinding them in a stone grinder. These dishes are slow cooked in iron utensils for long hours to make them most nutritious and warming for the locals, where they don't get a lot of produce to cook with. In the mountains, where the lentils and beans are rain fed crops along with some coarse varieties of rice and millets, lentils become the mainstay of nutrition for everyone. Even the seasonal or foraged vegetables are greens are preserved in the form of sun dried lentil cakes or *badis*.

The stone grinders in the southern states are more adapted for the ways the lentils are processed before cooking. To make the lentils digestible and suited for the warm climate, they are soaked and ground into a wet paste before fermenting them in most cases. The stone grinders for wet grinding are in fact a genius design that allows efficient use of manual force to make smooth paste of soaked lentils and even grains and spices etc. For splitting the lentils, there were the *chakki* type stone grinders in southern India in the olden times and that explains the evolution of some of the lentil *vadas* that are made with coarsely ground mixed lentils, initially made with the grits that was a byproduct of splitting the lentils. Even the watery *rasam* and chunky *sambar*, cooked with a lot of vegetables and tamarind, are examples of lentil recipes adapted to suit local ingredients and warmer climate of the south.

Rajasthan and Gujarat use the maximum amount of lentils for the variety of snacks and main course dishes they cook with lentils, majorly the black gram. The recipes from these regions are often rich with fats and spices but very well adjusted to the climate, cooking methods and digestibility.

In modern times, in the last 4 decades to be specific, the electric mixer grinders have revolutionised the way we cook and the per capita consumption of lentils has increased manifold. Of course, the production has also increased, but the ease of grinding the lentils has made it much easier for the home cook. That is one of the reasons why every North Indian family makes *idli* and *dosa* at home now and making the *dal vada* at home is as easy as the *pyaz ke pakode*. Even the South Indian stone grinders have transformed to electrically operated sleek machines and making traditional foods using lentils and grains has become easier for everyone.

My book on *pakodas*, the quintessential snack made mostly with lentils has recipes using many different lentils and even grains, tubers and even fruits. Many of these *pakoda* family snacks are shallow fried and even steamed and that indicates that the traditional recipes have evolved with human nutrition being the central point even if the taste buds ruled to decide the flavours. The book on *pakodas* celebrates the diversity in Indian food with some recipes with wild and foraged greens and even some medicinal *pakoda* recipes that were part of the everyday food repertoire in every household earlier.

The writer is an author, a food and nutrition consultant, and develops recipes and products for the industry. Her book *Pakodas: The Snack for All Seasons* came out in August this year





IF YOU WANT OTHERS TO BE HAPPY, PRACTICE COMPASSION. IF YOU WANT TO BE HAPPY, PRACTICE COMPASSION. — DALAI LAMA

PATH TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Only when we tap into our spiritual consciousness, do we experience all-consciousness, love, peace, unity, bliss and freedom from fear, writes SANT RAJINDER SINGH



There is another ocean, far greater than the physical waters of this earth. An ocean that is far more permanent than the seas. It is an ocean that offers not only refreshing waters to bathe the body, but also refreshing waters to nourish the soul. It is the ocean of spiritual consciousness, of God, waiting to be tapped within each of us. It lies within, waiting to be discovered. It is there for everyone who seeks it.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS?

Spiritual consciousness is to be conscious of the soul and God within us. Most of us are aware of our body, of the thoughts passing through our mind, and the world around us. This is called body consciousness or physical consciousness. But we are much more than our body and mind. We are actually a soul, a conscious entity which inhabits the body.

The soul is part of God and is the power that enlivens the body. This consciousness at the level of soul, independent of our body and mind, is what is termed spiritual consciousness. When we tap into our spiritual consciousness, we experience the qualities of spiritual consciousness — all-consciousness, love, peace, unity, bliss and freedom from fear. Let us look at each of these.

QUALITIES OF SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Love: Anyone who has experienced

spiritual consciousness has spoken of divine love. The love we think of as love is but a reflection of a much higher love. It is an all-embracing, fulfilling, satisfying love that pulls close to its heart all that exists. It embraces each of us equally, and is an unconditional love — one that does not see our outer differences. We may lose the love of everyone in the world, but we are sustained by a much higher and more permanent love—the divine love of God embracing us from within.

When we tap into our spiritual consciousness, we not only experience love ourselves, but we expand in our own capacity to love others.

All-Consciousness: Another aspect of spiritual consciousness is that of all-consciousness or wisdom. God is all-knowing, all-aware. If we want to get a small glimpse of how this is possible, we need only look to our technology as it exists today. If we look at the Internet, we find that all information is available to us by logging onto different sites. The server that hosts all the sites is a storehouse of all the information on all the sites. By logging on we access all the information we want. God is like a giant server that hosts all our individual souls or websites. Thus, all knowledge about us is known to God. God is also able to simultaneously know what is happening to each of us at every second at the same time. When we tap into that spiritual consciousness, we too attain access to all-consciousness.

WE CAN ATTAIN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS BY FOCUSING OUR ATTENTION WITHIN THROUGH A PROCESS CALLED MEDITATION. THROUGH MEDITATION, WE CAN ATTAIN A SENSE OF UNITY, AND WITH ALL THE LOVE, WE CAN EXPERIENCE PEACE AND BLISS

Freedom from Fear: What is it that most of us fear the most? Most people fear death. They think of death as the end of their existence. Little do people realise that death is just a transition from this physical world to another realm of existence. It is only by raising our consciousness to a spiritual level that we discover that we exist at the level of the soul even without the physical body. This body is but a covering over the soul. If we can raise our consciousness, we can discover our true identity. By attaining spiritual consciousness, we can become fearless.

Peace: In this world, we are faced with much turmoil, conflict, pain, disease, and suffering. Few live out life without passing through moments of stress and pain. But in the spiritual realms within, all is peace.

The reason we lack peace in this world is due to our ego and desires. The world offers countless temptations, distractions, and attractions. Our soul is overshadowed by our mind, which is attracted to the outer world. When it begins to desire things of this world that are temporary, it is headed for disappointment. Nothing material in this world is lasting. It is all transitory. Only the soul and God are eternal. The moment we pin our hopes on something perishable, we have set ourselves up for disappointment and pain when we lose it.

The only true peace is available when we rise to a level of spiritual consciousness. Then we enter a realm that

knows no death, no suffering, and no pain. We find an eternal region of all joy and bliss. If we wish to experience true peace in our life, we need to look within. Peace begins within us.

Unity: At physical level, all we see is physical differences. When we develop a spiritual consciousness, we experience that the same Light of God is within each person. We are all united at the level of soul. When we reach that level of awareness, we start to see all living beings as one big family of the Creator. We no longer differentiate between people based on form and custom. We recognise that there is beauty in diversity. We start treating all people with love and respect, because we know at their very core is the same essence of which we are made.

Bliss: Bliss is a state of pure ecstasy and joy. Any happiness we experience in this world is only a fraction of the joy we experience when we merge in the ocean of spiritual consciousness. There are no adequate words to describe the bliss. We can only imagine at our level what it is like to multiply our greatest bliss by a million-fold.

Total bliss is ours when we enter into a state of spiritual consciousness. We also bring that bliss when our attention returns to physical consciousness. Thus, it is possible to pass through times of trials and tribulations at the physical level, while the soul is experiencing bliss within. It is like a potter who shapes clay. From the outside, the clay pot may be beaten and shaped by the potter, but the potter supports the pot with his or her hand from within. Similarly, the bliss we experience from merging with the ocean of spiritual consciousness stays with us to withstand the stormy seas of life.

HOW TO ATTAIN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS?

We can attain spiritual consciousness by focusing our attention within through a process called meditation. We contact our true nature, our soul, and discover that it is one with God, the source of divine love. Only then can we find all the treasures of divinity available to us. We gain all-consciousness and find ourselves free from fear. Through meditation, we can attain a sense of unity and with all the love, we can experience peace and bliss.

Just as the ocean has been there for people of all ages, so is the spiritual ocean of love within us. Meditation is the first step. This technique is available to all those who wish to learn it. It is a free gift of God like air and sunlight. It can be practiced as a science — in which we can experiment in the laboratory of our own body.

The writer is a spiritual leader



HIDDENSOULS PRAMOD PATHAK

Happiness: A Vedantic view



The word *Vedanta* means the “end of the Vedas”. In the literal sense this denotes the final knowledge or the ultimate *Vidya*. The *Vedas* are our oldest scriptural texts that have been claimed as the most ancient of the books of knowledge. These are compiled into four volumes, each having two parts. The first part of each *Veda* deals with the mundane subjects of means and ends or worldly gains. The second part, called *Upanishads*, are directed towards spiritual knowledge and address the serious seeker who is looking for self-knowledge that leads to realisation of the ultimate reality and thus leaves nothing to be desired or achieved. It is the knowledge that helps in acquiring self-actualisation. The basic purpose of *Vedanta* or the *Upanishads* is to help man search for the eternal that is the source of truth and joy. Happiness, thus, is the product of realisation of truth. Happiness, according to the Vedantic view, does not lie outside a person but is within that person. It is the very nature of man. But it is ignorance of that essentially happy nature which is the cause of all dissatisfaction and unease. The *Vedanta* thus helps a man lift that veil of ignorance and reveals the source of all happiness to him. Happiness is essentially embedded in human nature and is the *vedantic* goal of life. *Vedanta* shows how happiness lies within and the study of *Vedanta* is a journey towards reaching a deep understanding of one's own true nature. It teaches how without going anywhere or seeking anything from the outside one can attain total fulfillment. *Vedanta* gives the knowledge of *Brahman* or the ultimate reality. The very name *Brahman* suggests that the questing spirit in man is due to the activity of God and the aspiration to realise God is in fact derived from God. The knowledge of self is what leads to the knowledge of God and this knowledge is the road to the eternal happiness or bliss. These are times when happiness is being sold as a commodity and people are actually paying a price to buy happiness, which is but a mythical concept. Real happiness cannot be found externally, it has to be realised within. The mystic Indian poet saint Kabir Das has explained this very appropriately in his famous couplet which can be paraphrased in one sentence as follows — Just as the fragrance of a flower lies within so also is the essence of human happiness inside the man, yet he acts like the musk deer searching for the musk in the grass where the aroma from the musk within it has spread. This ignorance is the root cause of the futile search for happiness outside. Happiness cannot be found. It has to be realised. It is a state of mind. The *Vedantic* view tries to emphasise this approach to happiness by suggesting that linking happiness to external objects would always be a failed exercise. This truth can also be understood by the simple marginal utility theory of economics. The wisdom of *Vedanta* lies in this eternal truth that linking happiness to outside is a prescription for unhappiness. Indian civilisation and culture has survived the ravages of time because it is based on the solid foundation of the wisdom stored in the *Vedanta*. The search for happiness outside is *trishna* or intense craving for something. It will never lead to contentment. Real happiness can only come from within.

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Celebrating Jesus Christ

Jesus stands for the truth and truth is omnipresent. He is present here, and right now, in the hearts of those who love him, says ACHARYA PRASHANT TRIPATHI



Jesus is not a mere mortal. Jesus is the source of light; the root of all flowers and beauty. In one form, he disappears. In another, he arises, again. Jesus or Truth is omnipresent. Prophets don't come and go; they live forever. Going back into the past to look for them is the tragedy of the living. A lot gets missed out on what is available right now because of the mind's tendency to think that it must be similar to how it once appeared in time. Jesus will keep sending his message. He is present here and right now, in the hearts of those who love him.

THE BIBLE & JESUS

The Bible looks at man as he is, and not as he ought to be or as he imagines himself to be. It look at man as he exists in flesh and blood, in anger and angst, in regret and rage, in desire and death; and to this man the Bible says: 'See and acknowledge that you are living a life of incompleteness.'

A PATIENT MUST KNOW THAT HE IS SICK

The one who is lost in limitations must know and accept (and continuously remember) that he is lost. If he continues to be ignorant and keeps imagining himself as a complete one, then his limitations will continue to exist. That's why Bible continuously reminds the man that he is sick.

There is no point talking of completeness as an abstraction, or even as a concept, and believing in it, because in actuality, it is not the case. Every sense, every feeling, every thought that mankind points towards incompleteness. Man continuously seeks more, and wants to get rid of the stuff that he does not want. Bible describes both. It says that man is limited, he is guilty, he is a sinner, he is ignorant; and secondly, that if he follows Jesus, he can be led to the Father.

RESPOND TO HIS CALL

You come to Jesus only when the Jesus within you calls. Jesus will never tell you

what to do. He will never be a provider or instructor of action. Instead, he will be the illuminator. He will help remove the obstacles that come in the way of light, so you can see better. And when you see better, then you know for yourself what path to follow.

THE PATH AHEAD

Your path cannot be the same as somebody else's path. There is no formula or a general method. What applies to the others may not be suitable for you. You are what you are because you are programmed, brought up and conditioned in your own way. The right action, must necessarily, be different for different people.

Jesus says: "What is right for you, depends on, what you take yourself to be. Your way towards home, depends on, how badly you have lost yourself — depends on, where you think you are. There can be no, one general way or one general right action".

REMEMBER THE CRUCIFIXION AND REPENT

Live by his word. Remember his crucifixion; because if you forget the crucifixion, you will also forget your immediate reality. The immediate reality is important.

Christianity asks man to repent. The word repent is quite subtle with meaning. It means 'to go back, to return to home'.

Man is born a wanderer, a homeless recluse — somebody who has a continuous thirst to return to the home, but the thirst finds expression in a million ways except a direct one; and that is why repentance is very useful as a tool. It helps man remember that he is indeed incomplete as he is.

Godliness within oneself must be unabashed in its love towards Jesus; but that which is not godly within a man, also must look at Jesus and repent. It must stay rooted, and true to the facts.

The writer is a spiritual leader and founder, Advait Foundation

The quest for real *sukha*

Sukha is often confused with material gains. Real *sukha* must have *shanti* (peace) as its integral part, says AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

In Hindi, the word *sukha* is used very loosely, whereas in Sanskrit it has a special meaning. *Sukha-suvridha* in Hindi indicates comforts, facilities, and so on. The word *ananda* is lot closer to what *sukha* really is. This word comes from *sat-chit-ananda* — a Sanskrit description of a soul. Real *sukha* must have *shanti* (peace) as its integral part. Without *shanti* where is *sukha*, asks Lord Krishna. (*Bhagavad Geeta* 2.66) Subsequently, wherever this word has been used in the *Geeta*, it means this *sukha*, not *sukha-suvridha* used in Hindi.

In English, the word happiness is used for *sukha*, and the word happiness is defined as a feeling or showing pleasure; pleased. Here the emphasis is on pleasure like sense enjoyment. There is no reference to a peaceful state.

Happiness index, calculated for different countries has housing, income, work, education, safety, etc. However, happiness is person specific. These factors are conducive for becoming peaceful but individuals have to still make personal efforts to be happy. This is where spirituality comes in, when we identify ourselves as souls, and act accordingly. A soul being part of God must connect with God and that is where peace comes from. The word peace is defined as a state of being calm. This is close but the real peace comes from a good connection with God, as explained in the same verse quoted above. Peace comes from faith in God and God consciousness as a result of it.

Without this knowledge, people get bemused and do not seek real *sukha*. It is no wonder that they do not get satisfaction and keep on looking for more of the same pleasures. This is because such pleasures are like insatiable fire; more one tries to satisfy the self more intense they become. There is another



big problem with the false sense of *sukha*; people make big mistakes when enjoying that. Personally speaking, all my big mistakes were made when I was relatively *sukhi* in the conventional sense, when I felt that I could do no wrong, and could enjoy unlimitedly.

Lord Krishna has spoken about the real *sukha* in many verses of the *Geeta*. Happiness is a boon. In the state of peaceful enjoyment, all sufferings end soon, because the intelligence of such a person is firmly established. In a state of having real spiritually intelligence, one transcends the feeling of material suffering. (2.65)

The Lord speaks in great details about who can be happy. A self-controlled person, who is not too attached with the fruits of his karma lives happily. (5.13) A person, having consciousness unattached to external sense objects, enjoys that happiness within, which is extraordinary. He having consciousness linked to the *Brahman*, experiences eternal bliss. (5.21) Here the Lord has clarified that such *sukha* is

unlimited and does not repel after some time. One, who is capable of tolerating the urge caused by lust and anger prior to leaving the body, he is a true *yogi*; he is a happy person. (5.23) Beyond the senses, there is unlimited bliss, which can be experienced through the intelligence. (6.21)

God also clarifies about who cannot be happy. Bereft of real knowledge, a doubter who has no faith perishes. For the doubter, there is neither happiness in this world nor beyond. (4.40) Then, there is happiness in different modes, but they all bind. In the mode of goodness, this binds with knowledge and attachment for such happiness. In the mode of passion, one is bound to acts, that is, gets attached with them. In the mode of darkness, one is bound to carelessness, laziness and sleep.

Therefore, it will be wise to seek the real *sukha*, and not chase after illusory *sukha* or happiness; one will have a high quality of life.

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Brexit: The final journey under Johnson

Boris Johnson has romped home in the parliamentary election with 365 seats in the 650-member House against the Labour Party's 203 seats. The Labour Party, under James Corbyn, lost its heartlands, and the Liberal Democrats' surge failed to materialise. This helped Johnson-led Conservative Party to clinch a historic victory, only seen last in the 1980s during the era of Margaret Thatcher. For the Labour, this was its worst defeat since the 1930s. Whereas the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) won 48 and the Liberal Democrats got 11 seats. When Johnson took over the mantle of the party, the Conservatives were about to be crushed in between the Brexit imbroglio and the Liberal Democrats, leaving behind a terribly chaotic Labour Party under Corbyn. But then, with the election result, he pulled off an extraordinary political manoeuvre of sort. On the other hand, as the Conservatives crushed the Labour's red wall in the North and in the Midlands, the traditional party bastions, it could safely be concluded that the British voters have categorically rejected the leadership of Corbyn and his ultra-left agenda. The man and his party credentials were viewed even by their hardcore supporters as unpatriotic and profligate. Therefore, it is time now for Corbyn and his party to decide whether to continue moving on the left-wing path to annihilation or reclaim the centre to occupy the power corridors once again.

Now what lies ahead for Corbyn and his Labour Party? After the shocking election debacle, his party has claimed it won the argument and dismissed those who voted against it as morally inferior. Now, the Labour MPs and their supporters are likely to fight for an alternative brand of leadership as he has already signaled that he is not going to be the party face in future elections.



Pro-Brexit demonstrators hold banners outside Parliament in London on December 20, 2019

Johnson, a leader known for failing to redeem his promises, has eventually won the trust of millions of ordinary voters who would have never extended such mandate to a Tory establishment. So it is really intriguing how Johnson would respond to the changing political understanding of his countrymen. Today he encounters troubles from many fronts, but for the Conservative grassroots, he is the only hero and stalwart they have been looking for.

Britain's national discourse and narratives in the post-Johnson victory are worrying signals. First of all, Britain will be out of the EU by the end of January. However the reality is that either the UK can main-

tain the close economic relations with the EU on which Britain's prosperity relies on or the Britons can opt for a low-cost regulation that Johnson's financiers look for. But unfortunately the Britons can't go for both. Second, the Scottish nationalists have indicated that they are in full control of their turfs. Since they are pro-independence and pro-EU, their revitalisation may soon drag Britain to a future referendum for Scotland's separation from the UK. Third, as the post-Brexit analysts have already predicted recession in the country, it would be a Herculean task for Johnson's big promise on public spending. Fourth, Johnson has to

navigate a deeply divided party. During his campaign, he projected a no-deal exit from the EU as a potential threat to gain support from the future negotiations. While doing this, he intentionally pushed aside many pro-Europeans within his party, many of whom either will resign from the Government or will be replaced. Fifth, another puzzle for the international community is to see whether Johnson would be able to deliver to those traditional Labour supporters who offered their support to him. Sixth, the National Health Service is on its knees with more than 100,000 vacancies. The Prime Minister has promised 50,000 more nurses,

6,000 more doctors, etc. But once the immigration system is tightened, it would deter foreign workers to fill these vacancies. Again as the PM has vowed not to raise income tax, national insurance or VAT, he is simply narrowing all possible means to gather funds for the Treasury and the NHS. Seventh, gimmicks, half-truths and tall promises showered by Johnson would not be able to rescue the criminal justice system of Britain. As per the Conservative manifesto, 20,000 police officers are due on the roads. But sadly this figure is 1000 less than the 21,000 made redundant since the year 2010. In fact, a strong and effective police force is the demand of

the day to tackle the new knife-crime epidemic in some major cities of the country. Eighth, he has to seriously focus on climate emergency as green campaigners urge that the Johnson Government could introduce the ban on diesel and petrol cars by 2030, instead of 2040. Also his administration must deliver on the de-carbonising the homes and other buildings soon. These all could be crucial to alleviate harmful emissions that are fast engulfing Britain. Ninth, another issue that could bother the new Tory establishment is the winning of more nationalist MPs in Northern Ireland. They want a United Ireland while the Unionists want Northern Ireland to remain as a part of the UK territory. This could open a Pandora's Box for Johnson. Finally, a new trade deal with the US might be a tough task for London as Donald Trump is unpredictable, and he may switch sides at any time as per his convenience.

Johnson's election slogan, "Get Brexit done" means much more to his voters and other Britons. It simply indicates that the UK leaves the EU in a smooth manner but Johnson said that "It is fair to say that you are getting Brexit done because you are coming out of the EU and you are coming out of the legal order of the EU." All that what has been promised by Johnson is a cumbersome process. Even some naysayers say, "In sum, the political culture of Britain, as we have known for generations, is earmarked for demolition. Anyone who has tried, however ineffectually, to scrutinise Johnson's plans or hold him to account will reap the coming authoritarian whirlwind. Trump will no doubt represent himself as this revolution's enabler and he will be right. But Johnson may well outdo even his mentor: Britain, after all, lacks the protection of a written Constitution. A resilient human spirit that

hopes for the best and adapts to circumstances looks sadly inadequate for what is now in prospect (Witney 2019). If this is what is evinced by the Johnson administration, then Britain will witness doom in the post-Brexit period. Barring all these negative vibes, he must not forget the fact that this mandate is given to him and his grand old Conservatives to rescue the country from the Brexit gloom and a radical labour regime led by Corbyn. Many of the strong labour bases offer support to Johnson not to see an uncertain and unruly establishment at 10-Downing Street, but just to come out of the confusion and chaos that the country has been undergoing since the referendum of June 2016.

Truly, Brexit is a rare point of unity and convergence for the rest of the 27 members of the EU, but this could expose the faultlines among them as well. It's not at all clear how unitedly they could fight the challenges left behind by the departure of Britain from the group. Also, while negotiating new trade deals with Britain, the members of the EU will face difficult trade-offs as they want close economic ties with the country, but with conflicting interests of varying degrees.

What lies ahead is a daunting task not only for Johnson but also for his Conservative Party. It's a historic mandate for the party and its leadership. Britain needs a clear strategy and pathway to deal with a post-Brexit scenario. However self-destructive convulsions of British politics fomented by the Conservatives, the socialists and the ultra-nationalists around exiting the EU would no way retain the monumental reputation that the country has built over centuries. It's a testing time for Johnson. Moment has come for him to demonstrate not just leadership but statesmanship.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

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MAKHAN SAINI

PERSPECTIVE

Management of land can stop farmers' suicide

Land is the precious resource for any country, more so for India because India is a tropical country with largely monsoon dependent agricultural economy where over 70 per cent of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Land is a finite resource while natural resources can vary according to uses or misuses over a period. Hence, whenever and wherever there is unsound management of land, it is reflected in decline in production of all the natural resources and allied functioning of ecosystems like riparian ecosystem, grassland ecosystem, forest and soil ecosystem. Hence, the management of land in India requires careful husbandry, but unfortunately over the years, the land management has never received the attention it deserves.

A land resource department under the Rural Ministry exists, but land being the State subject, technical policies regulating the land use are being dealt at the level of States, which are mostly engaged with short-term measures and generally do not concentrate on long-term policies of the management of land on a sustainable basis.

Sustainability is not a part of 5-year cycle of the electoral need. Land-related institutions are distributed at the Central and State Government's levels but these are fragmented and scattered. This results into short-term measures to address the pressing needs like law & order, land distribution, consolidation, digitisation of land record mapping.

There is no denial that these things are most important in the short run, but strategies for sustainable management of

land are not in place. There is no institution to take care of long-term sustainable management of land resources and to take measures to rejuvenate the land to increase its productivity on a sustainable basis. Land use boards in the States are non starter.

Most of the suicides have occurred in areas of cash crops like cotton and sugarcane, which is high input, high output gambling, not based on principle of sustained and resilient high yield.

Manifestation of these is reflected into many of our woes and maladies. Gradual decline of productivity of land has largely led to farmers' suicide. Besides host of other factors, the main factor being attributed to a large number of such suicides is sickness of our soil, steep decline in groundwater table, deteriorating discharge of rivers and flooding due to mismanagement of land in the catchment and riparian areas.

These are pointers to poor land husbandry. In the nutshell, by and large Indian soil is sick and requires revamping of policy, institutions, and policy instruments. Besides, the absence of integration and harmonisation of the land use policy with other sectors of economy leads to counterproductive measures like cultivation of potato on the slopes of Himalayas, encroachment in the flood plain areas. These lands are suitable only for specific tree species but we hardly find any landscape with trees in these areas.

Farmers' suicide has become a matter of serious concern for the Supreme Court of India. The court observed, "It is not possible for the court to grant compensation every

time a farmer commits suicide." The court also frowned upon the lack of seriousness on the part of Governments to address the core issues.

The use to land is determined by its owners, farmers, Government, institutions and other user agencies according to their own perception of needs, understanding and available information. This in turn leads to environmental pollution and neglect resulting into poverty and related problems. Application of input like nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) cannot substitute for natural trace elements that can give us a wholesome perfect nutrition in their crops.

Besides, indebtedness, decline in water table, failure of conservation measures, drought, flood and pest infestation are a few reasons for the spate of farmers' suicide. Increasing quantity of inputs with continuously decreasing uncertain output and risk due to climate change in the rainfed areas makes agriculture less resilient and more risk prone. The factors that matter most in soil management is regular supply of humus and maintenance of soil fertility which is fundamental basis of human, plants and animal health.

The action of compost is not due to supply of plant nutrient, but its biological reaction, which has the effect of modifying soil microflora. Role of microbes around root zone of plants in soil in maintaining fertility of the soil is seldom appreciated; widespread application of herbicide and pesticide kill the microbes.

Dr Terosse Wiesner, Science Counsellor to US President John F Kennedy, had said, "Use of pesticides is more

dangerous than atomic fallout." We are rightly appalled by the genetic effects of radiation. How microorganism in the soil is truly engines of life? How microbes control ecological balance of nature, how humans and technology is disrupting. It is very often not a part of our education. Life on earth is much more than plants and animals. The overwhelming majority of life on earth is microbial. Association of trees with soil environment is seldom a part of our biology education in schools, much less at primary level to widen our understanding of environment and change in attitude and aptitude of our young inquisitive minds.

How then we could be indifferent to the same effects of farm chemicals used freely in the environment. The toxic farm chemicals are radiomimetic in that they ape the character of radiation. No doubt how the incidence of cancer is rising in India particularly in States like Punjab, where pesticide is used indiscriminately. It has been rightly said by Alan N Edison that modern technology owes ecology an apology.

Agroforestry-agrohorticulture, Silvopastoral system for sustainable resilient agriculture is an answer to efficient land management. Further, the issue of conservation, management and development of land resources assumes significance in a situation where as much as about 174 million hectare or approximately 53 per cent of geographical area of the country is estimated to be affected by various problems of soil erosion and land degradation. Out of the total problem area, about 83

per cent suffers from water and wind erosion and rest suffers from problems like water logging, alkalinity, salinity, shifting cultivation.

An estimate shows that about 6,000 million tonnes of top soil is lost annually from original site. If present trend is allowed to continue, about one third of arable land of our country will be lost within 20 years.

From various studies, it is established beyond doubt that much glorified agricultural development results in high production growth. Massive food production, several times increase in yield and increase in per capita food availability have not made farming attractive to potential farmers. The ratio of agriculture population to general population is going down. The National Commission on Agriculture, 1976, also called for an integrated development approach for building a forward looking, dynamic diversified agriculture with livestock, fisheries and forestry.

The commission has warned against indiscriminate interference with ecological balance in the quest of increasing food production. In this context, it is emphasised that trees which are the only natural means of sustainability of the land is missing in most of the landscapes that are required to be restored on an urgent bases. Hence, there is a dire need to push the programme of agro and farm forestry with utmost seriousness to check the fast deterioration of soil and water resources.

It is reiterated that there is no other natural means other than the trees or the perennial vegetation that can restore

the nutrient, carbon and nitrogen recycle. Century back someone observed that the relationship between agriculture and forest is like husband and wife: dark, stern and strong but protecting and cherishing; agriculture, bland, benignant and bountiful, may be described as wife.

The trees protect the agriculture in absence of which agriculture pines and languishes and becomes barren and unfruitful. But unfortunately land use patterns are an expression of deep political, economic and cultural structure; they do not change when an ecologist or a forester sounds the alarm that a country is losing its resource base.

Agroforestry programme in shape of wind and shelter belts can restore or even improve soil fertility. The problem is that scientific data on actual changes taking place in soil fertility is scarce.

Again there is no good substitute for local scientific research. The main question to be resolved is the rate at which the soil loss is taking place. Decline in soil fertility reduces the gross value of the crop and livestock activities but the farm land is taken out of production even when the net value of farm output becomes negative.

The Ministry of Agriculture had constituted a committee of experts to prepare the draft outline of National Land Use Policy to fulfill the socio-economic objective of the country. The committee recommended that all existing legislations in the primary production sector as well as non-agricultural sector dealing with land resources should be reviewed to deter-

mine that no conflicting provisions exist. Efforts should be made to bring out a single legislation to ensure protection, optimum management and continued productivity of available land resources while meeting increasing demands from various sectors. Land is a subject of State list of schedule-7 of the Constitution of India and the importance of such a comprehensive, single legislation was emphasised at several occasions by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.

It has become imperative that we should have an effective land use policy and institution to watch the health of our land. A few important recommendations of this policy could be:

1) A committee of experts should be constituted to prepare a draft outline of national land use policy in order to bring out a single legislation to ensure protection, optimum management and continued productivity of available land resources.

2) Efforts should be made to ensure a healthy debate through people's participation in implementation of the soil and water conservation Act.

3) Land Acquisition Act should be given a relook and non-scientific exploitation of groundwater be stopped.

4) Land requirement norms for different development schemes should be evolved.

5) Steep slopes, flood plain and fragile water-shed should be reserved for trees, grass and perennial vegetation.

(The author is former Indian Forest Service officer)



BKP SINHA



EVERYTHING HAS ITS WONDERS, EVEN DARKNESS AND SILENCE, AND I LEARN, WHATEVER STATE I MAY BE IN, THEREIN TO BE CONTENT — HELEN KELLER



YOUR WEEK AHEAD



MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19
Health remains good but you still need to be vigilant. Maintain a positive mind-set and things will come easily to you. In professional life, your talent will help you distance yourself from difficulties and you will feel more optimistic than usual. Work wise, you will obtain the confidence you have always dreamt of. New opportunities in terms of a new venture or projects are indicated. For a few of the Arians, you will decide to leave a job that is no longer working for your betterment. It is a great time for socialising because of your increased popularity and charisma. You are likely to have an open and honest communication with your partner. The discussions you have now will be of a serious nature.
Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22
Health remains good this week. Those of you with a persisting health issue, share your health concerns with others. You may find some solution to your problem. It is a very positive new beginning, especially, on the work front. If you have had a difficult time in the recent past, then know that things are likely to get better very soon. The new possibilities in this week will escalate your chance of making new discoveries and attracting new admirers. Some of you may expect a good news of promotion. In the field of romance, you will probably want to nurture and protect your partner. Most of all you will want to give them kindness, love and affection. Someone will call you out of the blue or you will plan a reunion with a lover or an admirer.
Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 19
Your health will show improvement. This week you will find yourself in a more psychic and intuitive phase, so it is important that you trust your instincts. At work, your mind is likely to be very active. Make sure to communicate your thoughts to the others. Fine tune your goals and make clear plans and strategies to attain your objectives. This is a good time to discuss your plans with the others, because you will get good feedback and support. There is a possibility that you may become a victim of confusion. This might lead to insecurity. Just keep in mind that the bad time shall pass. Expect a slight delay in your travel plans. Romance is blossoming. You are likely to take your relationship to the next level. Those who are single may have to wait for some more time.
Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20
This week your health will be at its best. Despite your busy schedule, you will take time out to relax and rejuvenate. If suffering from health problems, then it is likely that you will find a way to your recovery. The cards indicate that the people around you will appreciate you and your efforts, and notice the quality of your work. Keep doing what you are doing as you are on the right track. You will have a lot of luck in investments. Property dealings are likely to be resolved. This week will bring peace and harmony to your life. This is a great time to relax with loved ones or party with friends. Your loving mood will make you more attractive than usual. Studies and exams should go well, especially in technical areas like the sciences, computers and mathematics.
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Camel brown
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22
After a bad health phase, this week brings you a big relief in terms of positive health. You will be able to revive the inner child like energy and will be active the entire week. On the professional front, you will be able to fulfill your long term ambition this week. Whatever you put your mind to should lead to a lasting results. People around would look up to you for a sound advice. You need to have a profound vision and a vigilant analysis of all the plans and strategies which will enable you to move towards success. Socialising and your love life will benefit from extra charisma and intellectual attractiveness. You may find yourself taking care of family matters such as insurances and wills. You can be confident about making commitments.
Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
This week brings quick thinking, decisiveness and a influential communication style. It is an apt time for debates, asking for favours and public speaking. You can expect positive reactions and valuable assistance to your propositions. The forceful nature of your communication makes it a perfect time to defend yourself and your loved ones. Those in academics, this is a good time for studying and appearing for exams. Good concentration and attention to detail means you will not make mistakes. This is also a good time to make important decisions, conduct negotiations and business dealings. Your romance appears to be a little disturbed this week. Try to keep a two-way communication with your partner to avoid any misunderstandings.
Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday



GEMINI May 21-June 20
Things will get better for those who are facing ailments. On the work front, your innovative spirit will help you expand your horizons and attain new goals. Later this week, you can expect an exciting news. Stimulating conversations will lead to a business deal. Some of you may face competition at work. Keep a watchful eye as someone will try to frame you at work for something serious. This is a good time to be with your partner, friends and family. You will have an enjoyable time going to parties, places of relaxation, entertainment and amusement. New friendships would be formed or a significant new romance may begin. Your new charm will fetch you popularity, and win over dates for you. Romance is in the air.
Lucky number 12
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
This week your health will be good. Try not to get into ego conflicts and retreat to a safe place where you can develop your creative, spiritual and generous nature. You will be smart and optimistic at work and accomplish all your incomplete tasks. You can expect some exciting opportunities coming your way later this week. Wait for some news on domestic front will make you feel frustrated. Love life looks satisfying. You will maintain harmony in your relationships and will have a greater ability to express your love and affection towards your partner. Travelling to far off destination to meet someone is on the cards. Those who are considering investments, must think and discuss with those close to you before taking any action.
Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
You will enjoy a good health. Continue with your meditation and yoga routine, as it will keep you connected to your soul. Those dealing with health issues, need to get a bit serious and take proper treatment. Your ability of quick thinking and determination will make this week an apt time to prepare long term plan on work front. Networking with some promising contacts will allow you to make a change. You will have a better mental energy and concentration, and this will help you succeed in studies or researches. Do not worry about taking risks, as this week, luck is in your favour. You can expect some exciting news in your love life. You are likely postpone your travel plans to another day.
Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Wednesday



CANCER June 21-July 22
Be careful while exercising as you might suffer an injury or sprain. At work, you will be professional and follow the company policies. Travel due to business commitments is on the cards. On this trip, you are likely to make new friends and admirers. You will have a lot of work on your plate. Dedication towards task is important, but oversteering yourself may prove counterproductive. Do not hesitate to ask for help, if needed. On your personal front, the week indicates love, harmony and friendship. This is a good time to relax and have fun with loved ones. Your loving and friendly mood will make you popular. This is an excellent time for dating because your charm and beauty will attract genuine, honest love.
Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
Continue with your daily exercise or yoga routine. If you have not yet started, then start fresh now. You will feel driven to succeed at something with your strong sense of purpose and initiative. With the immense amount of courage and fighting spirit, you face all the challenges without any frown. This week you are able to finish a lot of work in a short period of time. It is a favourable time for business matters and negotiations. Financial situations are not good, so avoid spending lavishly. You may find yourself to be more emotional and sensitive than usual. This is a great time to talk about relationship issues because you will be in touch with your true feelings. You will know how people are feeling and will be more sympathetic and nurturing than normal.
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20
Your emotional well-being will decide the state of your health. It is important that you assess your feelings. Channelise your energy in the right track and you will find yourself in the pink of health. In your professional life, you are clear about your goals and what you have to do to achieve those goals. A stimulating time, filled with opportunities, puts your determination and ambition a notch higher. Business dealings and negotiations are favoured, especially for long-term investments and real estate. This is the right time to make long term strategies. The cards indicate a sharp focus on your relationship. Be sensitive and passionate towards your partner. A short trip will prove beneficial because you will meet a new admirer, who shares the same mind-set.
Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Tuesday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

No shortcuts to fixing problems

A couple of months back someone called me to check on longevity prospects of one of his friends he had brought seeking astrological advice. "Why?" I questioned. "His kidney is malfunctioning and has to undergo dialysis twice a week." He answered.

I immediately recalled that the man in question had come to me a couple of years back with two straight questions: "Sir, I am a lawyer by profession. Many astrologers said that I am a genius. Yet, every now and then, my career goes for a toss. I have heard a lot about you. Kindly perform a puja that saves me from such an ordeal and ensures success. Also, some astrologers have warned me that I may face serious health issues close to 45 years of age. Please do conduct puja that would help me build my immunity level and save it from failing ever. Don't worry about the cost."

Well, I agree that you are extraordinarily intelligent, with very good communicative skills. But that alone would not suffice. You need to look within, figure out inherent habits and attitudes that stand in way of your positives from blooming out in full. Acknowledge and address them without further loss of

time. I am afraid, no puja mediated by a pundit can penetrate your inner mind space to let you rise above your limitations. Remember, there is no quick fix solution to problems of mind genesis, as habits die hard. But you can help yourself by exercising freewill option, which enjoins upon you with the capacity to guide your actions by choice and discrimination. Instead of expecting external intervention, better take charge of yourself, and put in conscious efforts to make necessary amends. In terms of your health, better consult a doctor and have regular health check-up. Regulate your food. Do necessary physical exercise. Here again, it is difficult to digest that trying to appease some hypothetical God existent in the higher realms of cosmos, could help change your physiological conditions.

I could make out that with his hardened attitude and delusional mind, he won't easily digest my advisory. Later, I was given to understand that he went after so called sorcerers and got tantric pujas conducted. He also engaged pundits and got many pujas done. But to what effect? Let us now look at his astrological pointers.



Towards the positive, wisdom-oriented Jupiter conjunct intellectually ordained Uranus, extends beneficial aspect to intelligence signifying Mercury. This planetary alignment is indicative of his extraordinary talent. He may have clarity in vision and thought over such subjects he pays attention, which he could present with exactitude because of his excellent communicative ability.

All this gets compromised because of many negative inherent traits. The first marker is his lagna sign Aries. That points to his aggressive, impulsive, irritable, hot headed, abrasive, intolerant, and impatient nature. He wishes to live in a demanding mode, often to his whims and fancies. He may jump into action without applying proper forethought, and with obvious consequences. Lagna lord Mars in the 8th house identified with difficulties, read together with lagna sub-lord Venus occupying the 12th house, makes him vulnerable to self-undoing acts. So, he remains susceptible to become a victim of his own making. Lagna lord Mars, identity-signifying the Sun, and mind-signifying Moon, all placed in fixed signs accounts for his hardened attitude. Lagna lord Mars conjunct Neptune and also square to both the Sun and Moon makes him temperamental.

Both the luminaries the Sun and Moon locked in adverse formation to mischievous Neptune have him stuck in his self-delusional beliefs and perceptions, and not open to listening or counsel. The Sun placed adverse to Venus makes him emotionally too much sensitive and touchy. He may get over exercised even on trivial issues, over which he may keep unnecessarily mulling for long. Venus ill-placed to Neptune tempts him to get rich quick even if it means getting into murky deals, which may often tell upon his reputation.

In terms of health, the 6th sub-lord Saturn in the 12th occupying the nakshatra owned by Mercury the 6th lord makes him vulnerable to long drawn serious health issues, calling for medical intervention. The Sun distanced from Venus by 45 degrees made him vulnerable to kidney related issues around that age, and so it happened with him. But because of his delusional perception, he failed to take pre-emptive measures. The result is there to see.

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