

OPINION 8
A BROKEN JUSTICE SYSTEM

WORLD 12
PM BORIS CELEBRATES ELECTION WIN WITH SPICY CHICKEN CURRY

SPORT 16
CARIBBEANS TASTE THE FIRST BLOOD

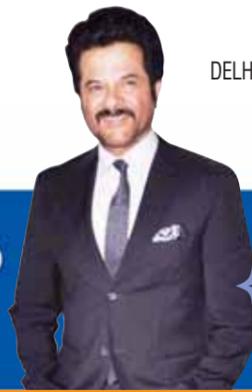
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I DON'T FOLLOW ANY PLAN: ANIL 13 VIVACITY

ANTI-CAA PROTEST FLARES UP IN CAPITAL

Agitation in Jamia turns violent, students clash with police, 35 injured, 3 DTC buses torched

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The protest against the amended Citizenship Act (CAA) by the Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) University students erupted on Sunday. Violence spilled on the Mathura Road, Jamia and its adjoining areas following a clash between police and students who were protesting against the amended CAA. The student protest is said to be led by the local leaders of the area. Three buses of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and four fire engines were damaged by the protesters against the police.

According to report, at least 35 injured people were taken to a nearby hospital.

Delhi Police personnel entered the Jamia Millia campus after situation became highly volatile in the wake of intense violence. Police blocked the university gates to nab some "outsiders" who had entered the premises to hide, sources said. There was a heavy deployment of police in and around the campus. Several metro stations were closed, including Jamia Millia, GTB Nagar, Shivaji Stadium, Patel Chowk and Vishwavidyalaya metro stations.

Later, Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia announced closure of all schools in South Delhi following the incident.

Later a demonstration at police headquarters was held after police crackdown at Jamia.

Both the Jamia Millia students' community as well as the Teachers' Association have disassociated themselves with the

All in a day

- Police forcibly enter Jamia campus, fire tear gas, beat students and detain them along with some 'outsiders'
- Police said they entered the campus to only control situation after incident of arson
- Demonstration at police headquarters after police crackdown at Jamia
- Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia announced closure of all schools in South Delhi following the incident
- Both the Jamia Millia students' community as well as the Teachers' Association have disassociated themselves with the violence and arson that took place near the university

violence and arson that took place near the university Sunday afternoon. Three public buses and a fire tender were set afire by the protesters during the violence and arson in New Friends' Colony.

The students claimed that "certain" local elements had "disrupted" their protest and indulged in violence.

The sources said that as police tried to disperse the protesters by using baton charge and firing tear gas shells, some of the "outsiders" ran towards the campus and tried to hide there. While, a group of Jamia students sitting on the protest said the police baton charged them when they were holding a peaceful protest. A Delhi Fire Services official said four fire tenders were rushed to



A bus set ablaze by protesters against the Citizenship Amendment Act at Mathura Road in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

the spot. "One fire tender was completely damaged and two personnel were injured," said a senior police deployed on the protest site.

While, National secretary National Students' Union of India (NSUI) Saimon Farooqui, said, "The protesters were peacefully sitting on Mathura Road when policemen tried to "trouble" a couple of protesters, who resisted.

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BJP ANNOUNCES NATIONWIDE DRIVE TO SPREAD AWARENESS ABOUT CAA

New Delhi: Amid Opposition's pitch against the amended Citizenship Law, the BJP on Sunday announced a nationwide campaign to spread awareness about it. Party spokesperson Sambit Patra said on Sunday the BJP workers will spread out across the country to inform people about the law. He said party cadre from 11 States were briefed by the national leadership on the law. The party has asked all the MPs including those from Rajya Sabha to visit their constituencies and States to create awareness.

AASU HINTS AT LAUNCHING PARTY AS OPTION TO BJP, AGP, CONG IN ASSAM

Guwahati: The All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which has been protesting the amended Citizenship Act, on Sunday hinted at launching a political party along with 'Shilpi Samaj' (artists' forum) as an alternative to the ruling BJP and AGP as well as to Opposition Congress. AASU president Dipanka Nath supported popular actor Zubeen Garg's proposal of launching a political party. "We are in talks with Silpi Samaj and also discussing with people of Assam to think about an alternative," he said.

PNS

In U-turn, AGP all set to move SC against law

PNS ■ GUWAHATI/ NEW DELHI

2 injured in protest succumb, unrest continues in Assam

Taking a u-turn after voting in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the Rajya Sabha, BJP ally in Assam Assom Gana Parishad (AGP) has decided to challenge the Act in the Supreme Court. The party leaders have also decided to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah over the matter.

Meanwhile, the North east continued to witness unrest with two more people protesting against the amended Citizenship Act in Assam succumbing to injuries on Sunday. The deceased were identified as Ishwar Nayak and Abdul Alim. Both of them suffered bullet injuries due to police firing during clashes in Guwahati on Thursday.

Curfew imposed on Guwahati and parts of Dibrugarh district in the wake of the violent protests was relaxed on Sunday for several hours. Special trains have been arranged by the Assam tourism department in association with the railways to ferry passengers stranded in various parts of the state.

Continued on Page 4

party leaders in Guwahati on Saturday night. He asserted that the AGP respected the sentiments of common people, who were wary that the law might threaten their identity and existence.

"We will take the legal route to seek revocation of the amended Act as the indigenous people of Assam are apprehensive that their identity, language might come under threat," Das said. Sources said a delegation of the AGP, led by Das, would leave for Delhi to file the plea in the apex court as PILs seeking revocation of the Act were scheduled to be taken up for hearing on December 18. Former AGP Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, who had been vocal about his opposition to the amended Act, claimed the party never adopted any resolution supporting the law. He urged the AGP leadership to clear its stand on the contentious matter.

On the other hand, dissonance had been brewing in the AGP after party chief Atul Bora said if the Centre "wants to bring the Bill, he cannot do anything about it."

Continued on Page 4

Opp parties behind unrest, raising storm over Act: PM

PNS ■ RANCHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the Congress and its allies of raising a storm over the citizenship law and asserted that the Opposition parties were behind the unrest and arson in parts of the country.

Modi, addressing a rally in Dumka, said the Congress and its allies are creating a ruckus in North Eastern States and other parts of the country after Parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). He said, "They are doing arson because they did not get their way. Those who are creating violence can be identified by their clothes itself. The work that was done by protesters on Pakistan's money in London is now being done by the Congress."

The Prime Minister



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses an election campaign rally, in Dumka, Jharkhand on Sunday

Sanjib Kumar Dutta | Pioneer

accused the Congress of speaking the language of Pakistan on CAA and other important decision taken by his Government in last six months. Modi making a scathing attack on the Congress following the line of

Pakistan assumes importance as this is for the first time that the PM has spoken against the Congress after Parliament passed CAA last week.

The Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019, which provides a path to Indian citizenship for persons belonging to religious minority groups persecuted in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, was passed by Parliament on Wednesday, with the Rajya Sabha voting 125-99 in favour of the Bill.

After the passing of the Bill, many parts of country witnessed violent agitations in Assam, West Bengal and even at national capital as students of Jamia Millia Islamia University took to the streets to protest against the exclusion of Muslim immigrants from the provisions of new Citizenship Act.

Also, the Congress on Saturday had held a massive rally called "Bharat Bachao" at Delhi's Ramliya Maidan attack-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Raghubar Das and others being garlanded during an election campaign rally ahead of the 5th phase of State Assembly elections in Dumka on Sunday

Pioneer photo

ing the Modi Government on a number of issues, including the economy, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and women's safety.

On the Opposition to the citizenship law, he said after seeing the quality protests in Northeast, it is clear that the decision was commendable and in the right direction.

The rally which was also attended by Chief Minister Raghubar Das, Dumka BJP candidate and Minister Louis Marandi, Minister and Sarath Singh, MPs among others. The Prime Minister urging

the protestors to end violence said that those having any doubts on CAA should sit and talk, but these people have embarrassed the country by demonstrating there.

Modi in Dumka also said the BJP Governments at the Centre and the State will continue to protect Jharkhand's 'jal', 'jungle' and 'jameen', no matter what the opposition parties say.

"In Jharkhand, the institutes of higher education, engineering and medical studies like IIT, AIIMS were opened, this is also done by BJP," PM Modi asserted.

Continued on Page 4

Violence spreads in Bengal

Guv terms Govt's ad against NRC, CAA unconstitutional

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Post passage of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), violence continued unabated and spread to other parts of Bengal on an incremental basis with protester going on a rampage. Things threatened to lapse into a bigger turmoil as BJP leadership warned retaliation if the State police continued to sit silent spectator allowing public properties to be looted and destroyed.

Violent protests that were largely limited to Murshidabad, Howrah and North and South 24 Parganas on Saturday on Sunday spread to Malda, North Dinajpur and outer fringes of Kolkata leading the State administration to partially shut down the internet network.

As people, including daily commuters suffered from road and rail blockades and cancellation of trains, fresh conflict war of words erupted between the State Government and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar



Members of West Bengal Human Rights Cell stage a protest rally against CAA and NRC in Kolkata on Sunday

PTI

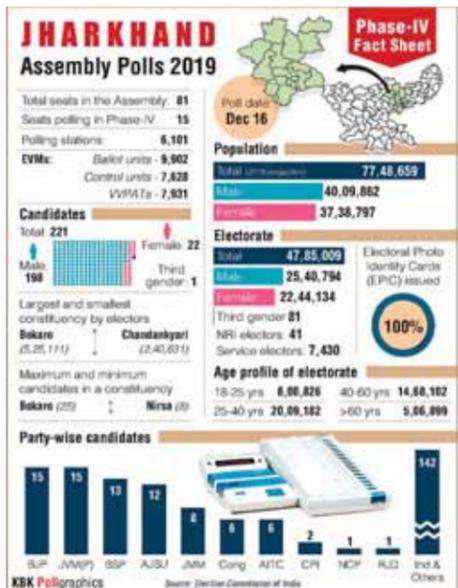
who denounced a televised publicity clipping of the State Government — in which Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is appealing for peace as a quid pro quo for her blocking the implementation of the new Act at any cost — as unconstitutional.

Parts of Bengal sizzled and simmered as rural mobs in Malda, Murshidabad, outer Kolkata and Birbhum took to

streets attacking and vandalising public properties. At Bhaluka Road Railway station in Malda district bordering Bangladesh miscreants ransacked the station premises forcing the railway staff on duty to flee the area, police said.

Similar protests were witnessed at Tildanga station at Farakka where locals torched the station offices.

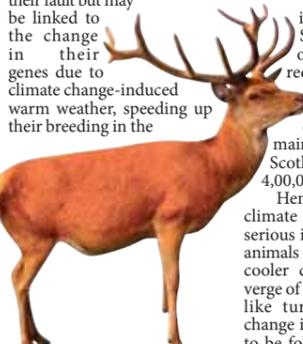
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Global warming leads to rise in red deer population

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Multiplication of red deer population in Scotland could not be on account of their fault but may be linked to the change in their genes due to climate change-induced warm weather, speeding up their breeding in the



region. A new study has said that Scotland's red deer are altering their birthing patterns in order to adapt to global warming.

This finding has come in the light of the Scottish Government's order of culling of the red deer whose population has multiplied over the years. It is estimated that the main highland range in Scotland now has about 4,00,000 of the animals.

Hence, while man-made climate change is having a serious impact on the wildlife animals — some are moving to cooler climes, some on the verge of extinction while a few like turtles are witnessing change in sex, red deer seems to be following the theory of

evolution developed by Charles Darwin, said the scientists in the study published in the journal PLOS (Public Library of Science) Biology.

And this evolution is happening in decades, not centuries, they said after studying field records and genetic data collected on the four-legged animals on the Isle of Rum in Scotland over a 45-year period since 1972.

This is one of the first evidences of wild animals undergoing evolution process, said the scientists from the University of Edinburgh, Australian National University and the universities of St Andrews and Cambridge.

"Not only do warmer temperatures encourage deer to give birth earlier in the year, it has also meant the gene for

breeding earlier has become more common among the deer," said Dr Timothée Bonnet, of the Australian National University, who led the study. He explained that the deer that give birth earlier have more calves over their lifetime — which means they have more reproductive success.

"It is rare to see evolution over such a short period," he said about the study "the role of selection and evolution in changing parturition date in a red deer population."

Previous studies have shown that the deer have been giving birth earlier since the 1980s, at a rate of about three days per decade. However, the new study says that female red deer — called hinds — give birth to a single calf each year, and those that reproduce earlier in

the year have more offspring over their lifetime.

The gene which causes earlier birth is therefore much more common among the red deer population over time. This is an example of natural selection, the theory of evolution developed by Charles Darwin, he added. The research shows that natural selection "may help populations adapt to climate warming."

Professor Josephine Pemberton, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Biological Sciences, who was also involved in the study, added, "Long-term studies of individual lifetimes are one of the few ways to understand how populations respond to environmental change and how to manage its effects."

Continued on Page 4

CAPSULE

PAYAL ROHATGI DETAINED BY RAJASTHAN POLICE
Kota: The Rajasthan Police on Sunday morning detained Bollywood actress Payal Rohatgi from her Ahmedabad residence for interrogation in a case relating to alleged objectionable content against the Nehru-Gandhi family on social media.

FATE OF J'KHAND MINS TO BE SEALED TODAY
Ranchi: The fate of state Labour Minister Raj Palivwar and Land and Revenue Minister Amar Kumar Bauri will be decided in the fourth phase of polling in Jharkhand on Monday. BJP candidate Bauri will lock horns with NDA ally AJSU Party nominee Umakant Razzak in Chandankiyari seat while BJP's Palivwar will contest JMM candidate Hussain Ansari in Madhupur constituency.

DEARTH OF RESOURCES

CPI (Maoist) changes strategies

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

The Central Military Commission of CPI (Maoist) has embarked upon three major types of assault on the security forces — attacking from a distance, invading non-LWE hit areas and using Improvised Explosive Devices, sources said on Sunday.

Sources said the Maoists have neither enough men nor machines left to attack any police station, outpost or picket straightway — the most common form of offensive by the ultras from 1990s to 2007.

A head on collision with security forces is avoided now by the insurgents for the simple reason that the Maoists have a strong depletion of their men and teeth. They are not in any position to carry their dead or injured cadre on stretchers, sources said.

Sources said the second strategy of the Maoists is to strike in non-Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas with deadly precision as they first did at Kookoodeeh in Saraikeela where in the market they killed 5 cops



and looted their weapons and again on NH 5 under Chandwa police station.

At Pipra bazaar in Palamu where Maoists killed a JMM block chief two days ahead of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit here in Daltonganj police stumbled upon a printed leaflet there where the Maoists wanted rural

people to form Jan Chhapaamaar (people's raid).

Maoists' use of anti personnel IED has come under sharp criticisms from activists who taking serious umbrage of the killing of a primitive tribal Etwa Parhiyaya at Bulbul forest on December 12.

Zonal Inspector of Police Navin Singh said "We are too

shocked and concerned over the killing of an innocent poor civilian in the pressure IED laid by the Maoists in the forest of Bulbul for which the Maoists must come out to explain their aberrations and senseless act of violence which is now taking a toll on civilians."

Singh added, "This is the most nefarious design of the

Maoists which will boomerang upon them as common people hold them squarely responsible for the loss of lives and days are too near when villagers will hold them by their collar to know as to why they killed the poor civilians."

Agreeing with the Pioneer's investigations about the paradigm shift of strategy of the Maoists like distant targeting of security forces, invasion of non naxal areas and rampant use of IEDs IG Singh said "Maoists' new strategy is indicative of their desperate battle for their own existence wherein control and management of their territories by cadres sitting atop have gone astray as down the line cadres do not realize the consequences of their actions."

The IG did not deny that Maoists are refraining from using cell phones and have begun to depend on 'courier' system for exchange of information. In this form of communication, senior Maoists can be fed with wrong information by lower rung just to cover up their own folly like this loss of life at Bulbul forest.

Candidates put in last-minute efforts to woo voters

PNS ■ BOKARO

With just one night left for the poll battle in Bokaro and Chandankiyari Assembly constituencies, all the candidates have rolled up their sleeves to woo voters.

Candidates who are in poll fray are on their last-minute effort to woo the voters. Candidates and their supporters undertook door-to-door campaign to seek votes, promising to end the problems faced by the people.

Some of the candidates remained busy to consolidate their booths and polling agents while others worked with their teams to ensure a good voter turnout amidst bad weather on Monday.

Congress candidate Shweta Singh, AJSU candidate Rajender Mahato, JMM candidate Dr Prakash, Janta Party candidate Sunil Kumar including other candidates today visited in the interior colonies of Bokaro distributed pamphlet, slips and appealed for the vote. While in Chandankiyari AJSU candidate Umakant Rajak, JMM Bijay Rajwar and BJP sitting MLA Amar Bauri along

with their supports also conducted house to house campaign with new promises.

Though, the election is expected to witness a neck-to-neck fight between AJSU candidate Umakant Rajak, JMM candidate Bijay Rajwar and BJP sitting MLA Amar Bauri. While in Bokaro constituency it is expected a very close fight between Congress candidate Shweta Singh and between BJP's sitting MLA. AJSU candidate Rajender Mahato is also hopeful of winning the seat taking advantage of the two-corner fight.

Meanwhile, 'Lure of money in lieu of votes' is on the rise in the rural parts of both constituencies. Candidates rampantly using 'money power' to lure the voters also in the slum areas and in Khatals too; distributed currency note filled buckets (in khatalis), informed an eyewitness on anonymity. Taking tough steps Mukesh Kumar District Electoral Office Deputy Commissioner Bokaro promised to investigate and take strict action. "Our surveillance teams are keeping eye on all activities," he added. The administration has a

close watch on political parties as well as candidates. For all political parties, the district administration has deputed shadow teams, who are constantly monitoring each of their activities, he said.

If any political parties do any activity or campaign with the intention of influencing the election or violate the model code of conduct, then prompt action will be taken, said Kumar.

"Our investigation teams are conducting inspections, hotels, restaurants, dhabas are being checked in the mid-night to avoid any kind of lapses, and neither money power can be used in the election," he said.

There is a full prohibition on alcohol till 05:00 PM on 16 December, during this period, all liquor shops, bars, clubs would remain closed and strict legal action will be taken against the distribution or illegal collection of liquor, he said.

"If any person has information about distribution or storage of liquor at someplace, then kindly informs the district administration officials immediately through C-Vigil App, said Kumar.

Paradise extends helping hand to needy kids Dumri to witness multi-corner contest

PNS ■ RANCHI

Members of Paradise — a social organisation visited Pestalozzi Children Education Society (PCES) Pundag area and distributed necessary commodities among the children living in the shelter home on Sunday. The group distributed necessary items worth ₹1.65 lakh among needy students.

PCES was set up in 2017 with an aim to provide education among needy children from Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, West

Bengal and other states. The first batch of such students started in 2008 with 12 students eight girls and four boys from Bihar and Jharkhand. The Paradise group on the occasion also felicitated the coordinator of the PCES Gayatri Singh.

In another function, Murari Lal Agarwal from Awaran group also distributed items including food packets, daily use item among differently able children. The distributed items worth ₹25,000 and it was distributed among 600 differently able children.

"We welcome our new mem-

bers contributing monthly. We request all to encourage other interested persons to join our social drive too. Together we will always keep coming forward as a ray of hope for institutions like PCES, so that they can work for the society," said president of Paradise, Rushikesh Raipat.

Founded by 14 like-minded couples in May 2019, Paradise works in India to provide relief to the poor, medical relief, education and advancement of any other object of general public utility without any distinction of religion, caste, colour, creed, or sex.

SURESH NIKHAR ■ BERMO

As the campaigning for the fourth phase of Dumri Assembly polls ended on Saturday evening, with the polling on December 16, it would be crucial for the sitting JMM candidate Jagannath Mahto in the Dumri as three other heavyweight candidates are in fray.

The key candidates include Jagannath Mahto of JMM, Yashoda Devi of AJSU, Pradeep Kumar Sahu of BJP and former minister Lal Chand Mahto contesting on JDU ticket.

According to the Election Commission the total voters in the constituency is 2,72,248 and there are 16 candidates in fray. Adequate security arrangements have been made to ensure smooth and peace-

ful poll in the Naxalite affected Dumri constituency, said Dumri, SDPO Niraj Kumar.

The poll momentum gained pace with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home minister Amit Shah as well as JMM leader and former CM Hement Soren and Sudesh Mahto of AJSU addressing several rallies in Dumri and Giridih in last few days. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union minister Smriti Irani also addressed rallies seeking votes in support of BJP candidate. Actor-turned politician Manoj Tiwari also addressed election meeting in support of BJP candidate.

Dumri Assembly seat has been the traditional stronghold of JMM and is locked in a triangular fight with AJSU nominee, Yashoda Devi and BJP candidate and Pradeep

Kumar Sahu.

Jagannath Mahto had been representing Dumri Assembly seat since 2000, however, BJP candidate Pradeep Kumar Sahu claim that there is anti-incumbency against the JMM MLA. Sahu claimed that Mahto did nothing for the constituency. However JMM MLA Mahto said the election is going to be rather easy this time, compared to the last three assembly polls, as "historical development work" has been done by him in Dumri region. Mahto said these parties tried a similar strategy in last elections but voters rejected their "gimmicks" and voted for development schemes that helped all sections of the society. Rejecting the JMM's claims of development works in the region, Yashoda Devi of AJSU said he was limited to

a few areas and the farmers are facing a major crisis in the agriculture-dominated rural areas of different panchayats of Dumri region due to drought and fuel price hike while youths are being compelled to migrate because of unemployment.

Moti Mahto a resident of Kanjkiro village said that I had high hope from MLA as he has been the MLA of this constituency for over last 15 years. Closer of several important industries like DVC, CCL and failure to set up new ones in Dumri have led to unemployment which has affected the local village youths who have to migrate to other states for job opportunities. While Chandermuni Devi a para teacher said the Dumri desperately needs a good higher educational centre and a good hospital.

XLRI felicitates alumni with 'Distinguished Alumni Awards'

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

XLRI - Xavier School of Management hosted 'Distinguished Alumni Awards Ceremony' to felicitate its illustrious alumni on the occasion of 'Annual Alumni Homecoming 2019'. This year nine distinguished alumni of the institute received the Distinguished Alumnus Awards in five categories.

The two-day long celebration of XLRI's Annual Alumni Homecoming 2019 was held on 14th - 15th December. This year, XLRI celebrated the Annual Homecoming for the 17th year. Over 250 XL Alumni participated in this year's Homecoming



held at XLRI Campus, Jamshedpur.

The highlight of XLRI Annual Alumni Homecoming, the 'Distinguished Alumnus Awards Ceremony' was hosted today at the Tata Auditorium. Fr. P. Christie S.J., Director, XLRI;

Mr. Rana Sinha, President of the XLRI Alumni Association and Prof. Pranabesh Ray, Chairperson, Alumni, XLRI were also present on the occasion. The Winners in different categories of 'Distinguished Alumnus Awards 2019':

Distinguished Alumnus Award - (Lifetime Achievement) Jitendra Singh, Professor Emeritus, XLRI, Jamshedpur, (PMIR-1970)

Distinguished Alumnus Award (Practicing Manager) Mr. Krish Shankar, Group Head - HRD Infosys, Pratik Kumar, Member of Senior Leadership Team, Wipro (PMIR-1988), Judhajit Das, Chief Human Resources, ICICI Prudential (PMIR-1995), Ramakrishnan Ramamurthy, Chief Executive, Polycab India Ltd (BM-1982)

Distinguished Alumnus Award (Allied Fields, Arijit Biswas, Script Writer (PMIR - 1991)

Distinguished Alumnus

Award Entrepreneur, Dhaval Shah, Founder, Pharm Easy, (HRM- 2014), Distinguished Alumnus Award - (Academician) Dr. Anand Narasimhan, Dean (Faculty & Research), IMD (PMIR-1991), Dr. Madan Pillutla, Faculty, London Business School, (PMIR-1991)

This year's Homecoming saw reunion of the batches of 1979 and 1969 celebrate their 40th and 50th homecoming year respectively. Many alumni of Batch of 1971 also participated in these celebrations.

Commenting on the Annual Alumni Homecoming, Fr. P. Christie S.J., Director, XLRI said, "The Annual Homecoming is

one of the most prestigious and important events for XLRI. Our alumni are the torch-bearers of the XL-Culture and have taken the vision and mission of XLRI to the world. They are the true role models for our present and future students and are the ones who truly inspire them to carry forward their legacy. It is a proud moment for us to welcome them back to the campus and felicitate them for their achievements."

Rana Sinha, President, XLRI Alumni Association said, "XLRI can claim to have the most active networking of Alumni amongst Indian Business Schools. Every year the alumni chapters have their get-togethers

in cities across India and abroad. This year, we celebrated Alumni Summer Meets in different cities like Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru and also in Dubai and Singapore. In earlier years, alumni meets were also held in various cities in USA, Dubai and Toronto. In 2008 we had created the XLRI Endowment Fund (XEF) and today XEF USA is a registered non-profit association."

Prof. Pranabesh Ray, Chairperson - Alumni, XLRI commented, "Homecoming is the annual XL family get-together that strengthens our XL bond and fosters camaraderie amongst us. It revives the family spirit.

Our alumni meet their old acquaintances, classmates and teachers and reminisces memorable experiences they have had at XLRI."

XLRI Alumni Association has Alumni Chapters both in India and abroad. In India, the XLRI Alumni Chapters are in Bangalore, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Pune. XLRI also has Alumni Chapters in Singapore and Dubai. In U.S.A. it has chapters in San Jose (covering Bay Area), Dallas (covering the State of Texas), Washington DC, New Jersey, New York, Boston (covering New England), Chicago (covering mid-west region), as well as in Toronto (Canada).

BOOK REVIEW

New Kings of the World: The Rise and Rise of Eastern Pop Culture

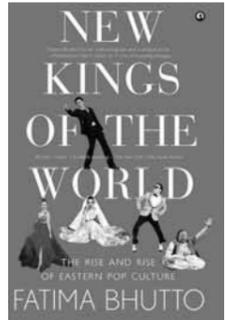
PNS ■ RANCHI

That the grand-daughter of Fatima Bhutto and the daughter of Murtaza Bhutto, controversially killed in a police encounter when his sister Benazir was at the helm in Pakistan, has chosen to write on Hindi cinema, Turkish soap operas and Korean pop, intrigued me no end. Educated as she was at Bernard College in Columbia University and at SOAS in London, Fatima Bhutto, the author of New Kings of the World, focuses in the book on the decline of America's worldwide cultural supremacy and the concomitant rise of a largely Bollywood driven new global pop culture.

America's pop culture — represented by Coca-Cola, jazz, jeans, rock-n-roll and Hollywood — was once the only global pop culture available and it catered mainly to Third World elites. The American culture was spread not just by its inherent coolness but also by the American Defence Complex that helped export this cultural power.

The American military has been the most widely deployed army in history, and it once maintained a massive infrastructure outside its borders with bases across all continents. At its height, in 1968, more than one million American troops were deployed in 54 countries. They brought their cultures with them; their films, their music, their tastes and their products. Global affinity to Coca-Cola, rock-n-roll, and blue jeans was in fact born out of American military bases. With just under 2,00,000 personnel overseas today, marking the lowest American troop deployment in six decades, it's argued that as troop numbers have decreased, so too has American cultural dominance.

The book tells us about the new global pop culture that has emerged from the East and has surpassed America's monopoly of soft power since the end of World War II. The primary focus here though is on Bollywood and how it has travelled to over seventy countries riding piggyback on the unparalleled stardom of Shah



Rukh Khan. Fatima Bhutto does a scholarly study of the evolution of Hindi cinema in the process. Bollywood's early stars, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, and Dev Anand, were all inspired by Nehru's ideals of nation-building, but the growing inequality and corruption of the 1970s led to the rise of the anti-establishment Angry Young Man personified by Amitabh Bachchan. "It's only in the 1990s that Bollywood's historic left-of-centre ideal is finally

defeated. The 90s hero no longer danced in sugarcane fields with farmers but in London's Trafalgar Square with a gang of leather mini-skirted blondes", Bhutto points out.

Bollywood's narrative took a paradigm shift notably through the films of Karan Johar "that recast the NRIs as the epitome of sophisticated modernity, as the masters of global capital and international savoir faire". No longer were stories set in rural India but in Indian mega cities, or else in American and European capitals. Shah Rukh Khan epitomized Bollywood's nouveau riche aesthetic. The yuppie hero was carefully packaged in a flexibly secular modernity with traditional values in urbanized settings. This hero, while driving Ferraris, buying clothes at the Gap, and keeping posters of Madonna and Micky Mouse in his bedroom, still bends to touch his mother's feet every morning.

Fatima Bhutto has traveled extensively in course of exploring popular culture emerging from the East. Her most sur-

prising discovery was to find an entire subculture of Bollywood fans in Peru, where Shah Rukh Khan had attained the status of a demigod. Indigenous Peruvians who migrated into capital Lima from the Andean highlands and who didn't speak English, they quite knew all the Hindi lyrics of Bollywood songs. Campo de Marte, a park in downtown Lima, was filled with people every Sunday dancing to Bollywood music. Women turned shawls into saris and stuck sequins on their foreheads as bindis. Bollywood films make the Peruvians feel seen; they see their struggles and their dreams mirrored in the story lines.

No wonder the Limenos have been stirred by Khan's films that abound with themes of high family values. There're stories galore in Lima which follow a pattern of deep despair being lifted by watching films like Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge and Kal Ho Naa Ho. A petite fortysomething housewife Marlid, for example, was so inspired by Khan's films that she got rid of her old alco-

holism and, having married thereafter, she named her son Aryan Valentino, after Khan's own son!

Though primarily focused on India, this book also briefly touches upon two other cultural industries challenging American soft power: Turkey and South Korea.

A dizi is a soap opera for television in Turkey. Often adapted from Turkish literary classics that run over two hours, every dizi has its original soundtrack and can have up to fifty main characters. 'Magnificent Century', a dizi based on the life of the tenth Ottoman Sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, has reportedly been sold to over hundred countries and seen by over 500 million people. The previous Guinness World Record holding American TV programme, The Bold and the Beautiful, watched by a peak of 26.2 million people worldwide in 2008, looks like a run-of-the-mill show in comparison. The behind-the-scene account of Turkey's biggest TV extravaganza and the way it has

impacted global pop culture has been described deftly by the author.

Fatima Bhutto also travels to South Korea to see how K-pop transformed the world of popular music. K-pop has become a \$5 billion-dollar-a-year industry. In 2016 K-pop music videos were watched 24 billion times on YouTube, with 80 percent of the views coming from outside South Korea. Interestingly, YouTube didn't even know videos could be watched over one billion times until Psy's 'Gangnam Style' famously broke their counter.

Indian films, Turkish television dramas or Korean pop songs have more universal appeal than a piece of American work. They look modern and appealing in the same way that American film, soap opera or music looks. But uniquely, these are all cultural products set firmly in the realm of values. They are concerned with principles, with how one defeats temptation, greed, and avoids dishonor. So, for the most part, there is less violence, no nudity and romantic rela-

tions are portrayed in a chaste manner. Bollywood films exemplify these traits. A K-pop song too may be enjoyed with one's grandmother in the room, no lyrics have to be beeped out. A Turkish dizi might as well be watched with the entire family in attendance.

American or Western pop culture is no longer a vaunted soft power. After President Trump used 'Game of Thrones' imagery to announce renewed sanctions on Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, dismissed American decision by highlighting America's declining cultural, rather than military, cache.

"The United States is much weaker than it was forty years ago. The United States' soft power is worn out. It has been destroyed". Reading the book the Ayatollah's words would appear utterly convincing, for sure.

(The review has been done by Ajay K Singh, who is a Joint Secretary rank Officer in the Government of Jharkhand. Singh is a bibliophile having a voracious appetite for reading)

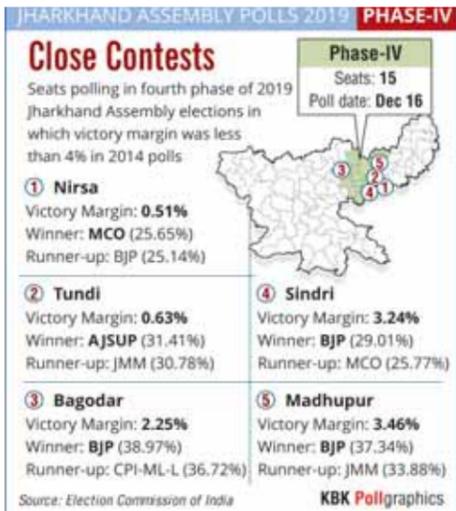
48L voters to decide fate of 221 candidates today

15 constituencies go to polls today

PNS ■ RANCHI

Fifteen constituencies spread across four districts — mostly Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected — in Jharkhand will go to polls in the fourth and penultimate phase of elections here on Sunday. Out of the 6,101 polling stations in the phase, 1,133 have been marked as hypersensitive and 3,070 sensitive, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vinay Kumar Choubey said on Sunday.

"At least 587 of the 1,133 hypersensitive booths and 405 of 3,070 sensitive booths fall in LWE-affected areas," said Choubey, adding that the remaining sensitive and hypersensitive booths are in areas where LWE groups are not active.



Nearly 48 lakh voters will decide the fate of 221 candidates in the 15 constituencies spread across Deoghar,

Giridih, Bokaro and Dhanbad districts on Sunday. The polling process will begin at 7am in all the 15 constituencies and conclude at 3pm in constituencies that fall in LWE-affected areas. The polling will continue till 5pm in the constituencies that do not fall in LWE affected areas, said Choubey.

Sufficient security forces have been deployed in the constituencies to ensure peaceful polling on Sunday. Jawans of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), State police and Railway Protection Force (RPF) have been deployed in the constituencies to thwart any attempts by the LWE outfits to sabotage elections, officials said on Saturday. Besides, polling personnel and security forces were airdropped in highly sensitive zones on Saturday. "Foolproof security arrangements have been made to con-

duct peaceful polls on Sunday. A total of 7,628 control units have been set up in the 15 constituencies for the polls," Choubey said.

The five-phase election in Jharkhand began on November 30 and will conclude on December 20. The first two phases of polls — on November 30 and December 7 — witnessed a fair share of LWE menace. CPI (Maoist) rebels blew up a culvert in Gumla on November 30, while rebels attacked a polling party in Khunti and torched a bus in Chaibasa on December 7. However, no casualties have been reported in LWE incidents on any of the polling dates here so far during this election. No LWE incidents were reported in the third phase of polls on December 12.

At least 4296 polling booths in the fourth phase fall in rural areas while the remaining 1805 booths come

in areas under urban civic bodies. All the polling booths in Jharia fall in urban areas, whereas all polling stations in Chandankiyari, Dumri, Gande, Bagodar and Jamua fall in rural areas. Madhupur, Deoghar, Giridih, Bokaro, Sindri, Nirsra, Dhanbad, Tundi and Baghmara constituencies have polling stations in urban as well as rural areas. As many as 1367 differently-abled and voters above the age of 80 years cast their votes through postal ballot in the fourth phase of elections in Jharkhand.

Elections for the 81 Assembly seats in Jharkhand began on November 30 and will conclude on December 20. The votes will be counted on December 23. Some parts of the State witnessed a sudden rise in minor LWE incidents soon after the Election Commission of India (ECI) announced elections in Jharkhand on November 1.

JMM intensifies campaigning in Santhal Pargana

Guruji, Hemant address rallies

MRTUANJAY KUMAR ■ RANCHI



JMM executive president Hemant Soren addresses an election campaign rally ahead of the fourth phase of Jharkhand Assembly elections in Dumka. Pioneer photo

In a bid to strengthen its hold in tribal-dominated Santhal Pargana area the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) has intensified its campaigns for the penultimate and final phase of polls in the State.

Santhal Pargana has been a JMM stronghold since the days of unified Bihar. The party won 7 seats in 2014 State Assembly Elections out of total 18 seats in the region despite the Modi wave that swept the rest of the country. JMM had won 10 of 18 seats in 2009 State Assembly elections here.

Santhal Pargana will go to polls in the fourth and fifth phases of election slated on December 16 and December 20. JMM Supremo, Shibu Soren and his son JMM Executive president and former Chief Minister, Hemant Soren are extensively campaigning for the party candidates in the region to reclaim their throne from the saffron brigade.

Addressing an election rally at Pakur for Indian National Congress (INC) candidate Alamgir Alam — the sitting MLA from the seat — senior Soren said that people are perturbed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government; be it at the Centre or in the State. He addressed the rally in Santhali language. He appealed to the people to vote for the INC candidate to make Hemant Soren the Chief Minister of the State.

JMM is contesting the State Assembly elections in alliance with INC and former Chief Minister of Bihar, Lalu Prasad Yadav led Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Under the seat sharing pact with the alliance partners, JMM is contesting 43 seats, INC got 31 seats and RJD is contesting 7 seats.

On Sunday, junior Soren addressed five election rallies. Addressing an election rally at Poraiyahat seat for JMM candidate Ashok Kumar, the former

Chief Minister said that in the last five years a large number of youths of the State have become unemployed due to misuse of the incumbent State Government as in last five years the Government has not been able to conduct Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) and Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission (JSSC) exams. "There are huge vacancies in all departments of the State Government but the Government did not try to fill them. The youths of the State are forced to migrate to other states for their livelihood," he added.

He also addressed an election rally in Dumka, where he is the candidate of JMM. Soren is also contesting from Barhait seat. Soren had won the Dumka seat in 2009. However, in 2014 he had contested from Dumka and Barhait Assembly seats and represented the fourth assembly from Barhait after losing to minister Louis Marandi in Dumka, which has been a traditional seat for the party, represented by Stephen Marandi several times in the past.

The JMM put up a brave fight as it gained a seat over its 2009 performance. However, it failed to keep all its seats in Santhal Pargana, losing four seats from its 2009 tally of 10. BJP used Modi's charisma to snatch three seats from JMM's share in the tribal belt, taking its tally to seven of the 18 seats.

JMM managed to retain only Barhait, Littipara, Maheshpur, Shikaripara, Nala and Jama in the tribal belt.

UPA alliance will win all 15 seats: JPCC

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee (JPCC) on Sunday claimed that the Grand Alliance will win in all 15 constituencies going to polls on Monday in the fourth phase of Assembly elections in Jharkhand.

Addressing a press meet, JPCC In-charge RPN Singh said that the Grand Alliance will win in all the seats where polling is to be held in the fourth and fifth phases of elections. The UPA alliance, he added, will dominate in the fifth phase of polls in Santhal Pargana.

Attacking the Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the State Government led by Chief Minister Raghuraj Das, the JPCC In-charge said that a large number of youths are becoming unemployed every day but the Centre and the State Government are not doing anything to provide them employment.

"The PM visited the State and addressed an election rally but he did not say a single word on cases of rape which is regularly taking place, he did not say a single word on growing unemployment and he did not say any



State Congress in-charge RPN Singh, alongwith JPCC president Rameshwar Oraon and Alok Dubey, during a press conference at party office in Ranchi on Sunday. Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

word on present condition of Jharkhand, he only spoke against Congress Party. We never said anything obnoxious against him but he is wasting time in criticizing Congress Party," said Singh.

Singh said that cases of rape are displaying the actual law and order situation of the State and the Government has completely failed to prevent such kinds of incident. "In every six hour one girl is being raped but the Prime Minister did not say anything on this issue," he added.

Congress is contesting the elections under Grand Alliance, which consists of INC, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and former Bihar Chief Minister; Lalu Prasad Yadav-led

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Under the seat sharing pact with the alliance partners, JMM is contesting 43 seats, INC got 31 seats and RJD is contesting 7 seats.

Mocking the Prime Minister, the JPCC In-charge said that PM said in Santhal Pargana that he will protect water, land and forest of the State but he should clarify that how his Chief Minister brought amendments to Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act and Santhal Paragan Tenancy Act (CNT and SPT Act) which provides shelter to water, land and forest.

JPCC Spokesperson Lal Kishorenath Shahdeo and State Spokesperson, Alok Dubey were present on the occasion.



Chief Minister Raghuraj Das addresses an election campaign rally ahead of the fifth phase of State Assembly elections in Godda on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Seven arrested in advocate murder case

PNS ■ RANCHI

In a major breakthrough, Ranchi District police on Sunday arrested seven persons in connection with the murder of Advocate Rampravesh Singh, a resident of Sarvodaya Nagar under Kanke Police Station in Ranchi District.

Addressing a press meet on Sunday, Ranchi Rural Superintendent of Police (SP), Rishabh Kumar Jha informed that a contract of ₹7 lakh was given for the murder of Advocate Singh. Ranchi police disclosed this on Sunday.

"The police arrested seven persons including those who gave contract of killing to the criminals. On the evening of December 9, Ranchi Civil Court lawyer Rampravesh Singh was shot dead in front of his house in Sarvodaya Nagar of Kanke Police Station area. After scrutinising the CCTV footage, the police investigated and reached to the accused," said Jha.

police searched for CCTV footage on the next day on December 10. "After searching for the footage it is found that Singh was going to park his car in front of the house like every day. Then a person came close to him, who had a pistol in his hand. He shot at Singh and escaped. Singh fell on the ground as soon as he sustained the bullet injury and died on the spot," he added.

"After this, the police also searched the CCTV footage of the surroundings, and it was found that several persons were involved in the crime. Another person was on the bike with the person who shot at Singh. The deceased was from Aurangabad district of Bihar. Later, the family had told the police that in a land grab dispute, Ramesh Gaadi, his brother-in-law Chhotu Lakda, along with hockey sticks and weapons, along with more than two dozen persons had also assaulted them. And the people present with Singh were also injured," said Jha.

Rain increases chill in air



A train runs slowly as fog envelopes the railway track on a cold winter afternoon in Ranchi on Sunday. Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

PNS ■ RANCHI

Several districts of the State, including capital Ranchi, coal city Dhanbad and

Lohardaga, witnessed moderate rainfall on Sunday causing a sudden shift in the weather, officials from the Meteorological Centre in

Ranchi said. Ranchi was covered in dense fog in the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday. The visibility was down to 20



Two girls cover themselves with warm clothes as they sit outside the Harmu St. Francis Church during a cold winter afternoon in Ranchi on Sunday. Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

meters on highways in the night, sources said. The haze also resulted in a slight fall in the mercury level in Ranchi and Kanke.

According to the Meteorological Department, the change in weather is due to western disturbance. Prediction by the MET department says that the weather is likely to remain the same for the next 48

hours. Ranchi will remain overcast on Monday, with no signs of sunshine throughout the day, sources said.

On Sunday, the highest rainfall was recorded in Daltonganj at 10.2 mm. Janshedpur recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 13.2 degrees while the maximum temperature of the city was 29.6 degrees Celsius.

State's efforts give boost to tourism

SHRISHTI SINHA

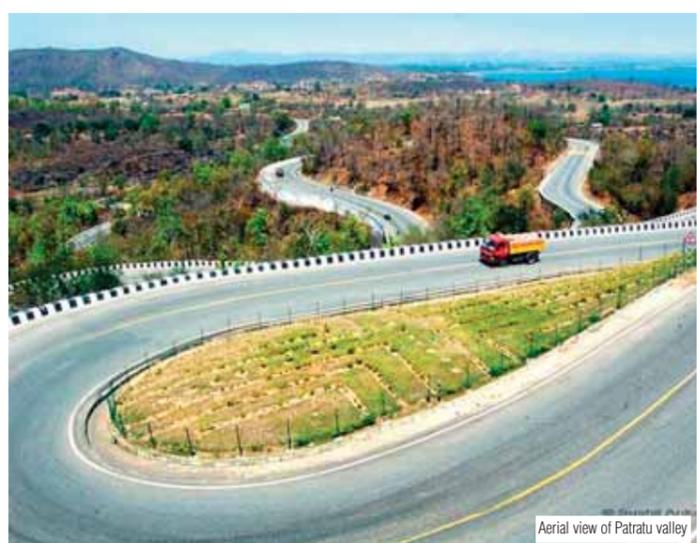
Jharkhand government has been taking substantial measures to attract tourists as well as make their experience better. Sharad Mahotsav in Netarhat, a local cultural programme that is organized every evening allows one to witness the local dance, local songs and much more. The Mahotsav starts in October and concludes in February. One can choose to stay in the tents, take part in water sports or engage in the sightseeing of Elephants and animal safari — a great way of spotting tigers at Betla National Park, 90 kms from Netarhat. "In Betla, the forest department facilitates jungle safari. There are tourist places like Palamu Fort known as the twin forts," said Kunal Rajvik, senior manager of hotel Van Vihar, Betla.

"Prabhat Vihar in Netarhat offers 70 rooms with different categories of rooms. The price ranges from Rs.1,700 — 4000 a night. It offers facilities like spa, gym, restaurant, a children's park and also a swimming pool is being made in the resort. The booking can be done online through the Jharkhand government website or via phone. Offices are also present in various places like Ranchi and Jharkhand. Free parking has also been made available for the guests and cottage facilities are also there. People here mainly come for the view point, sunrise and sunsets," said Arun Kumar, manager of hotel Prabhat Vihar. "Resorts have been started in Patratu Dam which have managed to attract a number of

tourists and made them visit the dam. Our main focus has been on Netarhat and Patratu. On the waterfalls like Hundru and Jonah we have tried to start adventure sports. As for the safety measures, near the falls there are tourist facilitators who guide the tourists regarding the dangerous areas and have also been successful in saving a number of lives," said Vidyannand Sharma, Deputy Director of Jharkhand Tourism. A number of adventure activities are also being offered across Netarhat, Betla, Chandil and Patratu Dam like Cycling, Bullock Cart Ride, 4 types of Kayaking, cliff jumping. A detailed account of all the activities has been made available on the Jharkhand tourism website with the contact number of the executives in charge.

For the religious aspect of Jharkhand, Deoghar is the holy city with its Baba Baidyanath Temple. The tourism department has constructed Ashrams here — the perfect place to stay for the devotees. Rikhia Yoga Ashram, 12 kms from Deoghar is one of the preferred destinations here. The place was the abode to Swami Satyananda who established International Yoga Fellowship Movement.

In Deoghar, construction of an international airport has also begun and is expected to be completed by February, 2020. The purpose behind this initiative is to boost the religious tourism in the state. For now, there are no special tourist buses available but the proposal of buses has been kept into consideration, it may come into action but take time.



Aerial view of Patratu valley

Santhal in progress path: Gilua

PNS ■ RANCHI

BJP State President Laxman Gilua on Sunday said that

Santhal is a BJP stronghold and JMM has become number two party here. Even today, BJP has the largest number of MLAs in Santhal. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is behind the BJP in Santhal in terms of the number of MLAs and the number of activists, he said. Likewise, the JMM bosses have also proved themselves to be number two, he added. He further said, "The people of Santhal have even rejected the leaders in whose name JMM ask for votes. This is the reason behind both Shibu Soren and his son Hemant Soren has suffered defeat here. That fear of defeat is still in Hemant Soren's mind, so he is contesting from two places."

The BJP state president claimed that JMM has kept the people of Santhal in confusion for a long time. "The Soren family used Santhal's wealth to increase their family's prosperity. They looted Santhal and erected their palace. The Soren family violated the CNT SPT Act grabbing the land of tribals in Ranchi and other cities," he added.

The BJP leader claimed that when they (JMM) were in power, they never looked towards Santhal. JMM never tried for providing employment in Santhal region, progress in education, construction of roads, provisions of electricity. They knew that if people are educated, if youths are employed, people would never look towards them.

Gilua said that the Santhali people have realized how a family took political advantage in its own interest just by raising emotions. This is the reason why the people of Santhal have rejected the dynasty of the Soren family.

BJP accuses Saryu Roy of double standard

PNS ■ RANCHI

State Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday said that Minister Saryu Roy is using double standard in politics which is not rational.

BJP State Spokesperson Pratul Shahdeo said that former Minister Saryu Roy had first alleged that the EVM hackers were staying at a hotel which was communicated to him by a friend from Bangalore. "Roy had complained about this to the Chief Electoral Officer of Jharkhand, so obviously Saryu Roy had faith in the working culture of the Election Commission. But when the Chief Electoral Officer rejected the entire charges after investigation then Saryu Roy lost faith on the Election Commission. And he began questioning the fairness of the Election Commission," he added.



Shahdeo said that senior politicians like Saryu Roy should not change their goals as per their convenience. "If he did not trust the office of the Chief Electoral Officer then why did he complain? And when the result did not come in his favor, then he started raising questions on the Election Commission. Such double standards are not appropriate in politics," he added.

The party Spokesperson said that the Executive

President of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Hemant Soren and his family have been accused of buying more than two and a half dozen land by violating CNT and SPT Act. "In this case, he has also received notice from the appropriate forum. Saryu Roy has known Jharkhand very closely," he added.

Mocking Saryu Roy, Shahdeo said that the JMM had sold the Jharkhand movement to then late Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao for Rs 3 crore. "Saryu Roy always talks of high moral ideals in politics. He is going to Santhal to campaign in favor of Soren just to give a return gift as Soren helped in election of Jharkhand. In any case this whole matter does not seem to be a matter of high moral ideals and principles which they talk about following," he added.

CSIR holds professional training programme

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Valedictory function of the Professional Training Programme (PTP) on Experimental Techniques in Iron and Steelmaking (ETIS 2019) was organised by CSIR-National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur at Lecture Hall of CSIR-NML.

During the four-day professional training programme, 4 lectures by experts, 8 lectures by NML Scientists and 9 demonstration/hand on sessions were conducted for the delegates from organizations such as Veerabhadrapa Sangappa & Company (Karnataka); DMRL (Hyderabad); Tata Steel BSL (Orissa); JAMIPOL (Jamshedpur); RINL (Vishakhapatnam); Supreme Metallurgical Services Pvt. Ltd (Indore); CSIR-CIMFR (Dhanbad); ACSIR (CSIR-NML Jamshedpur); OPJIT (Raigarh);

Vesuvius Refractories (Kolkata); Govt. College of Engineering (Salem); JSW Dolvi (Mumbai) and MECON (Ranchi) participated in the programme. The expert from IIT Kharagpur, Prof. G.G. Roy delivered a talk on Heat and material balance in ironmaking. Prof. Roy highlighted the importance of charge calculations to improve the efficiency of iron-making.

Prof. Dipak Mazumdar from IIT Kanpur delivered an expert talk on Modeling & Simulation in Steelmaking. He emphasized in the importance of physical and mathematical modelling of steelmaking phenomena to understand the complexities involved in the process.

Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Sr. Principal Scientist & Head, Metal Extraction Recycling (MER) Division highlighted on the processing and utilization of iron and steelmaking slags.

Dr. Siddhartha Misra, Tata Steel BSL (Angul) emphasized on the defects control during continuous casting process.

The programme was formally concluded by Dr. SK Mandal, Officiating Director CSIR-NML, Jamshedpur. Dr. Mandal appreciated the interest of the delegates for coming to CSIR-NML to attend this four-day professional training programme (PTP) during 10-13 December 2019. He also requested to make collaborative approach as the outcome of this training programme in the area of raw materials, technology of production, environmental issues and challenges related to iron and steelmaking.

Dr. J. Pal, Sr. Principal Scientist, Ferrous Processing Group appreciated the delegates for the active participation during the demonstration session and interaction with the NML Scientist.

INBRIEF

CONG-JMM WILL FORM GOVT: SUBODH KANT SAHAY

Subodh Kant Sahay on Sunday said that the Congress is like a Phoenix bird that revives by sacrificing itself and paying a heavy price. Congress has always given top priority to public interest and patriotism. The Congress is a party that is determined to maintain the self-esteem of the poor, farmers and people. With like-minded party such as Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and other parties are also sensitive and determined towards public interest. After the widespread failure of the Raghunath Government and huge dissatisfaction among the common people, it is now clear that the Congress-JMM alliance will definitely come to power," he added.



SOCIAL ACTIVIST DISTRIBUTES BLANKET



In view of the increasing cold on Sunday at Shri Shiva Sai Temple, Upper Bazaar, Mahavir Chowk following the trends of past years this year also distributed 101 blankets by social activist Jyoti Sharma among the needy after performing ritual of Sai Baba at 12 noon on the day. The event was attended by Monu Gupta, Amar Sharma, Gurpreet Singh, Arvind, Rahul, Penu, Sanjay, Mani, Bittu, Mrityunjay.

FARAH KHAN ALI WILL SHOWCASE JEWELLERY IN RANCHI

Celebrity Jewellery Designer, Farah Khan Ali will showcase her fine jewellery collection, lifestyle and gifting collection and signature coffee table book 'Farah Khan - A Bejewelled' at Ranchi on December 17 and 18 at Capitol Hill Hotel, between 11.00am - 7.00pm. Farah Khan-Ali is a renowned Jewellery designer and gemologist who's foray in the jewellery line was purely by chance when she decided to do a course in Gemology at the renowned Gemological Institute of America in Santa Monica, California in 1992. She graduated at the top of her class.

Haryana, UP CMs meet to resolve bilateral issues

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To solve the bilateral issues between the two neighbouring States, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal met his Uttar Pradesh counterpart Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow on Saturday and agreed to construct three bridges on River Yamuna.

Apart from this, it was also decided that both the states would construct the bridge connecting Hasanpur of Palwal and National Highway to Uttar Pradesh.

Both the chief ministers discussed wide range of bilateral issues concerning both the states in the field of revenue, irrigation, water resources, PWD (B&R) and agriculture in a meeting held at Lucknow.

Under the Dixit Award given on February 14, 1975, in the case of border of Haryana

and Uttar Pradesh, an important decision was taken to reconstruct the pillars which are missing from the spot through the Survey of India by March 31, 2020.

An amount of about ₹20 crores is estimated to be incurred on the work and both the States will bear this amount in 50:50 ratio.

Uttar Pradesh Government agreed to construct a bridge on Yamuna River between Faridabad and Greater Noida via Jasna-Manjhawali Atta Gujran and the land will be acquired this month, costing Rs 104 crore.

Uttar Pradesh also assured to construct a high-level bridge over the Yamuna River on Yamuna Nagar-Rador (State Highway-06) road to Nukur-Saharanpur (MDR-0-1472) road and for this, Uttar Pradesh would acquire four kanal of land.

EXCON: Shell Lubricants India showcases future ready solutions

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Shell Lubricants, the global market leader in finished lubricants showcased its flagship products and key services at the 10th edition of EXCON India 2019 — the International Construction Equipment and Construction Technology Trade Fair organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Shell firmly believes that the right lubricant can bring substantial savings in the construction sector by maximising equipment efficiency and reducing downtime. In line with this, the company's display was well received and drew significant interest at the event held from December 10th to 14th at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC).

The lubricants major presented many of its flagship products in its Tellus, Rimula, Spirax and Gadus ranges including a special showcase of its premium energy efficient lubricants, namely the Shell Tellus S4, Rimula R5, Spirax S6, and Gadus S3.

The Shell booth was inaugurated by V G Sakthi Kumar, Managing Director, Schwing Stetter India Private Limited, who also lauded the company's pioneering work in the construction equipment and technology industry.

EXCON 2019 also witnessed an array of innovative services offered by various participants, with Shell's newly launched range of B2B services drawing attention from visitors. The B2B services on display by Shell included Machine Max, Lubricants Management

Programme and LubeMaster. These were also accompanied by a display and live demonstration of Shell LubeVideoCheck, a non-invasive imaging technology capable of performing component analysis which would normally only be achieved by dismantling machinery; and Shell Lube Analyst Lite, which helps construction companies avail real-time, on-site analysis and reporting.

Customers in construction are generally remotely located, with multi-OEM fleets and little access to oil-testing laboratories, resulting in issues related to fleet monitoring. Shell's exhibit successfully highlighted the utility of its technology-forward services in helping solve these problems by implementing corrective action rendering better savings.

U'khand welcomes transgender members in party

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In order to revive the morale of their party members and to add some new faces, Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD) has added several new members from transgender community.

UKD's Mahanagar president Sunil Dhyani said that third gender is an important part of the society. Annie Thapa is one such example, who is working for the welfare of society.

He further stated that two mainstream political parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress are responsible for the deteriorating conditions of the State. The corruption which is presently at peak in Uttarakhand has been encouraged and nurtured by BJP and Congress since the last 19 years.

Man hangs self after tiff with wife

PNS ■ BERMO

A 28-year-old man allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling of his house at Dhori in Bermo here following a petty argument with his wife, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place in the late hours of Saturday after the deceased Govinda Bharti had allegedly argued with his wife over some domestic dispute, an official said.

Although the dispute was resolved by some neighbours, after a while Govinda Bharti hanged himself from the ceiling of his house using a dupatta, he said. Bharti was rushed to a nearby CCL Central hospital, Dhori where he was declared dead on arrival, he added.

A case of accidental death has been registered at the Bermo town police station, and the deceased's body has been sent for postmortem, the official said.

Global...

From Page 1

The Scottish Government has taken various steps to manage the burgeoning population of the animal, culling being one of them, in a bid to protect biodiversity as the deer are voracious eaters with high breeding rate.

The figures are specific to the study site in highland in Sweden, but wildlife experts feel that such "evolution" reported by the red deer might be happening in other animals somewhere in the world.

"We all know that climate change is having serious impact on the wildlife world. This study shows that the new adaptation by the red deer may very well help their population thrive as the climate continues to warm, said Dr K SivaKumar, wildlife expert from Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

He, however said, climate change is having impact in various other ways also. For instance, up to 93 per cent of green turtle hatchlings could be female by 2100, as climate change causes "feminization" of the species, he said citing a study conducted by the Researchers at the University of Exeter in the UK and the Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre in Portugal.

According to various studies, if we do not reduce our carbon emissions and instead allow global temperatures to rise by 4.5°C, up to half the animals and plants in some of the world's most biodiverse areas could go extinct by 2100.

"In fact, even if we are able to limit global warming to the Paris climate agreement goal of 2°C, areas such as the Amazon and the Galapagos could still lose one quarter of their species," noted the studies dwelling on the effects of climate change on 80,000 plants and animals in 35 areas.

Another study has found that local extinctions (when a species goes extinct in a particular area, but still exists elsewhere) are already occurring in 47 per cent of the 976 species studied, in every kind of habitat and climatic zone.

(This article has been published with support from the Nature India/India Alliance India Science Media Fellowship).

Anti-CAA protest flares...

From Page 1

Thereafter, police started lathi charging the protesters and using teargas," he alleged.

While other students claimed that the police forcefully entered the campus and fired tear gas on students. "Students are hiding inside washroom. This is barbaric on part of Delhi Police," they claimed.

However, a group of students and Jamia Millia Islamia Teachers Association (JTA) condemn the ongoing violence at Jamia and on the Mathura road. The students also claimed that the students groups have nothing to do with the violence. They alleged that "local elements" joined the protest and "disrupted" it.

"The students of Jamia Millia Islamia disassociate themselves from the violence that has erupted today. We have time and again maintained that our protests are peaceful and non-violent. We stand by this approach and condemn any party involved in the violence. We have maintained clam even when students have been lathi-charged and some women protesters have been badly beaten up. Media personal are a witness to these events. Violence by certain elements is an attempt to vilify and discredit genuine protests. We appeal to everyone to share this message," said a group of students.

While the teachers association of Jamia, issued a statement saying, "Jamia Teachers' Association condemn the violence in south Delhi, outside Jamia Millia Islamia. JTA is not part of any such violence. JTA also appeals to students, if any, to keep away

from such direction-less protest lead by local political leaders. Jamia practices and preaches peace. JTA condemn all sort of violence near Jamia or anywhere in India."

JTA has also called an emergency meeting of the extended Executive Committee on Monday to discuss misuse of Jamia's name in the protests.

Witnessing the rage of protest, the Jamia Administration has postponed the semester examination and declared winter vacation. "A large number of students staying in hostels have already left and the Vice Chancellor Najma Akhtar appealed to the students to maintain peace," read the statement issued by the University.

"Police have entered the campus by force, no permission was given. Our staff and students are being beaten up and forced to leave the campus," said Waseem Ahmed Khan, Chief Proctor, Jamia Millia Islamia University.

With the protest getting more violent in the parts South East Delhi, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) also closed the entry and exit gates of Sukhdev Vihar metro station on Magenta Line and Gate Number three of Ashram Metro station on Pink Line.

"As advised by Delhi Police, entry & exit gates of Sukhdev Vihar and gate no. 3 of Ashram have been closed. Trains will not be halting at Sukhdev Vihar," the DMRC tweeted. Entry and exit gates of Jamia Millia Islamia, Okhla Vihar and Jasola Vihar Shaheen Bagh have also been closed with no trains halting at these stations.

10-year-old Raj girl 'kills' classmate for snatching pen, sent to juvenile home

Jaipur: A 10-year-old girl was sent to a juvenile home on Sunday for allegedly killing her classmate by hitting her using an iron rod after the two got into an argument over snatching a pen, police said.

Also, the girl's parents were produced before court and sent to jail for destroying evidence by dumping the body of the 12-year-old in an open ground. Chaksu station house officer Braj Mohan Kaviya said.

On Saturday, the girl and her parents were arrested by police in the case, he said.

The incident happened on December 11 when the victim had gone to the girl's house after school

After her mother got home, the girl apparently narrated the entire story. The mother and daughter went on to tie the victim's body to a rock and threw it in a pond

for getting her pen back but an argument led to a fight, the SHO said.

The accused girl attacked the other with an iron rod in which the victim sustained critical injuries on her head, ribs and stomach leading

to her death, Kaviya said adding that the girl's parents were not at home then.

After her mother got home, the girl apparently narrated the entire story. The mother and daughter went on to tie the victim's body to a rock and threw it in a pond, the SHO added.

Later, the mother informed her husband. The couple, then, fished out the body from the pond and dumped it in an open ground, Kaviya said. After the 12-year-old did not reach home, her parents lodged a missing complaint and the body was recovered on Thursday, the officer said. **PTI**

In U-turn, AGP all set to...

From Page 1

He demanded that the Brahmaputra valley, where violent protests have been happening over the amended Citizenship Act, should be excluded from its purview.

Addressing a press conference at Guwahati, Bora, also a state minister, said as the legislation has

already become an Act, so at least the Brahmaputra valley should be excluded and it may be implemented in the Barak valley. The Barak valley, which has a significant Bengali population, has not seen any major agitation.

AGP leader and Assam minister Keshab Mahanta said the party has not left its "old stand" of

opposing the contentious Act. "Though we are a part of the NDA, our stand has not changed. We still do not want this Act to be implemented in Assam and North East," he said. The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which was cleared by the parliament on Wednesday and became an Act on Thursday.

Violence...

From Page 1

Even as a helpless police force stood a mute spectator in absence of specific orders from above local MLA Moinul Haq accompanied by his followers was seen chasing away the mob with stick in his hand.

Violence continued at Rezinagar police station in neighbouring Murshidabad district where the protesters vandalised the station premises, put the signaling office afire. A Railway Protection Force vehicle and a local BJP office was also torched, sources said.

Similar incidents were reported from Kalyani Expressway in Nadia district, Amdanga in North 24 Parganas where copies of the CAA were burnt by angry protesters. Parts of Howrah district like Uluberia and Domjur where 15 buses were torched on Saturday

were however comparatively peaceful on Sunday.

At Burdwan and Birbhum, agitators took out rallies and shouting slogans against the Narendra Modi Government and throwing burning tyres on the roads.

At Bhyabla in Basirhat subdivision of North 24 Parganas the Congress workers protested by blocking the Kolkata-Basirhat highway resulting in disruption of services. Police contingents have been rushed to the troubled areas to control the situation, sources said.

Near Kolkata, agitators ransacked the Akra railway station in the southern fringes of Kolkata. They burnt tyres, and blocked train services prompting the Government to send large contingent of police force in the area. This affected Kolkata-Budge railway link. The train services remained hit for several hours in the region.

Train services were partially disrupted in the Kolkata-

Baruipur suburban region too when protester stoned running suburban trains at Mullickpur.

By late in the noon, the State Government had snapped internet services in six districts, including Murshidabad, Malda, Karandighi in North Dinajpur, parts of Howrah, Basirhat subdivision in North 24 Parganas and Baruipur, Diamond Harbour and others areas in South 24 Parganas.

Meanwhile, fresh war of words erupted between Governor Dhanikar and State Government with the former terming unconstitutional a State-run advertisement in which the Chief Minister is seen appealing to the people for calm as she would not allow the CAA to be implemented in the State.

Telling "those on constitutional posts" that this was "no occasion to play politics," the Governor wondered "How can an elected head of a Government use public money

to give advertisement in national media that there will be no NRC, no CAB in state?" before concluding "This advertisement is unconstitutional."

He added as Constitutional head "I had very gracefully invited her (Chief Minister's) attention, I had urged her (to) withdraw it. I am sure you all will agree that public money can't be used to lead an agitation against law of the land."

In the advertisement the Chief Minister is seen holding meeting with top Government functionaries including police chief and senior secretaries whereafter she appeals to the people to "maintain peace as we all want to protest against this Act but in a peaceful manner."

She added, "We will not allow CAA and NRC to take place in Bengal" though now there is a central Act in place. "Remember the Central Acts have to be implemented through the State Government and we will not implement it.

We will not allow NRC in Bengal. We will protest jointly but in a peaceful manner. We will protest irrespective of caste, creed, religion."

Describing the law and order situation of the State as unimaginable Dhanikar questioned the way how public property was being damaged in a wanton manner, ruthlessly and recklessly, and how fear has been put in the minds of people belonging to a certain section of the society.

The Governor who has been at loggerheads with the Mamata Banerjee Government for quite some time now immediately received a counter attack from the State Ministers who asked him not to give advices to the Chief Ministers. State Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said the Chief Minister was an elected person and had people's mandate with her and she was a senior politician who knew her brief better than anyone else. "She can teach others about constitu-

tional ways and she does not have to take lessons from others," the Minister said.

In a relevant development, things threatened to lapse into a bigger crisis with the State BJP vowing to "retaliate" if the Government did not take immediate action and if the police continued to remain silent spectator to people's properties being destroyed.

"We have been watching how the Government and its police are sitting silent spectators to incidents of public and private properties being looted, ransacked and destroyed like this. We have been keeping silent but if things continue like this we will have to intervene," State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said adding "if due to that law and order issues erupts the responsibility will not lie on us."

Ghosh and State party secretary Sayantan Basu had earlier demanded immediate imposition of President's Rule in Bengal.

Opp parties behind unrest, raising storm over Act...

From Page 1

The Prime Minister outlined the progress and development successes of the Jharkhand.

He said, "Before 2014, the Chief Minister of the State used to claim the construction of 30,000 to 35,000 houses and described it as their achievement. But now we are moving forward with the resolve that every poor person in the country should have their own house."

The battle of Dumka gains much importance for both BJP and JMM as there is huge stake in Santhal Pargana which

goes to poll on December 20. Santhal Pargana is considered a JMM bastion as most of the MLAs are from this region. JMM executive president Hemant Soren too is contesting from two seats - Dumka and Barhait.

The region which was synonymous with JMM chief Shibu Soren as he had represented Dumka parliamentary seat eight times, however, in Lok Sabha election this year, BJP made a successful dent in JMM bastion as BJP candidate Sunil Soren defeated senior Soren in Lok Sabha election.

Delhi's traffic woes from neighbours!

Despite Western and Eastern Peripheral Expressways, Delhi sees more than 12 lakh vehicles everyday from its neighbouring States. Of them, less than one fourth of the total vehicular movement is attributed to the freight vehicles. As per the study conducted by CRRRI, number of vehicles entering to Delhi rose from 6,13,797 to 6,19,946 everyday

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Despite Western and Eastern Peripheral Expressways to reduce traffic congestion in Delhi, there is to-and-fro movement of more than 12 lakh vehicles everyday from neighbouring States of Delhi.

Of them, less than one fourth of the total vehicular movement is attributed to the freight vehicles. The volume of both personal and freight vehicles is gradually increasing. As per the study conducted by Central Road Research Institute (CRRRI) namely "Megacity Logistics: Metrics, Tools And Measures For Sustainability", the number of vehicles entering to Delhi rose from 6,13,797 to 6,19,946 everyday. The respective figures for the year 2009, were 4,72,852 and 5,50,841.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs on "the management of worsening traffic situation in Delhi", expressed concern as there is no planning to regulate or restrict the vehicular movement from



the neighbouring States when the roads of the city are already reeling under heavy stress because of traffic congestion and other related issues.

The Committee also expressed its strong displeasure on the fact that freight management plan for Delhi has not been formulated till now. The committee was informed by the representative of the CRRRI that the road traffic demand has increased exceptionally and is not in keeping with the growth in the supply side factors such

as increase in road network and upgradation of road infrastructure.

The Committee observed that freight traffic on Delhi roads contribute more than 18 per cent of the total vehicular volume on Delhi Roads. The committee, therefore, strongly recommended that after due study and assessment of management of freight traffic in other major cities, Government of Delhi along with other agencies should formulate a suitable plan for the freight traffic man-

agement in Delhi and NCR and this must be done keeping in mind the fact that least burden is felt during peak hours.

The committee therefore, recommended that infrastructure of suitable nature to commute, transport and dedicated places for boarding and de-boarding of freight materials needs to be earmarked on a priority basis and the timing of freight movement should be regulated/ fixed keeping in mind the material being carried by it like whether it is perishable item like food or vegetables or building materials, etc..

As per the data, there has been an average growth of 3 per cent in overall vehicular movement on the roads of Delhi in the last decade. Also, during the year 2018, 21.35 per cent of the freight vehicles entering Delhi used the roads of Delhi just to bypass Delhi and there was no plan as of now to regulate or restrict the to and fro vehicular movement from the neighbouring States to Delhi.

Therefore, the Committee also recommended that there

was an urgent need to formulate plan/policy to regulate the entry of the inbound traffic and ensure smooth exit of the outbound traffic by diverting the vehicles using Delhi roads only for bypassing via peripheral and ring roads.

"Recurrence of extreme congestion on the Delhi roads has become a common phenomenon and has hampered the quality of life of all. The average speeds have been reduced to 5 to 10 km/hr during peak hours even on the major arterial roads of the city leading to the loss of time of the working population, fuel wastage and environmental pollution," it said.

Furthermore, the problem of traffic congestion has been aggravated by the rapidly increasing population of Delhi, geographical expansion of Delhi, inadequate expansion of public transport, improper parking on roads and lack of a central coordination mechanism for formulation and implementation of traffic management policies in Delhi.

BJP announces nationwide campaign on Citizenship law

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid public unrest and Opposition's pitch against the amended Citizenship Law, that allows six religiously persecuted minorities excluding Muslims from three neighbouring countries to take Indian citizenship, the BJP on Sunday announced a nationwide campaign to spread awareness about the legislation, asserting that it was not discriminatory against Muslims or any other community.

The Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019, which was passed last week by Parliament which has now turned effective as an act with Presidential assent has triggered public protest in the North-East, Bengal and the national Capital with police and army called out at the epicenters of the violence.

The ruling BJP has sought to "dispel" the Congress and a section of other Opposition's campaign that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was unconstitutional as it seeks to exclude Muslim persecuted minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan from the provisions of CAA and is

thus discriminatory.

Party spokesperson Sambit Patra told a Press conference on Sunday that the BJP workers will spread out across the country to inform people about the law that, he said, meant to provide Indian citizenships to persecuted minorities — Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists, Jains and Christians — in the neighbouring three countries where their numbers have come down drastically on account of various discrimination against them.

The party has affirmed that the CAA was not against Muslims as has been "orchestrated" by the Opposition parties, particularly the Congress. "There is no provision in this law that even a single right of our Muslim brothers and sisters will be taken away. Instead rights will be provided to those who are living in India without any rights facing religious persecution in countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan," Patra said.

He said party functionaries from 11 States were briefed by the national leadership on the law's provisions here on Sunday before they start a campaign in their respective

State. The party has asked all the MPs, including those from Rajya Sabha, to visit their constituencies and States to create awareness about the provisions of the CAA and the specific purpose for which it was passed by the Parliament.

The state level leadership of the party including Ministers and MLAs would also be required to update themselves and inform public on the correct and positive implications of the Act.

Special awareness campaigns would be launched by the party in the North-East which has been the first to witness public protest after the bill was passed by Parliament with the apprehensions that giving citizenships to migrants across the borders and those already there in the region may impact the demography of the region and may also affect their social and cultural identity.

In the BJP Parliamentary party meet last week which was also attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the central leadership had directed all party MPs to counter political campaign launched by the Opposition against the Bill.

7 YEARS POST-NIRBHAYA

Rape conviction rate low at 32%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seven years after the brutal Nirbhaya gangrape that shook the entire nation, the conviction rate in rape cases in the country is as low as 32.2 per cent despite laws dealing with sexual assault being made stringent in the aftermath of the incident.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data available for 2017, the total number of rape cases that went to trial in that year was 1,46,201 but only 5,822 of them resulted in conviction.

What is perhaps more worrisome is that while the conviction rate in rape cases has increased marginally in recent years, the charge-sheeting rate has gone down — which means cases are not going to court.

The charge-sheeting rate in rape cases dropped to 86.6 per cent in 2017 from 95.4 per cent in 2013, the NCRB statistics show. Shilpi Jain, who was the defence lawyer in the Alwar rape case wherein a foreign

tourist was raped by Bitti Mohanty, son former Odisha director general of police B B Mohanty, said the field-level staff of police dealing with rape investigation need to be made more efficient.

"They are mostly ill-equipped, inexperienced, power gets to their head and in most cases they are extremely corrupt," Jain said.

"A sub-inspector is the highest-level officer who files a chargesheet, so one can imagine the quality of the content," said Jain.

Similarly, the prosecutors who deal with the cases at the district level are of low caliber and less driven, she said, adding that all these factors make up badly investigated cases which results in low conviction rate.

A 23-year-old paramedic student, who came to be known as Nirbhaya, was gang raped on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012, in a running bus in south Delhi by six people.

Death penalty debate rages on as court considers plea of Nirbhaya convict

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The death penalty has no place in the 21st century." The quote by UN Secretary General António Guterres seems convincing, but over 50 countries still allow capital punishment and gruesome crimes such as the Nirbhaya gang rape-and-murder case serve as a reminder that the issue of doing away with death penalty is not a settled one.

Fifty countries that still allow death penalty include India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, the US, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, Bangladesh, Iraq, Indonesia and the UAE, according to information in public domain.

The US-based Death Penalty Information Centre, a non-profit organisation, States that there are 146 countries that have totally abolished it in law and practice. India executes criminals only in extreme cases and only 26 executions have

taken place in India since 1991, last being 1993 bomb blast case convict Yakub Memon in 2015. Before that, India had executed 2001 Indian Parliament attack Afzal Guru.

Death penalty is in focus in India with a plea in the Supreme Court by one of the four death-row convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape-and-murder case, seeking review of the court's 2017 judgement awarding him the capital punishment.

A three-judge bench will hear the plea filed by convict Akshay Kumar Singh, whose lawyer has questioned in the review petition as to why give capital punishment at a time life is getting "short" due to rising pollution. The apex court had on July 9 last year dismissed the review pleas filed by the three other convicts — Mukesh (30), Pawan Gupta (23) and Vinay Sharma (24) — in the case, saying no grounds have been made out by them for review of the 2017 verdict.

Six States didn't use Nirbhaya fund at all: Govt data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Nirbhaya fund — set up by the Centre in 2013 to be used towards ensuring women's safety — has seen a dismal nine per cent utilisation with States such as Maharashtra and Meghalaya not spending a single rupee from it, according to Government data.

In total, just ₹147 crore out of ₹1,649 crore sanctioned by the Centre has been spent by the State and Union Territories (UTs) Governments. Parliament was recently informed by Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani.

Uttar Pradesh and Telangana, the two States which were in the news recently for horrific incidents of rape and murder, were among the highest recipients of the Nirbhaya fund alongside

Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Delhi.

While Karnataka used 7 per cent of the fund allocated to it by the Centre (the fund allocated to Karnataka was ₹191 crore and utilisation ₹13.62 crore), Tamil Nadu used 3 per cent of the amount allocated to it under the Nirbhaya fund (the fund allocated was ₹190.68 crore and utilisation ₹6 crore).

Six States and UTs — Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura and Daman & Diu — have not spent a single rupee from the fund allocated by the Centre, according to data shared by the Minister in Parliament in response to a question.

The data also showed that Delhi, where the brutal incident took place, saw utilisation of less than 5 per cent of the fund allocated to it.

Rahul should give up name of Gandhi: Patra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the light of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's public proclamation that he is a Gandhi and not Savarkar to apologise for his 'rape-in-India' barb, the BJP on Sunday asked him to drop his surname as it was "stolen" by his family for political gains. The party's riposte came a day after the former Congress president, in a public rally here, refused to apologise for his "rape in India" remark saying he is not "Rahul Savarkar".

Addressing a Press conference on Sunday, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had called Savarkar "son of soil", while her grandson was referring to him in a derogatory note. "They stole the Gandhi name for political gains. He should give up the name of Gandhi. You (Rahul Gandhi) are a political deserter," Patra alleged.

On Saturday, Rahul has stressed on his surname and unleashed a barb that he was a

Gandhi and not a 'savarkar' to apologise and would rather "die" than seeking forgiveness. Congress leader had earlier come under the BJP's attack for his "rape-in-India" comment at a public rally in Jharkhand.

Rahul had made the comment saying the Modi Government's "Make-in-India" has rather turned into "rape-in-India", indicating spate of rape cases in the country. A furious BJP had sought an apology from Rahul with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Lok Sabha saying the comment was unbecoming of a member of Parliament.

An unapologetic Rahul responded saying he has not done anything wrong and blamed the BJP Government for not protecting women and ruining country's economy.

In a counter attack, BJP has now accused Rahul of hiding behind his surname Gandhi and seeking to attack a patriot like Savarkar and demanded that he gave up his surname that the family has 'stolen'.

Home Min rejects move to give legal protection to docs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry does not seem to be appreciative of the Union Health Ministry's move to give legal protection to the practitioners of one specific profession i.e. doctors.

Sources said the Home Ministry has stalled draft central legislation, seeking to penalise those assaulting doctors and other healthcare professionals with imprisonment of up to 10 years and fine of ₹2-10 lakh.

The proposed Bill, the Healthcare Service Personnel and Clinical Establishments (Prohibition of Violence and Damage to Property) Bill, 2019, prepared at the behest of Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, was set to go to the Union Cabinet soon but the Home Ministry has rejected it saying that no central legislation can be brought to protect the practitioners of one specific profession

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□ Bill had been prepared in the wake of growing number of attacks on doctors in hospitals

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, was set to go to the Union Cabinet soon but the Home Ministry has rejected it saying that no central legislation can be brought to protect the practitioners of one specific profession.

Bill had been prepared in the wake of growing number of

attacks on doctors in hospitals and the immediate trigger for the drafting the legislation was brutal assault on junior doctors in West Bengal in June this year, which led to nationwide protests by medical professionals.

"The Union Law Ministry had already given a go-ahead to the draft Bill. But now the

MHA has red-signalled it and we will be forced to junk it," said a senior official in the Health Ministry.

Sources in the Ministry also said that Vardhan was very keen on getting the Bill through and it was due to his intervention that it had got drafted within two months after holding inter-ministerial consultations and taking representations from doctors' bodies. The Ministry had hoped that it would serve as a deterrent to family members of patients assaulting medical staff and doctors on duty.

"It was put out in the public domain for feedback only after we received the Law Ministry's approval. Hence, even we are surprised at the

strong objections by the MHA," another official said.

Apart from proposing strict legal provisions against the grievous attack on doctors, the draft Bill had also said that those resorting to violence or causing damage to the property of a healthcare facility can be imprisoned for six months to five years and fined between ₹50,000 and ₹5 lakh.

Healthcare professionals would have included doctors and para-medical staff, as well as medical students, diagnostic service providers in a health facility and ambulance drivers. The Indian Medical Association, the largest organisation of private doctors in the country had been staunchly pushing the Bill.

Deficiency of iron in early stages of pregnancy leads to anaemia

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Women considering becoming pregnant or who are within the early weeks of pregnancy, need to ensure that they have enough iron-rich food to prevent anaemia. For, early anaemic pregnant stage may leave their offspring afflicted with intellectually disability (ID), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), according to a study published in international journal, JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) Psychiatry.

However, women diagnosed with anaemia later in pregnancy did not have the same risk, said the study which holds importance in the

context of India too which is home to 50 per cent anemic pregnant women. Iron is a mineral that plays a key role in the making of red blood cells, which carry oxygen.

The Indian Government has mandated consumption of iron-folic acid tablets for 100 days during pregnancy, but only 30 per cent, or three in every ten, pregnant Indian women consume iron-folic acid (IFA) tablets for at least 100 days (NFHS-4), as per the latest Government survey. Anaemia in pregnancy is defined as a hemoglobin concentration of less than 110 g/L (less than 11 g/dL) in venous blood.

The large population-based study (nearly 300,000 mothers of more than 500,000 children



born in Sweden between 1987 and 2010) published in the JAMA journal showed that the risk of ASD and ADHD in children whose mothers had anaemia in early pregnancy was 44 per cent and 37 per cent higher, respectively, compared

with those children born to mothers without early prenatal anaemia.

The risk of intellectual disability was highest, at 120 per cent. However, interestingly, said researchers, anaemia diagnosed after the 30 weeks' gesta-

tion was not associated with an increased risk for any of the neurological development issues. It is believed iron may play an important role in the development of a foetus' brain, particularly in a 'critical window' before 30 weeks, the scientists said.

"It is part of standard antenatal care to screen pregnant women for low hemoglobin levels, and this is important to continue," senior author of the study Renee Gardner, PhD, of Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, said.

Among the women, 5.8 per cent were diagnosed with anaemia during pregnancy; of these diagnoses, 5 per cent occurred before 30 weeks' gestation, while 90.9 per cent occurred after 30 weeks' gesta-

tion. However, experts caution that while prenatal iron supplements might offset the risk of conditions associated with anaemia, too much iron intake can be toxic.

In India, the prevalence of anaemia in pregnancy is among the highest in the world. The study published in the JAMA journal may not be directly linked with India's status on number of intellectually/neurologically disabled children but definitely indicate the reason that why nearly 1 in 8 children in our country has at least one neurodevelopmental condition.

The actual number may be higher, given that families do not report the cases in view of stigma associated with the condition. The Indian Government has launched Anemia Muk

PREVENT ANAEMIA

- Rich sources of iron include heme iron (in meat, poultry, fish and egg yolk), dry fruits, dark green leafy vegetables (spinach, beans, legumes, lentils) and iron fortified cereals
- Using cast iron utensils for cooking and taking iron with vitamin C (orange juice) can improve its intake and absorption
- Certain foods which may inhibit iron absorption should not be taken with iron rich foods. These include polyphenols (in certain vegetables, coffee), tannins (in tea), phytates (in bran) and calcium (in dairy products)

Bharat (AMB) Strategy under POSHAN Abhiyaan with the aim to reduce anemia prevalence by three percentage points every year till 2022.

Ajay Khera, Deputy Commissioner for Child Health and Immunisation under the Union Health Ministry said that the most

important of these is making available the IFA supplementation across the states. While earlier programmes existed for 30 years, the reduction of anaemia has been just 1 percentage point per year, because the coverage of the supplements was about 20 per cent, he said.



Commissioner Santosh Kumar Mall and other senior officials were present at the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) foundation day celebration at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Sunday. Pioneer photo

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT

TMC takes out rallies in protest

Mamata to hit streets in opposing law

Kolkata: The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal took out rallies across the State on Sunday, protesting against the amended Citizenship Act.

Several senior party leaders, including ministers, led rallies in various districts and also appealed to the people to maintain peace and refrain from indulging in violence.

Carrying posters and placards, TMC members shouted slogans against the Modi Government and demanded that the new citizenship law be immediately scrapped.

"We want this divisive Citizenship Act to be immediately scrapped. Our State Government has already said that it will not be implemented in Bengal, so we appeal to the people not to take law into their hands, and



protest peacefully," senior TMC leader and education minister Partha Chatterjee said.

TMC supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will hit the streets from Monday in protest the law. For three consecutive days, Banerjee who has been at the forefront in opposing the law, will crisscross the city in protest.

PTI

AASU hints at launching political party in Assam

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which has been protesting the amended Citizenship Act, on Sunday hinted at launching a political party along with 'Silpi Samaj' (artists' forum) as an alternative to the ruling BJP and AGP as well as to Opposition Congress. AASU president Dipanka Nath, addressing a protest meet 'Concert for Peace and Harmony', supported popular actor Zubeen Garg's proposal of launching a political party.

"We are in talks with Silpi Samaj (artists' forum) and also discussing with people of Assam to think about an alternative. With your (people's) permission, we will not hesitate one bit to go in that direction (of launching a political party).

"The AASU will remain apolitical. But, in the interest of the people, along with Silpi Samaj we are ready to go in that direction," Nath said to loud cheers from thousands of people at the event. Nath alleged the Centre decided to implement the amended Citizenship Act to render the culture, language and heritage of the indigenous people "extinct". "Our agitation against the Act will be



long. Each one of us has to carry on our fight peacefully," he said.

Claiming that five persons have so far been killed in police firing, the AASU president accused the Sarbananda Sonowal-led Government of using the state machinery to dominate the protesters.

"They have unleashed their oppressive machinery on people killing five minor students and injuring many others with bullets... This Government will be brought down.

"No Government can suppress our struggle with killings and force. We will intensify our democratic movement through non-violent means," Nath said. The AASU president accused AGP of "betraying" the people of the state and said the Congress was also "equally bad".



Protesters hold placards against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), in Ahmedabad on Sunday

PTI



Rashtriya Janata Dal activists stage a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), in Patna on Sunday

Woman found dead in WB, family claims she killed self because of fear of NRC

Bardhaman (WB): A 36-year-old woman was found dead in West Bengal's Purba Bardhaman district, police said on Sunday, with her family claiming that scared of the proposed country-wide NRC she committed suicide.

Shipra Sikder was found hanging with a muffler wrapped around her neck at her house in Jaugram area's Teli village under Jamalpur police station limits on Saturday, police said.

She was taken to the Jamalpur government hospital where doctors declared her brought dead, they said. Locals said Shipra's husband, Shubhash Shikder, was a van driver and they have a son and a daughter. The woman had to depend on her income from the MGNREGA scheme to run her household.

Shipra's brother-in-law Bipul Sikder said she was tensed and scared ever since the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was cleared by

Parliament. Though her son, 19, had Aadhaar card but he didn't have a birth certificate and voter ID, due to which Shipra was scared that her son might be "thrown" out of the country, claimed Bipul.

"She went to the BDO office several times to get documents for her son. But she couldn't manage to get those. She killed herself because of the NRC," he said.

An officer of the Jamalpur police station said they suspect it to be suicide, however, a case of unnatural death has been registered.

The body has been sent for postmortem examination, he said, adding that the family's claims are being investigated.

Jamalpur panchayat samiti president Mahmood Khan said that he has heard that Shipra's son didn't have the documents and she killed herself as she was scared that her son will be ousted.

Anti-CAA agitators: We are protesting as Assamese, not as Hindu or Muslim

Guwahati: They come from myriad backgrounds and faiths but at the protest venues in the city and several parts of the State, they all unite against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as they believe it's an "assault" on Assamese culture and identity.

Forty-eight-year-old Guwahati resident Upendrajit Kalita says he felt a "sense of betrayal" the day Parliament passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, alleging that the legislation goes "against the Assam Accord" which was signed to protect the interest of the native Assamese people.

Kalita, who works in an advertisement agency, had participated in the historic six-year-long Assam Movement led by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) that had culminated in the signing of the Assam Accord

in 1985. The massive protests across the state against the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB), now an Act, are currently also led by the AASU, which has asserted that it will be unrelenting in its battle.

From Guwahati, the nerve-centre of the protests, to Jorhat, and from Dibrugarh to Sivasagar, protesters have virtually brought the state to a standstill, demanding that "the CAA must go", otherwise the agitation will be stepped up.

"One of the clauses of the Accord mandated detection and deportation of all illegal migrants without discriminating on the basis of religion and the all-accepted cut-off year of 1971. Clause 6 of it was to give constitutional protection to original citizens of Assam," Kalita said, and alleged the

Yogi seeks people's support for nationwide NRC, terms it as tribute to Iron Man

Lucknow: Amid fears in a section of population against the likely creation of a countrywide National Register of Citizens, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday sought people's support to the move terming it a "true tribute" to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Speaking at a function here to mark the death anniversary of the first Union Home Minister, Adityanath said, "Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel checked divisive policies of the British."

"Through his efforts, he foiled evil intentions of anti-India elements, who had a mindset of dividing the country, and included the country's 563 princely states into the Republic of India, contributing to the creation 'Ek Bharat,

Shreshtha Bharat'," he said. "The entire country should be united on the NRC and this will be a true tribute to Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

"Sardar Patel will be remembered for decades for being the symbol of India's unity, besides as a great freedom fighter," the Chief Minister added.

Bowing to a Sardar Patel's portrait on the stage, the chief minister said, "We are trying our best to make India of your dreams by following your ideals."

Adityanath said the Centre has been successful in bringing Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh under Indian legislation, following the ideals of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' by Sardar

Kashmiri pandit group hails Act, says entire nation 'stands with PM'

Jammu: Panun Kashmir, an organisation of Kashmiri migrant pandits, on Sunday welcomed the passing of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in both houses of parliament and said that the "entire nation stands wholeheartedly with Prime Minister Narendra Modi".

"The passing of CAB by parliament is a resolve to ensure complete politico-cultural decolonisation of India. Decolonising Indian mind is a critical necessity for national integration," Convener of Panun Kashmir, Agnishekhar, told reporters here.

Agnishekhar, who was flanked by several other leaders of the group including its chairman Ajay Chrungeo, said the decision to grant citizenship to persecuted Hindus of Pakistan, Bangladesh

and Afghanistan is a monumental decision of Modi Government to address the mutilations inflicted on Hindus during the colonial enslavement.

He alleged that the state of India since independence chose to remain a mute bystander to the genocidal attrition unleashed on Hindus left behind in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

"State of India for long had been functioning as a neutral or hostile entity towards the historical and civilisational responsibilities of the Nation of India. Congress regimes had converted state of India into an instrument to wage war on the historical and civilisational identity of the Nation of India," Agnishekhar said.



Muslim community members protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act at Indira Park in Hyderabad on Sunday

PTI



Protesters gather for a concert organised by All Artists of Assam against Citizenship Amendment Act, at AEI playground in Guwahati on Sunday

PTI

CAA against Savarkar views, says Uddhav



Nagpur: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said the new citizenship law is against the views of Hindutva icon V D Savarkar. Addressing a press conference on the eve of the winter session of the State legislature, Thackeray said that issues like CAB were being raised to "divert attention" of people from real issues like security of women, unemployment and farm crisis.

"Is CAB based on ideology? What about violence which erupted over it?, he asked. PTI

Those opposing CAA should not jump the gun: Kerala Gov

Kochi: Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan on Sunday urged those opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) "not to jump the gun" and let the things settle down.

He said this in response to a question from reporters here on the statement by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan that the CAA will not be implemented in the State.

He expressed the hope that elected Governments would fulfill their constitutional duties. The Governor said he was certain that if there was an issue, in a democratic society, elected Governments — both at the Centre and State — would rise to the occasion and fulfill their Constitutional duties.

"I don't know what he has said. I don't like to comment on that. In our Constitution this

has been very clearly specified....

These are the subjects where the Central Government will have the exclusive jurisdiction and these are the subjects where the State Government will have the exclusive jurisdiction....

Sometimes there may be misunderstandings. We should not jump the gun. Let things settle down," he said.

He said in a democracy, even if there are some misgivings about something, the state government, under the Constitution, can take its time to consider the issues and then come to a decision.

Vijayan had lashed out at the BJP-led Government and said the "unconstitutional Bill" will have no place in Kerala and the State would not implement it.

Justifying the the central Government's decision to enact the law, the Governor said life of the people belonging to the smaller denominations "in the neighbouring country" has become difficult.

"From 17 per cent, they came down to 1.3 per cent. Now this is a human tragedy, human problem. How to do it? I am not saying that everything is honky dory. But this is a problem, which is there before you. How to deal with it?", said. He said the controversies created for political reasons would soon settle down.

"Nobody should have any fear that any Indian will be subjected to any harassment or any difficulties. Nobody should have that fear. These controversies which are created for political reasons, they last a few days", Khan said.

PTI

Class 10 student raped in UP's Mau, 6 booked

Mau: Six youths were booked in connection with an alleged gang rape of a Class 10 student, officials said on Sunday.

According to Mau SP Anurag Arya, the prime accused, along with two others, have been detained for questioning, while efforts are on to nab the rest of the youths.

Arya said, "The incident took place in the Madhuban police station area of the district on Friday, when a student of Class 10 left her house around 9 am, but did not return till late in the evening."

"Around 10 pm, family members of the girl received a call that she was raped by six youths and they fled leaving her behind," he added.

The family members of the girl reached the spot and brought her back home. "When the girl regained her con-



scious, she narrated her trauma. Subsequently, she was admitted to a private hospital. On Saturday, a complaint was lodged against the six youths, including four named. A case has been registered against them under the IPC and the POCSO Act," the SP said.

UP: Man held on charge of raping, setting ablaze 18-year-old woman in Fatehpur

Banda (UP): A man was arrested for allegedly raping and setting ablaze an 18-year-old woman in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur city, police said on Sunday.

According to doctors, the woman sustained over 90 per cent burn injuries and her condition was critical.

An FIR was registered on the basis of a complaint lodged by the woman's family, and the accused was arrested for rape and attempt to murder, Fatehpur SP Prashant Verma said.

Additional Director General of Police (Allahabad zone) Subject Pandey said it was the woman who allegedly set herself ablaze when a 'panchayat' did not approve of her relationship with a distant relative.

When the matter of her relationship with the distant relative came to light, a panchayat was held in her village during which the woman and the man were made to take a pledge that they would live separately and not meet each other, the police officer said.

Upset over the panchayat's deci-



sion, the woman rushed to her house and allegedly set herself ablaze, he said.

District Magistrate Sanjeev Singh said that upon noticing smoke, villagers rescued the woman and took her to a local community health centre. Police said they are probing this aspect too.

Superintendent of Kanpur's Hallet Hospital RK Maurya said, "The condition of the 18-year-old woman from Fatehpur is extremely critical. She sustained over 90 per cent burn injuries. Only her feet were not burnt."

Leader of Congress Legislature

Party in Uttar Pradesh Aradhana Mishra and former Union Minister Rajeev Shukla visited Hallet hospital in Kanpur, and enquired her well being from her family members.

"On one hand, the BJP raises the slogan of 'Beti Bachhao, Beti Padhao', and on the other hand, it is under the BJP Government that maximum exploitation happens to women. If strict action is not initiated against the criminals, then such incidents cannot be stopped," Mishra said.

She also demanded that the family of the woman be given ₹ 50 lakh as financial assistance, provided medical treatment free of cost, and security to her family.

On December 5, a rape survivor from Unnao was set ablaze by five people, including two accused of raping her. They were arrested the same day. The woman later died during treatment in a Delhi hospital.

Govt should impart moral education to curb rape: Maurya

Ballia: Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya has said lack of good values is the reason for rising incidents of rape in the country and the Government should impart moral education to curb such crimes.

"Such incidents taking place in the country are extremely unfortunate. Among other reasons, the lack of good values is a major reason for this," Maurya said while referring to the Unnao rape case.

"The lack of good values in society can be addressed through moral education, among other mediums," he told reporters on the sidelines



of a programme of the BJP's student wing Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) here.

On the statement of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi that democracy and the Constitution are in danger in the country, Maurya said, "It is not democracy and Constitution, but the existence of the Congress which is in danger."

In blood-written letter, shooter writes to Centre to let her hang Nirbhaya convicts

Lucknow: Shooter Vartika Singh on Sunday wrote a letter in blood requesting the Centre to let her hang the rapists convicted in the Nirbhaya rape and murder case, a day before the victim's seventh death anniversary. In the letter, she has sought permission from Union Home Minister Amit Shah to execute the rapists.

Speaking to reporters here, Singh said, "I have a letter in my hand that is written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah. I have written it with my blood. I have written that I should be allowed to execute the convicts in the Nirbhaya case. This will reinforce the concept that women are viewed as goddesses in India."

"This message should go to the entire world. The rapists should know that in India, a woman can execute them. I have sent the letter through registered post and also tweeted it," she added.

The shooter urged all women soldiers, actresses, public representatives and organisa-

tions to lend their support for her.

She hoped there would be a transformation in the country with a "different kind of society" where women need not live in an atmosphere of fear.

Meanwhile, Tihar jail authorities in Delhi said they have been receiving requests from several people who are ready to volunteer as hangman.

Earlier in the week, S Subash Srinivasan, a head constable from Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district, wrote to the Director-General of Tihar jail stating his willingness to serve as an executioner.

The hangman at the Meerut prison has also indicated that he is ready to carry out the execution of the convicts. Pawan Jallad, a third-generation hangman, said his grandfather had carried out the hanging of the two men involved in the assassination of then prime minister Indira Gandhi besides notorious criminals Ranga and Billa.

Ensure justice delivery without delays in rape cases: Naidu to Judiciary

Gandhinagar: Underlining the need to curb the crime of rape with speedy investigation by police, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said it's the duty of judiciary to ensure that justice is delivered without "constant delays" though there cannot be "instant justice".

He also said that the crime of rape should be curbed without any discrimination or giving it a political hue.

The vice president's comments came on the eve of the 7th anniversary of the December 16, 2012 Nirbhaya gang-rape case that shook the nation, though he didn't mention the incident in his speech.

Recently, Union Home Ministry had sent to President Ram Nath Kovind the recom-

mentary of the Delhi Government rejecting the mercy plea of one of the convicts in the gang-rape case.

Naidu was speaking at a ceremony where he awarded President's Colour and Standard, including special flag and emblem, to the Gujarat Police, at the State Police Academy in Karai village in Gandhinagar district of Gujarat.

The Gujarat Police became the seventh such police force to be conferred with the symbol of excellence and pride.

"The rise in the number of crimes against women and children, especially heinous crimes, troubles me deeply. We have been hearing incidents here and there across the country."

"I want political leadership of the country not to politicise



this and give it a political colour," the Vice President said.

He said rape is a crime against women which should be "curbed with all might without any discrimination".

"Police should be people friendly and women friendly and deal with crimes against women with agility. Police should register every complaint without any distinction,

complete investigation at the earliest and start prosecution at the earliest," the vice president said.

Appealing to judiciary, Naidu said judicial enquiry should be concluded at the earliest and punishment be handed to culprits at the earliest so as to "curb" such criminal tendency.

The country had witnessed a huge outrage with the recent incidents of rapes and murders in Hyderabad and Unnao.

He said while police should do speedy investigation and file a chargesheet at the earliest in such crimes, judiciary should ensure that there are no "con-

stant delays". "There is a duty cast upon the judiciary as well. You cannot do instant justice, but you can't have constant delays. This has to be understood by one and all," he said.

Recently, Telangana Police had killed four suspects arrested for the rape and murder of a Hyderabad-based veterinarian in an alleged encounter.

After the 'encounter', Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad Bobde had said that justice can never be instant and it "loses its character as justice" if it becomes revenge.

Stating that 2013 Justice Verma Committee report on crimes against women be implemented "in the letter and spirit", the vice president said, "We simply cannot let the situation to continue."



Tribals perform during Tata Steel 25K run, in Kolkata on Sunday

Will sidelined leader Eknath Khadse quit BJP? Leader's recent cryptic comment sparks speculation

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra's sidelined BJP leader Eknath Khadse's recent cryptic comment that there is no guarantee that he may continue to remain in the party has sparked speculation in the State political circles that he might quit the Amit Shah-led party during the next fortnight.

Informed sources said here on Sunday that Khadse might announce his resignation from the BJP either during the Winter Session of the Maharashtra Legislature beginning on Monday or when Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visits Aurangabad to lay foundation stone for the construction for a memorial of late BJP leader Gopinath Munde in the near future.

Sources said that Khadse — who had met NCP president Sharad Pawar in the national capital on December 9 and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on the following day in Mumbai — was toying with the idea of joining the Shiv Sena.

Speaking at public rally organised by BJP leader Pankaja Munde at Panli on the occasion of the 70th birth-

anniversary of her father and senior party leader Gopinath Munde on Friday, Khadse had made no bones about admitting the manner in which he was side-lined within the party and the party had created such a situation where he would have to decide on continue to remain in the party in such a troubled atmosphere or quit the party.

"While Pankaja will remain in the BJP, there is no guarantee about me," Khadse had said.

Singled out former Chief Minister Devendra Fandav for a vicious attack, Khadse had charged that Fadnavis "ungrateful" towards late Munde. "Gopinathrao did not stab anyone in the back. It was Gopinathrao who made Fadnavis the State party president. When I was the Minister in the BJP-led Government, I had allotted the land for constructing a memorial after Gopinathrao. But, Fadnavis completed one full term as the Chief Minister and came back briefly as the Chief Minister.

"Nothing happened during Fadnavis' five year-term. It was only when Fadnavis remained as the Chief Minister for 80 hours during his sec-

ond term that he issued work orders for the start of the construction of a Gopinath Memorial at Aurangabad," Khadse said, adding that if Fadnavis so chose, he could have constructed the memorial for late Munde during the first tenure as the Chief Minister.

Khadse revealed that when he met Maharashtra's new Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, latter readily agreed to allocate money for the construction of a memorial for late Gopinath Munde at Aurangabad. "When I met him recently and broached the issue of the memorial for late Munde, Uddhav readily agreed to allocate money for the memorial. He also told me that he wanted to the location in Aurangabad where late Munde's memorial is to be constructed," he said.

With the possibility of Khadse quitting the BJP looming large over the state political arena, spotlight will turn on him during the course of the winter session of the Maharashtra Legislature. This is despite the fact the Khadse, who was denied party ticket by the BJP contest the State Assembly elections, is not member of both the Houses of the State Legislature.

DIG killed in mishap on Jammu-Srinagar NH

PNS ■ JAMMU

ADIG rank officer of Central Reserve Police Force, currently posted in Srinagar, was killed along with his driver while his personnel security officer (PSO) received critical injuries when their vehicle was hit by a boulder near Digidol in Ramban district around 8.00 p.m on Sunday.

According to CRPF authorities in Jammu, "the DIG rank officer, Shaileendra Kumar, holding the charge of DIG, North (Srinagar) was travelling in a Scorpio vehicle along with his driver and PSO when their vehicle was hit by a large boulder near Digidol on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway around 8.00 p.m."

"Both DIG and his driver died on the spot while critically injured PSO was rushed to the nearby hospital," police said.

Local police authorities along with rescue workers immediately rushed to the spot to shift the injured to the hospital.

The rescue workers struggled hard to retrieve the injured PSO from the mangled remains of the vehicle while dead bodies of DIG and the driver were shifted to the local hospital.

Traffic on the Jammu Srinagar National Highway earlier remained suspended due to inclement weather conditions and fresh spell of snowfall for last three days.

MAHA LEGISLATURE WINTER SESSION MVA Govt to corner BJP over State's debts, farm loan waiver

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government will go all out to put the Opposition BJP on the defensive in the Winter Session of the Maharashtra Legislature beginning in Nagpur on Monday, by trying to corner former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis among other things over the piled up the State's debts amounting to a staggering ₹ 6.71 lakh crore and his failure to implement properly the farm loan waiver scheme.

The Sena-NCP-Congress Government will also try to embarrass Fadnavis, who is now the leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, by raking up the issue of questionable decision of invoking the controversial provision in the schedule of rates for irrigation projects to regularise payments for additional works worth several hundred crores of rupees, taken by him days ahead the State Assembly polls.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has already stayed Fadnavis' decision. The treasury benches will in all likelihood go for

the jugular against Fadnavis, alleging irregularities in the decision taken by the former Chief Minister.

The two major developments that can be expected during the week-long budget session of the State Legislature are: the tabling of a white paper on the State's current fiscal position and unveiling of a relief package for the unseasonal rain-hit farmers in the State.

Through the white paper on the current fiscal position of the state, the ruling MVA will attempt to put the previous Devendra Fadnavis Government over the "mishandling" of the State's finances. It may also speak about stalling of certain development projects, including the construction of a car shed for Metro phase-III at Aarey Colony in south Mumbai and bullet train project.

The ruling front leaders will also try to needle Fadnavis over BJP MP from Karnataka Ananta Kumar Hegde's claim that during his 80-hour tenure as Chief Minister of Maharashtra the former "moved back ₹ 40,000 crore" to the Centre. Fadnavis will have to face the music despite the fact that he has

already denied the allegation and hit back at party colleague Hegde for making "false" and "baseless" claims when the fact remained that "the state did not return even one naya paisa to the Centre".

The treasury benches will also try to exploit the statements by disgruntled BJP leader Eknath Khadse and upset Pankaja Munde and delay on the part of the previous Devendra Fadnavis Government to construct a memorial for Gopinathrao Munde at Aurangabad, to project the BJP in a poor light.

In the brief session, there will be no customary question hour. There will be debates on Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari's address to joint session of the two houses of State Legislature delivered in Mumbai on December 1, supplementary demands of the budget, official and unofficial bills and passing of a resolution congratulating Sharad Arvind Bobde, who hails from Nagpur, on his appointment as the Chief Justice of India.

On its part, the Opposition BJP will try to drive a wedge between

the ruling Shiv Sena and Congress over the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 in Maharashtra. While the Congress has opposed the CAA, the NCP is seeking consensus over the CAA implementation. The Shiv Sena, which had supported the Citizens Amendment Bill (CAB) in the Lok Sabha and staged a walk out in Rajya Sabha before the bill was put to vote in Rajya Sabha, has not made it stand clear on the CAA.

The BJP has already laid bare its game plan to corner the Shiv Sena over CAA issue. Advising its erstwhile ally Shiv Sena to go ahead and implement

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 in Maharashtra, the BJP said on Saturday it was ready to make a "political compromise" and support the Sena in the event of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government's collapse over the implementation of CAA in the State. Rahul Gandhi's "My name is not Rahul Savarkar, I am Rahul Gandhi" comment has given fodder to the Opposition to target the Shiv Sena.

The BJP will exert pressure on Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to speak his mind on CAA and Rahul's controversial comment. However, Uddhav is unlikely to oblige the Opposition as his statements will have a bearing on the stability of the MVA Government.

The winter session will witness nomination of a new Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Maharashtra Legislative Council in place of NCP leader Dhananjay Munde. With the change in the government in the State, Munde has moved to the ruling side and the LoP's position has fallen vacant.

In the normal course, the then BJP's group leader Chandrakant Patil would have become the LoP in place of Munde in the Upper House. Since Patil was elected to the State Assembly in the recent elections, Patil is no longer a member of the State Legislative Council. There are three contenders from the BJP — Bhai Girkar, Dr Parinay Purke and Prvain Darekar — LoP's post. It remains to be seen as to who — among these three leaders — will become the LoP in the Upper House.

Speculation rife about creating more Deputy CM posts in Karnataka

Bengaluru: As Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa plans expansion of his Ministry, speculations are rife within the state BJP about creating more posts of Deputy Chief Minister or the coveted position being removed altogether, given the growing number of aspirants.

There are already three Deputy Chief Ministers in the Cabinet-Govind Karjol, CN Ashwathnarayan and Laxman Savadi.

Amid speculation that at least two more such posts would be created during the coming cabinet expansion, Savadi on Sunday termed it as a 'creation of the media' and said there was no confusion within BJP on this.

Everyone in the party would abide by the high command's decision on the matter, he said.

"There have been no such discussions, its only a creation of the media. On such issues, the party's state and national leadership will decide," he said to a query about the

demand for at least two more Deputy Chief Minister's posts and also talk of such a position being removed all together.

Noting that there have been instances in the past when Deputy Chief Ministers were appointed by the high command, he said "three of us are DCMs now... Whatever the party leadership decides next, we will abide by it."

While there is talk within BJP that newly elected BJP MLA from Gokak, Ramesh Jarkiholi, who was earlier disqualified as Congress legislator for his instrumental role in bringing down the Congress-JD(S) coalition Government, was being considered for the post, health minister Sriramulu is reportedly sulking with his chances looking dim.

Sriramulu, who had earlier openly expressed his desire for the post, has not been attending official engagements for the last few days.

Take the lead

The domino effect of protests over fee hikes and citizenship law shows that a mass student movement may be possible



The protests over the new Citizenship Act, which promises religion-based acceptance of refugees and excludes the concerns of minorities and indigenous people, may congeal as a mass student movement that is rearing its head across the country in a manner reminiscent of the anti-reservation stir of the 90s. As the young Assamese stood up for their linguistic and cultural pride, one that has been threatened since colonial times by waves of privileged Bengali-speaking settlers, their marginalisation has found echoes across

the country. Students at various colleges and universities, even in faraway Delhi, are out to challenge not just the autocracy of the ruling regime but occupy the space for balance, humanism and logic that has been vacated by civil society, Opposition leaders and rationalists. This confluence of students, therefore, comes from generational solidarity, from their stakeholderhood in an India that is being created by selfish politics but will leave them suffering the consequences and unlearning what we have raised them to believe, to hold the establishment to account. Perhaps, it is getting endorsement because of the silence from a coopted majority. For the new Citizenship Act is not about reimagining India in a positive way but about reconstructing on ruins and relics of our civilisational foundations. It is not about denying immigration rights to Muslims but the selective culling of whom we want on our land that goes against the grain of the Constitution, one of the best documents that guarantees our citizenry equality. It is about creating a fear psychosis among the majority community that for the first time believes it has been a victim of parasitic minorities, no matter how small their numbers. It is about a One India based on Hindu nationalism that disregards, as in the North-east, the emotions of locals who have over the years reclaimed their political rights as national parties have merrily played around with demographics, encouraging immigration for votebanks, first Muslim, now Hindus. It is about upending stability that has been hard-earned in a diverse India. In that sense, the BJP has, by fomenting disunity, probably gifted a plank of unity that might just lead to a transformative and revolutionary student movement. If the mass coalescence following the Nirbhaya rape, the Dalit atrocities, the Rohith Vemula suicide and fee hikes at institutions is any indication, then the young are getting restive. If the 90s fed the drive for economic empowerment in a globalised world, then millennials are looking at value-creation of a different kind, one that keeps them connected to their identity than be submerged by the homogeneous hold of power. One that is not intellectual fadism of campus politics but can be carried into the real world, one that is not just anger against the system but about claiming it.

Perhaps this is the reason why students in Assam, unlike the anti-outsider movement of the late 1970s and early 80s, are spontaneously coming together as an amorphous force. They have demonstrated peacefully by and large through blockades, gatherings and processions. It is the police clampdown which has been harsh in comparison, both in the State and even in Delhi. The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) may be leading the protests like the old times but has been joined by university students and even farmers and tribals. And so far they have decided to stay away from politicisation by national parties, be it the BJP or the Congress. Technology and media outreach have helped mobilise support, scale up the new law as a transnational issue and has even inducted peers in the diaspora. Student movements in India today may begin local but then draw traction in the broader context. This is the reason why the JNU fee hike agitation spread to all other institutions and became a swell of anger against fee hike in the higher education system in general. The *Hok Kolorob* movement in Jadavpur University, against the abrasive arrogance of the VC, had a domino effect with demonstrations being staged across India, including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. But in recent times, it is the Hong Kong students' protest, with human chains, night vigils and Nelson Mandela songs, whose innovation and energy have even compelled a totalitarian China to take a step back. The good part about this non-violent resistance against the regime was that it could not be demonised by the establishment but weaponised the entire world's sympathy. In the same way, the new wave of home-grown student movements could very well capture the national imagination. Once young people have freed themselves from State fear, then we may yet reap a true democratic dividend.

India calling

A record number of Indian-origin MPs were voted to the UK Parliament but not all might end up being friends of India



Fifteen of the newly-elected Members of Parliament (MPs) in Westminster will have Indian roots. And while 15 out of 650 MPs might not seem like much, this is an assertion of how influential the British Indian community has become. At least two or three MPs of the Conservative Party, which won a stunning victory, are expected to become members of the Cabinet, including Priti Patel and Rishi Sunak, the latter familiar to some Indians as Infosys-founder NR Narayana Murthy's son-in-law.

There were several Indian-origin MPs from the Labour Party as well and their number included Lisa Nandy, who some are pegging as a potential candidate for leading the Labour Party following the planned resignation of the current leader, Jeremy Corbyn. While most Indian-origin MPs of the Conservative Party are generally seen as pro-India — there was a concerted effort within the Indian community to consolidate behind the Conservatives after Corbyn's statements on the Kashmir issue and his previous statements sympathetic to terrorist organisations — it is not as if Labour's Indian origin MPs are anti-India. But given Labour's extreme position on some issues, it is almost certain that its MPs will be critical of the Indian Government's stance on several issues.

This is something that the Modi regime must be prepared for as such MPs, while being the biggest advocacy group for Indian interests, could also end up being the biggest critics of policies back home. The Chennai-born US Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal has been leading attacks in the US Congress against the Modi Government. Several first and second-generation Sikh immigrants in politics, particularly in Canada, have been openly advocating the Khalistani cause. Just because someone holds an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card does not make them a "friend" of India. Our diplomats and policy-makers should never forget this. At the same time, the Modi Government's overt support to certain Indian organisations that are weaponising the Indian diaspora politically is a good move. For example, many of Jayapal's constituents are from the Indian community working in the Greater Seattle area's IT industry, dominated by Amazon and Microsoft. Hundreds of them have written to her criticising her stance on Kashmir, making her realise that she cannot take the community's vote for granted. We should celebrate the success of our diaspora in every field, including politics, but we must not for one second forget that they do not owe their allegiance to India and are not "Indians."

A broken justice system

Increasingly, rape cases have seen an outpouring of public anger where the demand for death has reached a high pitch. Only reforms in the police and judicial systems can help



KUSHAN MITRA

No matter what problems one may have with fairness of social media platforms like Twitter, posts here do make up for an interesting read and allow one to gauge the mood, if not of the country, definitely of the chattering class. Reactions to the rape and murder of a young veterinary doctor in Hyderabad were telling. Several Twitter users advocated not just death penalty but some even argued that the perpetrators be lynched. This kicked in a fevered discussion and even found its way into the Parliament where several MPs, across party lines, argued in favour of lynching of the rapists. Not a State-sanctioned death penalty but public lynching.

The irony, at a time when people are talking about bringing anti-lynching provisions into the law, was not lost on some. People's anger stemmed, in no small part, due to the fact that December 2019 marks seven years of the horrific gang-rape in South Delhi, where a young physiotherapist was brutally assaulted and left for dead. The perpetrators of this horrific crime, despite being convicted and given the death penalty, have successfully eluded the sentence that was handed down to them. This is death of our conscience by using every available aspect of the law to delay their execution.

But isn't this the right of every prisoner? The ability to use every possible means to prove his innocence or mitigate his sentence or even delay it, particularly when it is a matter of death? The only other major democracy that regularly executes prisoners is the US, which has several provisions in its statute books. Even the Governor of a State can issue a last-minute pardon to prisoners if appeals to the US Supreme Court fail. To deny them that would potentially mean convicting an innocent man or woman to death. In college and school debates, we have held discussions on justice delayed is justice denied but it is almost certain that a rushed judicial process is dangerous. It is gratifying that the Chief Justice of India, Sharad Arvind Bobde, realised this. While commenting on the murders of the four undertrials in the Hyderabad rape and murder case, he said, "Justice should not be revenge. I believe justice loses its character as justice if it becomes revenge."

Those — including not just liberal ideologues in the country but also Right-wing thought leaders — against death penalty have a simple argument: Who is a man to judge a crime? But how do you explain this in the Indian context, because at our core, we remain a deeply tribalistic society where the 18th and 21st centuries have had a troubled relationship. Anyone who has been 50 kilometres outside India's major metropolitan areas, particularly the national Capital, will understand this. When



crimes are committed in such a brutal manner and scale, there is an expectation of punishment matching the act. India is not Norway, where a mass murderer can be allowed to live and also fight the State for human rights. No, we are India, where we have a very specific set of criminal issues. We should not pretend to be a socially developed State. Indeed, it can be argued that India's social problems will likely get worse before they get better and the country will have little choice but to execute certain citizens.

We have to, however, take every single possible precautionary measure to prevent the possibility of an innocent man/woman going to the gallows. We cannot accept even one wrongful death sanctioned by the State. That said, when it is proven beyond any iota of doubt that an accused is guilty of those "rarest of rare" cases, where State-sanction is justified, then the executive and the judiciary both should ensure that the punishment is delivered swiftly. To keep a man or a woman on death row for an indefinite time is technically, cruelty. Of course, one may not sympathise with the murderers but constant appeals bouncing

“ WE HAVE TO, HOWEVER, TAKE EVERY SINGLE POSSIBLE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE TO PREVENT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INNOCENT MAN/WOMAN GOING TO THE GALLOWES. WE CANNOT ACCEPT EVEN ONE WRONGFUL DEATH SANCTIONED BY THE STATE ”

around the judiciary and the Union Home Ministry for years is plainly ridiculous. If someone has been sentenced to death for a heinous crime, the death penalty should not be handed out like candy by the lower judiciary. If the sentence has been confirmed by the Supreme Court, the Home Ministry and the President should get on with their jobs.

We have had Presidents who have delayed the signing of death warrants because it went against their conscience. Fair enough, but Presidents should come out and be vocal about it instead of delaying matters until the next head of the State assumes power.

This is a peculiar Indian issue — putting off tough decisions instead of acting on them. It took a century to bring natural justice to the Ayodhya case. On top of that, the fate of the Delhi rapists is still hanging in the air. This is one major reason why there is so much pendency in courts. Forget about the failure of the bureaucracy and the executive to take decisions. Of course, there are other reasons, too, such as delay in filling judicial vacancies, which coupled with the lack of education and knowledge across the board,

including that of the legal profession, has completely broken the criminal justice system in the country.

So when incidents like the Hyderabad rape case happen, there is public anger. The same sentiments run across among the local population when alleged child snatchers or cattle hustlers are lynched. We know how people get worked up over vigilantism.

Our justice system has failed us completely and needs to be revamped with meaningful implementation of processes. Increasingly, people have started taking matters into their own hands. If this isn't a sign of a banana republic, no one really knows what is. It is, therefore, imperative for the executive and the judiciary to work towards fixing this. While policing is a State subject, there needs to be a comprehensive federal re-evaluation of policing and the judiciary, just like the indirect taxation system was overhauled to the Goods and Services Tax system. But we cannot afford to bungle anymore. India needs police and judicial reforms now in sync with the severity of the emerging crime graph.

(The writer is Managing Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

BJP asked me to apologise for telling the truth. I am not Rahul Savarkar. I am Rahul Gandhi. I will not apologise. Nor will anyone from the Congress.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

The big films that I've done and their success gave me the courage to do smaller films and take it all upon my shoulders.



Actor —Sonakshi Sinha

One of India's great strengths is its Constitution. As a fellow democracy, we respect India's institutions, but are concerned about the implications of the CAB Bill.



US diplomat —Sam Brownback

Clearly, this is not an ordinary slowdown. It is India's great slowdown, where the economy seems headed for the intensive care unit.



Former Chief Economic Advisor —Arvind Subramanian

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Assam's anxiety

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Spent force" (December 13). The hard-earned peace in Assam is now on a knife's edge with continuous violent protests in several parts of the State following the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, which seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The passage of the CAA is an act of betrayal by the BJP, which had promised to solve the vexed foreigners' issue once and for all in accordance with the 1985 Assam Accord. The pact stipulates that all foreigners, who came to Assam on or after March 25, 1971, shall continue to be detected, deleted from the rolls and expelled in accordance with the law.

Apprehensions and fears of the Assamese were genuine and, hence, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) was necessitated by the Supreme Court. A consensus was arrived at where it was decided that the final NRC list would be a piece of legal document for identification, deletion of names from the voters' list and

Russia will be missed on the world stage

This refers to the editorial, "Shut out Russia" (December 11). It is unfortunate that Russia has been banned for four years by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) from participating in the world's major sporting events on grounds of doping non-compliance. The WADA took this decision after concluding that Moscow had planted fake evidence and got rid of files linked to positive doping tests in laboratory, data that could have aided the process of identifying drug cheats.

It must be noted that Russia has been embroiled in performance-enhancement drug scandals since a 2015 report commissioned by the WADA found evidence of mass doping among Russian athletes. Many players were sidelined over the past two Olympics and Russia was stripped of its flag altogether at last year's winter games in Pyeongchang as punishment for State-sponsored doping cover-ups at the Sochi games in 2014. One of the conditions for the reinstatement of the Russian anti-doping agency, RUSADA, had been that Moscow would provide an authentic copy of the laboratory data. However, the punishment does still leave the door open for Russian athletes, who are clean, to compete at big international events without their flag for the coming years, something they did at the Pyeongchang Olympics. There have been



protests claiming that the WADA's decision is part of a broader Western attempt to hold Russia back from progressing in the international arena. How will Russia's absence affect the Tokyo Olympics and the World Cup in Qatar? If Russian athletes do not participate in the Olympics, then a lot of the tournament's sheen will disappear. After all, Russia is a sporting power to be reckoned with. The brilliant performances of its athletes often set new global standards in sports.

TK Nandanani Kochi

and resources and lead to conflicts between communities.

Himangka Kaushik
New Delhi

Temporary relief

Sir — The trade war between the US and China, which has continued for almost two years now, led to uncertainty in the way global businesses would be conducted going forward.

Investors underwent sleepless nights as they kept navigating through an environment of slowing growth and increasingly volatile markets. While US President Donald Trump slapped punitive tariffs on Chinese imports, China, too, retaliated. As a result, the global economy suffered.

With the US and China now striking a "phase one" deal to de-escalate trade war, the world can genuinely take a breath. While this is just the first step, any sign that the trade war is cooling off needs to be cheered.

Sudhanshu
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Preserve nation's genetic wealth

We need to take our animal resources seriously and utilise them efficiently for economic and social uplift in rural areas



VK BAHUGUNA

India is endowed with huge genetic resources and is one of the 17 megadiversity nations of the world. Human-animal interactions date back to early civilisations and are not restricted to economic reasons. They have deeply impacted the cultural, spiritual and religious life of people. These genetic resources have played a critical role in our agrarian economy. In domesticated livestock and birds, the documented breeds are 30 of cattle, 10 of buffalo, 40 of sheep, 20 of goat, 18 of poultry, nine of camel and six of the horse.

World over, scientists have been seeking animal germplasm in their quest to utilise their genome for medicine and food, to feed growing populations and shore up the dwindling genetic base due to deforestation and climate change. There have been cases in India and Nepal when scientists from Western countries on a tourist visa were found trapping beetles.

We need to take our animal resources seriously and utilise them efficiently for economic and social uplift in rural areas. Traditionally, livestock had been the backbone of small farmers for nutrition, farm work as well as other activities. A whopping 21 million people are dependent on livestock for their livelihood and this sector contributes 4.11 per cent to the country's GDP. The share of animal products in agriculture is more than 25 per cent. Though the country is the largest producer of milk in the world, its production from indigenous cows is minimal. The world is tapping the genome of Indian cows for the healthy A2 milk as the A1 milk produced by foreign breeds like Holstein Friesian and Jersey is not very healthy because it contains Beta-Casein which causes hypertension, heart ailments and diabetes.

These foreign breeds are also prone to infections and need big investments for better milk output. In our quest to increase cow milk production in the past, we had indiscriminately used foreign breeds and neglected Indian cows. There was not much emphasis on research targeted at improving milk production from local breeds. However, countries like Brazil, Uruguay and New Zealand realised the genetic potential of Indian cows early on and have now emerged as world leaders in the production of A2 milk. The Gir cow and other Indian breeds in Brazil won the prize for the highest milk production in a 2014 contest. This germplasm was supplied by India to Brazil during the early and middle part of the last century.

Though the Indian Government has now taken steps for promotion indigenous cow breeds, the attempts are half-hearted at best and lack focus on integrated planning for the future. The Department of Animal Husbandry must focus on converting hybrid cows into fully domestic breeds in the next 15 years. India should initiate bilateral arrangements with Brazil and other countries to get the superior or high-yielding Indian cow gene pool back to improve the productivity of bovines back home. Similarly, we should have a breeding programme with South Asian countries which are home to Indian breeds. For instance, both Pakistan and India have breeding tracks for Red Sindhi, Sahiwal and Tharparkar cows and joint programmes can be launched for enhancing milk production from these breeds and their conservation. This programme should be launched for buffaloes simultaneously as they also produce A2 milk.

Thankfully, now in India, people are working towards making world-class products from cow dung and urine and exporting them. There is also a foundation that is proving that cows can be economically reared for their entire life and is working with more than 75,000 Indian cows in 25 shelters. It offered help to Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand but is yet to get a response from the States.

There should be a plan for economic utilisation of cows when they become unfit to yield milk. At present they are let loose and stray cattle foraging on the streets and blocking traffic are a menace apart from being a big problem for Government agencies. It is well-known that the desi cow's urine and dung have great cultural, economic and medicinal value. This has been proved by several scientific studies. The Animal Welfare Board and the Kamdhenu Commission should be assigned the task of preparing projects for this, so that cows are treated well once their productive years are over. An integrated farmer-centric decentralised programme must be initiated for all other animals like horses, ducks, camels, donkeys, goats, sheep, pigs, quail and so on, with the sole aim to energise the earning potential of farmers. This will require sufficient funds, manpower and technological upgradation through research.

Stray dogs are yet another neglected species in the country. With people preferring foreign breeds, the local dogs are left to roam the streets and scavenge. There should be a complete ban on breeding pedigree dogs and people should be encouraged to adopt strays. The management of animal wealth should get top priority if we have to bring prosperity in rural and tribal areas.

(The writer is a former civil servant)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

MY NAME IS RAHUL GANDHI, NOT RAHUL SAVARKAR. I WILL NEVER APOLOGISE FOR SPEAKING THE TRUTH. BUT MODI MUST APOLOGISE FOR RUINING ECONOMY.

—CONGRESS LEADER
 RAHUL GANDHI



VIR SAVARKAR WAS A REAL PATRIOT. NO ONE BECOMES GANDHI AND A PATRIOT BY MERELY ADOPTING A SURNAME.

—UNION MINISTER
 GIRIRAJ SINGH

India's *beti* not *nirbhaya*

The overall utilisation of Nirbhaya Funds allocated to States till date is just 11 per cent, which is only ₹252 cr of the ₹2,264 cr sanctioned for ensuring the safety of women



RAKESH SENGER

Seven years ago today, the country witnessed an act of monstrosity, when a 23-year-old woman was gang-raped, had a rod inserted in her private parts and was left to die on the roadside in Delhi. Despite battling hard for many days, she couldn't survive, and, to honour her courage, was named *Nirbhaya* (fearless).

Due to the ghastliness of the crime, the citizens of the country came out on the streets demanding justice for *Nirbhaya* and safety for all women. Candle marches and protests were held all over and many PILs were filed. The protests showed results and the then Government introduced the Nirbhaya Fund in the Budget for the Financial Year 2013-14, for the safety and protection of women.

Circa 2019. It has been seven years but the situation remains unchanged and women continue to be unsafe in public spaces. On November 27, a 27-year-old veterinarian was gang-raped and burnt to death, her charred body recovered the next day. This was followed by reports of a nine-year-old girl being raped and strangled to death in Karnataka, the rape and murder of a six-year-old in Rajasthan, a 37-year-old being gang-raped in Odisha, the Unnao rape victim being burnt to death by the accused out on bail and another girl being threatened with the same fate by her tormentors if she testified against them. These are just a few among many more similar heinous crimes against women reported in recent days in the country. These cases led to another outcry in the nation and once again got everyone thinking about the safety of women in their families.

Questions were once again raised in the Parliament on the utilisation of the Nirbhaya Fund, following which, the Minister of Women and Child Development, Smriti Irani, presented data in the Lok Sabha on its use.

The Nirbhaya Fund was created with a corpus of ₹1,000 crore in 2013 and this was increased to ₹3,600 crore in the last six years. Of this, ₹2,264 crore, which is 63 per cent of the corpus, was allocated to various States and Union Territories (UTs), by various departments, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Home Affairs, Justice and Road Transport and Highways.

To understand the ways the disbursed money had been used, the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (KSCF) carried out an analysis of its utilisation by States/UTs. It revealed that despite an increase in crimes against women and children every year, the overall utilisation of Nirbhaya Funds allocated to States/UTs till date was a mere 11 per cent, which is only ₹252 crore of the ₹2,264 crore sanctioned. It was appalling to learn that none of the States/UTs could spend more than 50 per cent of the funds allotted till the financial year 2019. Shockingly, the BJP-ruled Maharashtra had failed to use a single rupee allotted to it, while Tripura and Tamil Nadu had just spent three per cent of the funds. Manipur had spent four per cent and Daman & Diu, West Bengal, Gujarat and Delhi used five per cent of the total funds allocated to them. Further, out of the 36 States/UTs for which data is available, the utilisation in 18 States/UTs has been less than 15 per cent, which is a testimony of their utter disregard towards women's safe-

“ DESPITE AN INCREASE IN CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN EVERY YEAR, IT WAS APPALLING TO LEARN THAT NONE OF THE STATES/UTS COULD SPEND MORE THAN 50 PER CENT OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TILL THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019. SHOCKINGLY, MAHARASHTRA HAD FAILED TO USE A SINGLE RUPEE ALLOTTED TO IT. WHILE TRIPURA AND TAMIL NADU HAD JUST SPENT THREE PER CENT OF THE FUNDS, MANIPUR HAD SPENT FOUR PER CENT AND DAMAN & DIU, WEST BENGAL, GUJARAT AND DELHI SPENT FIVE PER CENT OF THE TOTAL FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THEM ”



ty. The analysis also revealed that States, including Telangana, Karnataka and Odisha, where the recent cases of crimes against women were reported, have spent only six per cent of the funds allocated to them. In Uttar Pradesh, where the Unnao rape victim was burnt to death, 79 per cent of the funds had remained unspent. The highest utilisation of funds, which was 50 per cent, was done by just two States, Mizoram and Uttarakhand, with just three States, Haryana, Nagaland and Chhattisgarh showing spending of more than 30 per cent of the funds allocated.

The report shows that crimes against women and children have been on a constant rise from 2015 to 2017. The total crimes against women reported in 2015 were 329,243 which increased to 338,954 in 2016 and 359,849 in 2017. Similarly, crimes against children went up from 94,172 to 106,958 and 129,032 in 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively. The latest annual *Crime in India, 2017* report issued by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) showed that in 2017, 32,559 cases of rape were reported, of which 17,382, (53 per cent) were those of minors. A review of the report from 2013 onwards shows that every year over 30,000 women and girls fall victim to the heinous crime.

The huge non-utilisation of the fund, especially set up for the protection of women, is a testimony to the complete lack of political will and utter disregard for the importance and seri-

ousness of the issue of women's safety. The Nirbhaya Fund was created for the implementation of projects and schemes exclusively designed for providing safety and security to women in public places. Some major schemes, where the States were supposed to use the funds, included the establishment of an Emergency Response Support System, Central Victim Compensation Fund, Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children, One Stop Centre Scheme, Mahila Police Volunteers, and Universalisation of Women Helpline Scheme.

However, meagre spending of the fund has resulted in the sub-optimal operationalisation of these schemes, with the country failing to achieve, even partially, the objectives for which it has been created.

Over the years, there have been demands for setting up special courts, appointing more women police officers, installation of CCTV cameras and street lights in every nook and corner and taking other measures to make the streets safer for the fair sex.

There is a need for strengthening the judiciary through the appointment of more judges, public prosecutors and other officials for time-bound disposal of sexual assault cases. It is imperative to train police officers to ensure timely filing of strong chargesheets against criminals with a diligent investigation to make watertight cases, among other things.

While recently, some policy developments have taken place, including

creation of special courts for speedy disposal of cases related to Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act; further strengthening of the POCSO Act; launch of the fast track special courts (FTSC) scheme for expeditious disposal of cases of rape and the POCSO Act, 2019 (which calls for establishing 1,023 FTSCs), much more needs to be done.

The KSCF has also been working relentlessly for the last several years to raise awareness against these crimes, demanding that India be made a country safer for women and children. A major step taken was the launch of Bharat Yatra, a national march against sexual abuse of children in 2017 and the Rape Free India campaign before the Lok Sabha elections, earlier this year.

The recent incidents of rape and other crimes against women are a wake-up call for State Governments. There is a need for States/UTs to formulate schemes for the safety of women and girls and implement them on a war footing. They need to utilise the Nirbhaya Fund placed at their disposal, and if necessary, allocate a budget from their funds for implementation of these schemes.

The women and children of the country have remained unsafe for long. It is high time that steps are taken to make them feel secure as they go about their daily business, at home and outside.

(The author is Executive Director, Programmes, at Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation)

Unions allow students to let off steam

Clandestine extremist groups have been operating on Pakistani campuses in the vacuum created by the absence of unions



NADEEM PARACHA

The 'Students Solidarity March' on November 29 seems to have ruffled some feathers. It was being thought and even hoped by some that the march would draw nothing more than the kind of negligent attention candle vigils attract. But this wasn't the case and thousands of students from assorted universities and colleges poured out in almost every major city of Pakistan, mostly demanding the restoration of student unions.

Campus unions were first banned in 1984 by the General Zia dictatorship and then restored in 1989 by the first Benazir Bhutto regime. However, they were banned again in 1993, this time by the Supreme Court.

The manner in which the current Government has reacted to the recent march suggests that a lot more hap-

pened, or was perceived to have happened, than just a handful of students marching and raising slogans. Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted that he was in favour of restoring the student unions. But by the time the tweet was posted, his own Government was arresting certain prominent student leaders and booking them for sedition. Twitter trends such as #StudentsSolidarityMarch and #StudentsMarchExposed began to compete against each other. Some commentators on TV were hailing the march; some were cynically dismissing it as an "elitist" one-off; while others were warning that the restoration of unions would again prompt violence on campuses.

The latter is the most frequently used reason against the demand for restoring the unions. In fact, Khan, even while supporting restoration, pointed out that the unions, before they got banned in 1984, had become violent. This is the perception that has overshadowed the fact that, till the late 1970s, elected student unions were bastions of well-intentioned democratic activities.

One can claim that Khan, too, was drawing his information in this con-

text from the negative perception associated with student politics. But I would like to share here an incident in which Khan actually faced the violence he was talking about. During the Indian cricket team's tour of Pakistan in 1982-83, the fifth Test match of the series at Karachi's National Stadium was repeatedly invaded by student activists agitating against the growing Government curbs on campus politics in Karachi. Khan was bowling and some students charged towards an Indian batsman on strike. Others ran towards the batsman on the non-striker's end who was standing with Khan. Khan pulled out a stump from the ground and threatened to use it against the charging students. However, before he could do this, cops entered the fray and chased away the students.

Indeed, campus politics, especially in Karachi and Lahore, had become increasingly violent. This was mainly due to the brutalisation of politics and society by the Zia dictatorship and the steady introduction of sophisticated weapons in the hands of the youth. These weapons began to arrive almost immediately after Pakistan agreed to fight the US' and Saudi Arabia's proxy battles against the Soviet Union and

Iran. During my research in 2015, findings showed that there were just three incidents of gunfire in the country's student politics between 1951 and 1977. The first was recorded at Karachi University in 1968, in which a student was arrested for possessing a pistol but one that was never actually fired. Then a pistol was used for aerial firing during a student union election at the same university in 1974. There were no casualties. A pistol was also fired during the union elections at Lahore's Punjab University in 1975 in which a student was killed.

However, between 1981 — the year Pakistan fully joined the so-called "Afghan jihad" — and 1984, all hell broke loose and dozens of students lost their lives in gunfights between opposing student outfits — both from the Left and the Right — and between students and the police. It is thus important to comprehend under what circumstances violence became a norm in student politics.

Second, ever since student activism played a major role in the movement against the Ayub regime in the late 1960s, Governments in Pakistan start to worry when students manage to exhibit an impressive show of strength.

What gets missed in this urge to keep a lid on student politics, is the important underlying fact behind student uprisings and violence. For example, most scholars who studied the global rise and fall of student activism between the 1960s and 1970s, point out that student violence and agitation mushroomed in the 1960s when universities and colleges failed to accommodate the large influx of middle-class students in that decade.

The students' anger towards the logistical and administrative problems caused by this influx boiled over and was expressed through political action. Student activism receded when, in the 1970s, colleges and universities (in the West) managed to better accommodate the students.

The same thing happened in Pakistan in the 1960s. Pakistani universities and colleges also began to receive a large-scale influx of students. Then, in the 1990s, when most students began to join private educational institutions, politicised student unions fell out of favour. But as we are now seeing, this was a stopgap arrangement.

No one is talking about the damning 2009 and 2013 reports prepared by the British Council in Pakistan. The

reports speak about a growing youth bulge in the country, with over 60 per cent of the country's population being under the age of 30.

The reports' findings warn that disillusionment among the youth would continue to grow due to political and economic instability, and this might lead many young people to adopt extreme measures.

We have already seen the growth of incidents in which educated young people have been involved in committing crimes or joining extremist organisations. The pouring out on to the streets of students on November 29 can also be explained and seen in this context.

In fact, this should actually encourage the Government to restore the unions. Because unions can once again become conduits for the students to express their aspirations and concerns in a democratic manner, rather than become despondent, cynical and desperate; or worse, join clandestine extremist groups which, ever since the late 1990s, have been surreptitiously operating on campuses in the vacuum created by the absence of student unions.

(Courtesy: Dawn)



WE SHOULD ALL BE GRETA

Amid protests, clashes and expulsion of activists, the COP25 wound up recently, once again producing more promises and little political will that could save the planet for our children and generations to come. To make measures work, every one of us should be a Greta Thunberg. Every head of State or Government should be a Greta. By avoiding the use of plastic as much as possible, we can start this change from our homes.

(Courtesy: Daily Mirror)

FM to hold pre-Budget consultations with stakeholders

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Beginning the customary pre-Budget consultation exercise from Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will seek inputs from various stakeholders including industry bodies, farmer organisations and economists for reviving consumption and boosting growth.

Sitharaman is likely to present her second Budget for the Modi 2.0 Government in Parliament on February 1.

Sources said the pre-Budget consultations starting Monday will last till December 23. They said the main focus of the Budget this time will be on boosting economic growth,

which slowed to an over six-year low of 4.5 per cent in the second quarter of 2019-20.

As per the finance ministry, Sitharaman will meet stakeholder groups of 'New Economy: Start-ups, Fintech and Digital Sector' on Monday morning, and financial sector and capital market representatives later in the day.

Industry sources said the Government has sought their views on matters like ease of doing business, regulatory environment impacting private investment, export competitiveness, role of state (delayed payments, contract enforcement), and revival of private investment and growth, among others.



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The Minister is likely to meet industry chambers on December 19.

With the government already effecting significant cut in corporate taxes, expectations are high that it would

announce some relief for the salaried class by making changes in the personal income tax structure.

Industry bodies have demanded that income up to ₹5 lakh should be exempt from

tax for individual taxpayers from the current ₹2.5 lakh to spur demand for goods and services. They are also demanding hiking the overall deduction limit to at least ₹3 lakh (from the current ₹1.5 lakh under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act) to boost investments and increase tax savings for individual taxpayers. The Finance Ministry has already started the Budget preparation exercise, with different ministries and departments making expenditure projections.

The Budget will be keenly watched by market participants for numbers on key macroeconomic indicators like fiscal deficit.

Citizenship Act stir hits oil, gas output in Assam

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Crude oil and gas production in Assam have witnessed a drastic fall due to the ongoing state-wide protest against the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act, affecting supply of petrol, diesel and LPG in many districts.

The two major PSU fuel producers Oil India Ltd (OIL) and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Sunday said their gas output have totally stopped, while oil production is down by over 75 per cent after protests erupted in the State. "Our gas production has completely stopped. In the crude oil segment, we were producing 9,000 tonnes per day, which came down to just 1,000 tonnes," a senior official from the OIL told PTI from its field headquarters at Dulaijan in upper Assam. The company is operating only around 50 wells out of its about 400 oil and gas producing wells, he added.

The crude supply to Digboi refinery has gone down to 800 tonnes instead of 1,800 tonnes of daily plan, while the same to Numaligarh refinery has totally stopped, he said.

"Besides, drilling of our wells has fully stopped for the last six days. Our oil collection stations have also been shut by people protesting against the

amended Citizenship Act. "We have not been able to send gas to our clients like NEPCO, Namrup Thermal, BCPL and Assam Gas Company," the official said.

He also added that filled LPG cylinders and tankers are lying in OIL terminals as vehicle transport has come to a halt, thereby adding a risk factor to the terminals. "Keeping LPG inventory is always dangerous because of its highly flammable character," he said. On Saturday, the OIL appealed to people of the state in local papers to allow it to carry out day-to-day operations, which the firm said, have been "severely impacted". An official of the ONGC said that its daily oil output has fallen to 1,650 tonnes from 2,200 tonnes.

"Our gas production has completely stopped. Drilling facilities have also come to a halt after the protests started. The situation is grim as our central tank can stock fuel only for 3-4 days," he added.

The PSU major Indian Oil Corporation said vehicle fuel and LPG supply in Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Golaghat and Jorhat districts in upper Assam have been severely affected. "As per our information, petrol depots in these five districts have dried up. LPG distribution is also affected as

transporters are not able to send their trucks," IOC Chief General Manager (IndianOil-AOD) Uttiya Bhattacharyya told PTI. However, he said that fuel supply in other districts of Assam and neighbouring states are not affected as the company is sending tankers with police escorts. "The Guwahati and Bongaigaon refineries are functioning normally. All our tankers and trucks are moving under heavy police protection and we are not taking chances," Bhattacharyya said.

A Numaligarh Refinery spokesperson said that their employees could not go to the plant from the township as their vehicles were torched a few days ago. An official of the state-run power major NTPC's Bongaigaon plant said that coal from Margherita mines in Tinsukia district is not reaching the plant.

"However, our production is not affected as we also get coal from Raniganj in West Bengal," she added.

Violent protests had erupted in the city and other parts of the state earlier this week after the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was passed in Parliament, with agitators engaging in pitched battles with the police, forcing the administration to impose curfew.

Centre likely to sell 28% stake in BEML through strategic disinvestment

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Centre is likely to sell 28 per cent of its stake in BEML Ltd through strategic disinvestment and retain 26 per cent after the dilution of its shareholding in the public sector undertaking, a senior company official said.

The Government currently holds 54.03 per cent stake in the diversified engineering company.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in October, 2016 had given an in-principal approval for strategic disinvestment of 26 per cent equity shares in BEML Ltd.

"The Government will divest 28 per cent of its stake in the company through strategic disinvestment and there is no plan to demerge the business verticals," a senior company official told PTI.

The Centre has already "initiated preparatory work" for the disinvestment, he said.

BEML, a mining equipment maker, has diversified into manufacturing of rail coaches and defence production that already accounts for almost half of its current topline, the official said.

"There are private sector players who are into diversified engineering including defence

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in October, 2016 had given an in-principal approval for strategic disinvestment of 26 per cent equity shares in BEML Ltd

but the number of such large corporate is not many," he said.

The government has set an all-time high disinvestment target of ₹1.05 lakh crore, up from ₹90,000 crore projected in the Interim Budget 2019-20 in February.

In 2018-19, the Centre raised ₹84,972 crore from CPSE disinvestment, while in 2017-18, the figure was ₹1,00,056 crore.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has recently approved strategic disinvestment of its equity shares in five PSUs - BPCL, Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, Tehri Hydro Development Corporation and North Eastern Electric Power Corporation.

CAIT urges Govt to take action against e-commerce firms flouting FDI policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traders' body CAIT on Sunday urged the government to take action against e-commerce companies flouting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms and indulging in unfair practices.

Terming such firms "global economic terrorist" and "economic intruders, tax offenders and policy & law violators", the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) in a letter sent to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal demanded early enforcement of e-commerce policy and national retail policy.

It also called for constituting an e-commerce ombudsman and a Retail Regulatory Authority.

CAIT also criticised the Ministry of MSME's reported move to join hands with some prominent e-commerce companies for onboarding of small retailers on their platforms.

This is highly deplorable and the traders of the country will not accept such collusion with these firms, it added.

Their business model is greatly hampering 'Make In India' program as domestic producers are unable to compete with their predatory pricing and deep discounting tactics, CAIT said.

Mobile handset import duty may be kept at 20% in Budget

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is unlikely to increase the basic customs duty on import of mobile handsets from 20 per cent in the upcoming budget, according to official sources. No proposal was under consideration to increase duty, said the sources. The import of mobile phones (push button types) decreased to \$400 million in 2018-19 from \$935 million in 2019-18. Smartphone imports have also fallen from \$2,602 million in 2017-18 to \$1,216 million in 2018-19.

The production of mobile handsets has gone up from ₹18,900 crore (six crore units) in 2014-15 to ₹1,70,000 crore (29 crore units) in 2018-19, as per the commerce ministry figures.

Almost all foreign mobile phone makers — Vivo, Oppo, Nokia, Samsung and Xiaomi — have set up units in India and are manufacturing handsets and not just assembling.

According to Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Apple Inc, world's largest and most advanced telecom tech firm, has started making its latest iPhone XR in India and is also expanding operations.

In the budget 2018-19, the basic customs duty was

increased from 15 per cent to 20 per cent on cellular handsets. Handset makers three years ago had suggested imposition of duties to thwart imports of electronic products, beginning from mobile phones to its components to help build local capacities to generate volumes and exports.

The government thus imposed basic customs duty of up to 15 per cent on imports of more than half a dozen components and 20 per cent duty on fully-made phones.

In the last few years, the tariff structure has been rationalised to promote domestic manufacturing of electronic goods, including cellular handsets. Specified capital goods for manufacture of mobile handsets are permitted for import at the zero duty. To promote domestic value addition in mobile handsets and their sub-assemblies/parts manufacturing, a phased manufacturing programme was notified. As a result, India rapidly started attracting investments into this sector and significant manufacturing capacities have been created during the past four years.

The Government has permitted 100 per cent FDI for manufacture of mobile handsets and their sub-assemblies/parts.

Over 14K prosecutions withdrawn under Companies Act

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Sunday said more than 14,000 prosecutions have been withdrawn under the Companies Act as it undertook various steps to improve the ease of doing business in the country, including de-criminalisation of various penal provisions under this law.

Listing out the measures taken, the corporate affairs ministry said it has set up the Central Registration Centre for name reservation and incorporation of companies and LLPs within 1-2 days as opposed to an average of at least 15 days earlier.

"During the last three years more than 1,25,000 companies have been incorporated every year in the country in this manner, as compared to 50-60,000 companies in earlier years," the ministry said in a release.

Among others, the ministry has made the process transparent and non-discretionary for dematerialisation of securities of unlisted public

companies. It noted that "more than 14,000 prosecutions under the Companies Act, 2013" have been withdrawn and that second phase of de-criminalisation of penal provisions under the law has been initiated.

As part of de-criminalisation of technical and procedural violations under companies law and reducing the burden on criminal courts as well as the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), the government has shifted 16 offences sections to monetary penalty regime.

India has improved its ranking on the World Bank's 'Doing Business 2020' report, moving up 14 positions to the 63rd spot.

As per the latest report on the Resolving Insolvency Index, India's ranking jumped 56 places to 52nd in 2019 from 108th in 2018, the release said.

"Recovery rate increased from 26.5 per cent in 2018 to 71.6 per cent in 2019 and time taken in recovery improved from 4.3 years in 2018 to 1.6 years in 2019," it added.

Air India mulls launching Mumbai-London Stansted service

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai: Disinvestment-bound national carrier Air India is mulling launching a flight service to London Stansted from the country's financial capital, a senior airline official said. Air India currently operates a flight to Stansted from Amritsar. It also has operations to London Heathrow from Mumbai.

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic are the two other airlines flying to London from Mumbai. Air passenger traffic on Mumbai-London route has spiked 25 per cent in the last five years. It is expected to go up by 27 per cent this fiscal following the resumption of services on the route by Virgin Atlantic in October, despite the grounding of Jet Airways which used to have three daily flights to London Heathrow from the city.

"There is a need for more traffic to London region. However, due to the slot constraint issues at the London Heathrow, we are not able to add new flights on the Mumbai-London route. PTI

SBI may pay Essar lenders today as ArcelorMittal pays up

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

The State Bank of India (SBI), the lead banker of the bankrupt Essar Steel, is likely to settle dues of other lenders as it received ₹40,000 crore on Friday from ArcelorMittal, which is going to takeover the company bringing to an end to the much-prolonged resolution process.

The SBI may settle the dues of all the other lenders on Monday.

The development followed the tabling of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019, in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, which also provides for protection of buyers from criminal proceedings against previous promoters of the bankrupt firm.

ArcelorMittal had kept the promised ₹42,000 crore in an escrow account, but didn't release it immediately after the Supreme Court's order in the case last month, as the company wanted immunity for Essar Steel's assets from probe against its previous promoters.

The SBI had the largest exposure to Essar Steel of over ₹13,000 crore, while the amount approved by the committee of creditors (CoC) stood at ₹12,161 crore. The other lenders of Essar Steel included IDBI Bank, Canara Bank and Punjab National Bank.



Both ArcelorMittal and SBI, however, are yet to respond to questions sent by IANS.

As per the resolution proposal, banks would recover over 90 per cent of their claims against Essar Steel, amounting to over ₹40,000 crore. The operational creditors would initially get ₹196 crore, and another ₹1,000 crore later, allowed by the CoC, taking the total repayment to ₹1,196 crore.

The resolution of Essar Steel can be marked as a land-

mark in the 3-year-old Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). A major roadblock in the resolution was removed by the Supreme Court on November 15 as it set aside the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal's (NCLAT) ruling that provided for equal distribution of proceeds between financial and operational creditors.

The Essar case, which was among the first 12 cases to be referred by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for resolution, faced several hurdles as its promoter Prashant Ruia also tried to bid for the company and moved the appellate tribunal for rejection of the ArcelorMittal's ₹42,000 crore bid.

Positive momentum in market to continue post US-China trade deal, say analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Equity markets are expected to sustain their positive momentum this week after the US and China reached their much-awaited trade deal, analysts said. The US-China trade truce and Boris Johnson's win in the UK general elections drove global markets higher late last week. The US and China have suspended additional tariffs on each other's goods after reaching a 'phase one' trade deal after prolonged negotiations.

"The recent developments on the global front have subsided the fear of prolonged crisis and that cheered the participants across the world markets including ours. And, we feel the positive momentum to extend further in the coming week too," said Ajit Mishra, VP -Research, Religare Broking.

The current market momentum can sustain this week as well, provided there is more clarity on the US-China trade settlement, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head -Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

China suspends planned tariffs on US goods

AFP ■ BEIJING

Beijing suspended additional tariffs on US products that had been due to kick in on Sunday, after Washington and Beijing announced a major thaw in their trade war Friday.

China will suspend the planned addition of 10 percent and 5 per cent tariffs on some US imports, and "continue to suspend additional tariffs on US-made autos and spare parts", China's finance ministry announced Sunday.

The move follows US President Trump's cancellation of new tariffs on Chinese products as part of a "phase one" trade deal.

China's commerce ministry said on Friday it had agreed with the US a mini-deal that includes a progressive rollback of tariffs and the protection of intellectual property rights.

The two sides have yet to sign the agreement, which represents a major breakthrough in the 21-month standoff between the world's two largest economies.

Housing sales may rise marginally by 4% in 2019: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales are estimated to rise by mere 4 per cent to 2.58 lakh units across seven major cities during this calendar year on subdued demand because of liquidity crunch and overall economic slowdown, according to property brokerage firm Anarock.

"Indian real estate was devoid of any appreciable forward momentum in 2019. Dwindling consumption, lacklustre investment appetite and the global slowdown overshadowed all possibilities for growth," Anarock Property Consultants Chairman Anuj

Puri said. India's GDP growth rate slumped to a six-year low of 4.5 per cent in Q2 FY20.

In its yearly round-up for the real estate sector, Anarock said that collectively, all four quarters of 2019 are likely to see housing sales of 2,58,410 units (assuming 56,200 units in Q4 2019) as against 2,48,300 units sold in entire 2018.

Sales were better in the first half of this year but demand fell in the third quarter. Anarock tracks seven major cities — Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), National Capital Region (NCR), Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.

First-time homebuyers were given further tax deductions (now amounting to ₹3.5 lakh in a year) on interest amount of home loans below ₹45 lakh availed within FY 2020-end

"The real estate sector's performance — a reliable barometer of India's overall economic health — painfully reflected the macro-economic state of affairs. The liquidity crisis did not relent and dented any 'real' growth during the year," Puri said.

"Multiple developers fell off



the grid while others still struggle to stay viable. However, strong players with healthy balance sheets — in many cases diversified beyond real estate — sailed through 2019 and recorded decent housing sales and revenue growth," he added.

For the housing sector, 2019 was a non-event in terms of sales growth and investor interest.

"Sentiments remained subdued, sustaining almost solely on end-user activity focused on ready-to-move-in or almost-complete homes. Branded developers gained ground, with some listed players performing

exceptionally well on sales and commensurate revenue growth," he said.

For the housing sector, Puri said the only light at the end of the dark financial tunnel was the announcement of the alternative investment fund (AIF) of ₹25,000 crore to facilitate the completion of stuck affordable and mid-segment homes.

In fact, affordable housing remained upbeat in 2019 thanks to multiple government sops throughout the year.

amount of home loans below ₹45 lakh availed within FY 2020-end.

Luxury and ultra-luxury segments remained limited to end-user interest, with no serious investor activity.

Co-living and student housing gained momentum during the year.

In the organised housing brokerage business, Noida-based Investors Clinic, Anarock, News Corp-backed PropTiger, Anil Ambani-led Reliance group-backed Square Yards, Quirk Realty, Gurugram-based 360 Realtors and Wealth Clinic are the leading players.

HONG KONG VIOLENCE BREAKS OUT AGAIN

Many turn out in support of police

AP ■ HONG KONG

Several thousand people, some smacking heart signs with their hands, turned out in Hong Kong on Sunday in an unusual display of support for the police force, even as riot officers clashed elsewhere with protesters and pepper-sprayed a crowd.

Competing rallies on Hong Kong Island and wildcat protest actions, including vandalism, by black-clad youths at shopping malls dramatically exposed the deep gulf between pro- and anti-establishment camps carved out by six months of demonstrations that have shaken and split the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Truncheon-wielding riot officers fanned out at a shopping mall where demonstrators spray-painted protest slogans on the polished stone floor and smashed glass panels.

Watched by shoppers, officers pepper-sprayed bystanders and made several arrests, pinning detainees to the floor and marching them away.

Roaming groups of youths in black popped up at other shopping malls, too, shouting slogans.

At one mall, a small group adapted a Christmas carol into a protest song and a woman



Protesters gather during a rally in Hong Kong on Sunday

played "Glory to Hong Kong," a protest anthem, on a harmonica.

The scene was completely different at a waterfront park on Hong Kong Island, where a large crowd showered love on the 30,000-strong police force, broadly criticised as heavy-handed by the protest movement.

The rally echoed the Hong Kong government's view that protesters have become unacceptably violent.

Pro-police demonstrators

described protesters as rioters and terrorists and police officers as gallant heroes. They directed thumbs-up signs and shouted words of thanks at officers who policed the sidelines of the rally.

One woman yelled that they looked handsome in uniform. "I'm not against the protesters. It's OK for them to speak, but in a peaceful way," said Max Cheng, an IT worker who took part.

When mass anti-government demonstrations first erupt-

ed in June against a proposed extradition law, Cheng said she was among the hundreds of thousands who marched.

But she said she later felt repulsed by violence that increasingly accompanied protests. She said she didn't demonstrate again until Sunday, when she came out to support police, who have shot 26,000 tear-gas and rubber-baton rounds and arrested more than 6,000 people during the six months of snowballing protests.

"It has just gone too far," she said. "People are too upset, too divided and very emotional."

Man 'missing' after crossing China bridge checkpoint

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong's immigration department said on Sunday they have received reports a man went missing on a cross-border mega bridge to the gambling hub of Macau that currently hosts a Chinese mainland police checkpoint.

The disappearance first emerged on Saturday when the man's son told local media his father had texted to say he was being detained while passing through an artificial island manned by Chinese police on his way to the semi-autonomous city of Macau. The man, surnamed Chan, was travelling by bus on Friday afternoon along the bridge and tunnel network linking Hong Kong, Macau and mainland city Zhuhai, his son said.

Johnson vows to repay trust of opposition voters

AFP ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Boris Johnson vowed Saturday to repay the trust of former opposition voters who gave his Conservatives a mandate to take Britain out of the European Union next month.

Johnson toured a leftist bastion once represented by former Labour leader Tony Blair in a bid to show his intent to unite the country after years of divisions over Brexit. The northeastern region fell to the Tories in a general election Thursday that turned into a re-run of the 2016 EU membership referendum in which Johnson championed the Brexit cause.

Johnson told cheering campaigners that he understood how difficult it was for traditional Labour voters to switch sides and back his right-wing government.

"I can imagine people's pencils hovering over the ballot paper and wavering before coming down for us and the Conservatives," he said.

"And I want the people of the northeast to know that we in the Conservative party -- and I -- will repay your trust."

The working class north of England dropped its longstanding support for Labour and relegated the century-old party to

its worst finish since before World War II.

Johnson now commands an 80-vote majority in the 650-seat House of Commons -- a margin last enjoyed by the late Tory icon Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

The lead assures Johnson safe passage of his divorce deal with the European Union when he re-submits it to parliament next week.

This would pave the way for

Britain's formal withdrawal from the other 27 EU nations by the January 31 deadline set by Brussels.

The sides would then set off on the tricky task of trying to reach a brand new comprehensive trade agreement by the end of 2020. Failure to meet that deadline -- which Johnson has repeatedly promised not to extend -- would have unknown repercussions for global markets and economic growth.

PM Boris celebrates election win with spicy chicken curry

AP ■ LONDON

Following his landslide victory in the December 12 general election, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson celebrated his win by tucking into a spicy chicken curry made by his girlfriend Carrie Symonds, accompanied by a glass of wine, it was reported on Sunday.

In the December 12 election, Johnson gained a Commons majority of 80, his ruling Conservative Party's largest since 1987, and in contrast, the opposition Labour

suffered its worst election result since the 1930s.

On Friday night, Symonds cooked the spicy dish for an elated Johnson in no.11 Downing Street, *The Sun newspaper* reported. "Boris was exhausted but elated on Friday night - and Carrie treated him by cooking him his favourite chicken curry, nice and spicy the way he likes it," a source said.

This was also the first time he drank alcohol since the election campaign began at the beginning of November.

Longest UN climate talks end with no deal on carbon markets

PTI ■ MADRID

The longest UN climate talks held here ended on Sunday with no deal on carbon markets as sleep-deprived delegates from almost 200 countries, after two weeks of marathon negotiations, failed to come up with more ambitious targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions to fulfil the terms of the 2015 Paris agreement.

The negotiations which extended till Sunday saw no agreement on major issues such as Article 6, loss and damage, and long term finance.

Despite clear warnings from scientists through 2019, record levels of protests and severe climate impacts, the COP25 talks held between December 2 and 13 saw major differences between countries

that are proving hard to resolve.

According to experts, few countries came to this year's talks with updated plans to reach the Paris goals.

The observers blamed G20 countries for the poor outcome.

Leading economies were faulted for their complacency and their failure to deliver more support to vulnerable nations in the face of brutal impacts and push for a tougher collective response in 2020 when new climate plans are mandated under the Paris agreement.

The EU tried to play its role as bridge-builder between developing and developed countries. However, it will take a major diplomatic push and bigger leadership alliance to deliver substantial outcomes at COP26 in Glasgow next year.

COP25's final decision text "re-emphasises with serious concern the urgent need to address the significant gap between the aggregate effect of parties' mitigation efforts in terms of global annual emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020," according to the final draft.

It also "stresses the urgency of enhanced ambition in order to ensure the highest possible mitigation and adaptation efforts by all parties".

Negotiators failed to reach an outcome on carbon markets. In the final hours of negotiations, over 30 governments joined behind the San Jose Principles in an effort to preserve the integrity of carbon market rules and prevent loopholes and the ability for double-counting carbon credits, it said.

14 killed, 18 injured after bus veers off road in Nepal

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

A passenger bus veered off the road and fell some 100 metres along the Araniko Highway in Nepal's Sindhupalchok on Sunday, killing at least 14 people and injuring 18 others.

The bus was heading towards Bhaktapur from Kalinchok in Dolakha district when it skidded off the highway and plunged down from Chha Kilo area, police said.

Three children and 11 adults were killed in the accident, the Kathmandu Post reported, quoting police. "Of them, 12 people died on the spot," police said.

Home food in Iraqi square brings protesters together

AP ■ BAGHDAD

In Baghdad's Tahrir Square, there are the anti-government protesters demonstrating for a better future for Iraq, and there are the volunteers who feed them.

From stuffed lamb and fish, to the giant pots of soups and rice, to the plates of lentils and other beans, there is no shortage of food to go around. Volunteers from the capital and southern provinces cook traditional dishes that reflect the country's rich cuisine and bring protesters together.

Tahrir Square has been the focal point for the protests that have continued to roil Iraq since October 1.

The spontaneous, leaderless demonstrations were organized on social media over long-standing grievances including Government corruption, unemployment and a lack of



A volunteer chef prepares to serve free portions of the popular sweets of Awamah, fried dough balls to protester in the center of Baghdad, Iraq

basic services. For many, the square in central Baghdad has become a miniature model for the kind of state they dream of, where factional and sectarian politics play no part and public services exist.

Services, including the near-constant supply of food, have been integral to keeping people in the square, but vol-

unteers are eyeing a gradual drop in donations with concern.

Iraqis are used to communal meals and many volunteer food. Every year, during the annual Shiite religious commemoration known as Arbreen, volunteers prepare food for pilgrims making their way to their sect's holy shrines in the city of Karbala.

Shortly after the protests started Oct. 1, volunteers began setting up similar tents to cook and distribute traditional Iraqi dishes for the protesters in and around Tahrir Square. "We make it for the hungry people, and people in need here in Tahrir Square," said a woman who gave her name as Um Ammar, which means "Ammar's mother." She is from the southern province of Misan and was cooking Seyyah, a thick mixture of rice flour and water fried on a hot plate. Other popular dishes are lentils and beans; Tepsy, a traditional Iraqi casserole; Dolma, consisting of stuffed cabbage and grape leaves, onions and aubergines cooked in tomato sauce; and Makhlama, a mixture of potato, tomatoes, onion and egg all fried together and put in bread. It is a favorite breakfast for people in Baghdad.

Boko Haram kill 19 Nigeria herders in clashes: Sources

AFP ■ KANO

Boko Haram jihadists burned down 19 cattle herders Saturday in northeast Nigeria, civilian militia sources and residents told AFP on Sunday.

Ethnic Fulani herders, besieged by a spate of armed attacks targeting their cattle, pursued Boko Haram, sparking a fierce gunfight outside Fuhe village, near Ngala close to the border with Cameroon.

"The insurgents killed 19 of the herders in the fight," anti-jihadist militia leader Umar Kachalla told AFP.

Bodies of the slain herders were brought to the police by

militiamen, Kachalla said.

The herders had earlier repelled an attack by Boko Haram fighters who invaded the village to steal livestock, killing one of the militants, Mada said.

The herders then decided to pursue the jihadists and fight them "once and for all", Mada said, but were overwhelmed.

"The herders were subdued by the better armed Boko Haram gunmen," he said.

Jihadists then returned to Fuhe village and burnt homes and food supplies while herds fled, according to Ngala resident Abubakar Yusuf, who saw the dead bodies at the police station.

Tens of thousands evacuated in Italy as WWII bomb defused

AFP ■ ROME

Around 54,000 people were evacuated from the southern Italian city of Brindisi on Sunday as experts worked to defuse a World War II bomb, in the largest operation of its kind in the country, media said.

The British bomb, one-metre (three-feet) long and weighing 200 kilograms (440-pounds), was found on November 2 during work on a cinema.

The device was damaged by the workers' equipment, making the operation more tricky.

All residents within a 1.5-kilometre radius were evacuated, and gas supplies were cut in homes within 500 metres of the site.

Some air traffic and rail services were also suspended.

Singapore targets Opposition party with misinformation law

AFP ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore has ordered an opposition party to correct online posts under a controversial law against misinformation, the first time the legislation has been used against a rival party, ahead of elections expected within months.

The Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), one of a host of small opposition parties in the city-state, was ordered to correct two Facebook posts and an article on its website related to employment issues, authorities said in a press release on Saturday.

The Facebook posts claimed that many Singaporeans had been displaced from white-collar jobs by foreign employees, which the author-

ities said was false.

"These false and misleading statements by the SDP have a singular objective -- to stoke fear and anxiety among local PMETs (Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians). It is important to set the facts straight so that Singaporeans are not misled," the government said on its fact-checking site.

Authorities used the measure twice last month, ordering Facebook to put a correction by a post for the first time, and telling an opposition party member to correct a message.

According to the SDP, Google also cited the new regulation, which prohibits adverts seeking to influence public opinion, when it announced a ban on political ads in Singapore this month.

Military probes possible 'white power' hand signs at Army-Navy game

Washington: US military officials said they are investigating an incident where Army and Navy students used hand signs that can signal white power during a television broadcast.

The symbol was shown by two West Point cadets and a Naval Academy midshipman during festivities televised live by ESPN Saturday before a football game in Philadelphia between the Army and Navy. The gesture resembles the "okay" sign, with the thumb and forefinger touching to form a circle and the remaining three fingers played, pointing upwards. It has only recently become a white supremacist symbol, and was adopted partly because of its ambiguity, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Iran says it's defused 2nd cyberattack in less than a week

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's telecommunications minister announced on Sunday that the country has defused a second cyberattack in less than a week, this time "aimed at spying on government intelligence."

Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said in a short Twitter post that the alleged attack was "identified and defused by a cybersecurity shield," and that the "spying servers were identified and the hackers were also tracked." He did not elaborate.

Last Wednesday, Jahromi told the official IRNA news agency that a "massive" and "governmental" cyberattack also targeted Iran's electronic infrastructure. He provided no

specifics on the purported attack except to say it was also defused and that a report would be released.

On Tuesday, the minister dismissed reports of hacking operations targeting Iranian banks, including local media reports that accounts of millions of customers of Iranian banks were hacked.

This is not the first time Iran says it has defused a cyberattack, though it has disconnected much of its infrastructure from the internet after the Stuxnet computer virus, widely believed to be a joint US-Israeli creation, disrupted thousands of Iranian centrifuges in the country's nuclear sites in the late 2000s.

Tokyo's new stadium: A masterpiece by Japan's Kengo Kuma

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe spoke at Sunday's official completion of the new national stadium, the venue for the opening and closing ceremony of next year's Tokyo Olympics.

It will also host track and field and some soccer.

He could have spoken for anyone who has been inside the creation of Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, whose venue is sure to be up for many design prizes.

"It blends with its surrounding and the natural environment," Abe said, noting it showcased Japan's ties to nature with its use of wood lattice work around the stadium's rim and roof, and earth-tone colours in the seats that are randomly coloured brown, gray, two

shades of green and white. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike pointed out the other strong feature as she spoke.

"This stadium uses a lot of trees in its structure," she said, speaking of the greenery that is everywhere -- from flower planters, to trees and shrubs.

Although Tokyo is densely urban, it is also dotted with many parks and green areas. The stadium works off that theme, making sure it is functional and linked to nature.

A walkway on the fifth level is called the "Grove of the Sky."

It's about 30 meters (100 feet) above street level and runs 850 meters (1/2 mile) around the entire circumference of the stadium. It's lined with benches, flowers and trees. A stroll offers a breathtaking view of Tokyo, and on a

clear day Mt. Fuji is visible to the west.

Makoto Sato, a spokesman for the Japan Sport Council, a national government body that built the venue, said the walkway will be open to the public on days when there are no events at the Olympics.

"We have tried to emphasize all four seasons and people can use it around the year and enjoy it," he said.

The stadium seating rises in a steep gradient from the field level and the nine-lane track, getting steeper the higher it goes.

The colours of the seats also get lighter the higher up you go with more brown seats near the bottom -- the earth -- and more green, gray and white near the top. "Because of the gradient, it creates an atmosphere where

people can feel close," said Takeo Takahashi, another Japan Sport Council spokesman.

The stadium is sure to be the centerpiece of the 2020 Olympics, built at a cost of 156.9 billion yen, about USD 1.43 billion at the present exchange rate.

The capacity for the Olympics will be 68,000 and can be expanded later to 80,000. Tokyo's 1964 Olympics left behind several architectural jewels, the most famous of which was Kenzo Tange's Yoyogi National Stadium.

It was the swimming venue in '64 -- American swimmer Don Schollander won four gold medals there -- and will host handball this time, and badminton and wheelchair rugby at the Paralympics. The new stadium also feature items from the old nation-

al stadium, which was razed in 2015.

The most prominent are two mosaic-tile murals featuring the Greek goddess Nike and Nomino Sukune, a legendary sumo wrestler. They are located at the Aoyama Gate entrance.

The venue will be open to the general public on December 21, which will also feature a visit by eight-time Olympic gold medalist Usain Bolt. The first real event will be January 1, 2020 with the Emperor's Cup, the championship of the Japan football league. Governor Koike noted that the Olympics open in just over seven months -- July 24, 2020.

"I can already envision the scene where the athletes are sprinting on this field and spectators are cheering for them in this stadium," she said.



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Minister for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games Seiko Hashimoto, Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Kazuyoshi Akaba, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike and Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Vice President Toshiaki Endo attend the construction completion ceremony of the New National Stadium on Sunday

Trend
Blazer

I don't follow any particular plan: Anil

At 62, ANIL KAPOOR's fitness level serves as a goal for youngsters. He is counted among the fittest actors in the industry and is also enthusiastic about yoga and weight training.

Opening up on his fitness secret, he said: "My trainer keeps changing my workouts so that my body doesn't get too comfortable in any one thing. But the idea is to have a good balance between cardio and weight training."

On his diet routine, the actor commented, "I don't follow any particular plan. I just eat what feels right for my body, and that's usually healthy and simple food."

The actor rose to stardom in the eighties when fitness was not a priority for actors. Quizzed if today's generation of actors is more conscious about health and fitness, the actor smiled and replied: "That's a fair assumption. Today's youth are very knowledgeable about health & fitness."



I am very lucky to have a team which doesn't leave my side. They are very hardworking. I never have to

worry about certain things which can really derail any actor from focusing on giving their 100 per cent in acting. They also ensure that nothing distracts me. More than me, they have a professional attitude towards everything.

—Aparshakti Khurrana



Quirking up the promotional game for their forthcoming film *Good Newwz*, actors AKSHAY KUMAR and DILJIT DOSANJH tried the labour pain test to understand what expecting mothers go through during child birth.

Akshay shared a video on Instagram where he and Diljit are trying the test.

He wrote: "Good Newwz... A small step to understand what mothers go through by Diljit Dosanjh and me. Respect to all the mummies out there, delivering #GoodNewwz is harder than anyone can imagine!"



Ryan resembles Kate Beckinsale

Actor RYAN REYNOLDS says his resemblance to actor Kate Beckinsale is something that he has heard about for a long time.

The 43-year-old Reynolds revealed that he was aware of the talk about his resemblance to Beckinsale during an appearance on a show.

"It is like looking in a mirror," Reynolds joked, adding of the gown Beckinsale was wearing in a clip the show displayed of the actor. "I mean, I was going to wear that today!" he quipped.



In October, Beckinsale also talked about the uncanny resemblance to Reynolds while on a show.

OVER THE BOUNDARY

Sports writing has evolved over the years and inspirational stories now make for an independent literary genre, says CHAHAK MITTAL

Cricket, as often said, is nothing less than a religion in India. And this is reflected not just in the fan-following that the cricketers command but even in sports literature. Be it *Wizards: The Story of Indian Spin Bowling* by Anindya Dutta, Sujit Mukherjee's *Autobiography of an Unknown Cricketer*, *Pundits From Pakistan* by Rahul Bhattacharya, *Azhar* by Harsha Bhogle, *Swami and Friends* by RK Narayan, Ramachandra Guha's *States of Indian Cricket*, there have been numerous books on the sport in India.

Other disciplines, now boosted by international wins, have equally inspirational stories. This is the gap that the Ekamra Sports Literature Festival is trying to bridge. Shireen Sethi, founder-director of the festival, said that this was the main topic of debate at this festival — Why so many books on cricket and none on other sports? She said, "We cannot even blame the writers and publishers for giving us so many books on cricket because it sells the most, especially in India. But this is why this festival was conceptualised to also make all kinds of sports and sports stories a part of mainstream literature."

The festival, that concluded yesterday, also witnessed the first-ever sports book awards in six categories — Autobiography of the Year, Biography of the Year, (authorised or unauthorised), Cricket Book of the Year, Outstanding Sports Book Award, Best Sports Book Publisher and Sports Book of the Year.

Another reason which made the festival relevant was that the depiction of sports in literature, however engaging, never finds the same resonance as a film. Case in point, *Lagaan* (2001) probably the first film, which documented the history of cricket in India. Through the film, the



audience realised how Indians had struggled to defeat Britishers in a game they barely knew. For them, it was like a war and the only way was to save their hard-earned crops and money. The film became a national favourite. On the contrary, a similar reference in Ramachandra Guha's *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, which presents the history of how cricket became an Indian sport, does not feature anywhere in the consciousness of Indians.

Shireen said that while conceptualising it, many sports authors, journalists and publishers agreed that writing a book is one thing and getting recognition or finding visibility is another and much tougher, which is why "we wanted to create a platform for sports writers to talk and give them more visibility in terms of readership."

Author Kristen Worley, whose book, *Women Enough*, was released in India at the festival, talked about how sports literature and writing have changed over time and said, "I think it has evolved greatly in the past several years. From the printed glossy sports editions to digital publication, the publishing world is increasingly investing in the human stories of the 'athlete experience'. However, books



always reveal more. They not only talk about the life of an athlete or a sportsperson, but also illustrate his/her relationships, the 'ins and outs' of career and develop a real authentic voice and a tactile and unique relationship between the reader and him/her. Today, unlike earlier times, magazine publications and digital stories only provide the 'high-

lights, whereas the book format is able to reveal intimate details of an athlete — on and off the field. The crucial aspects of the athlete's career are missed in these highlights which also means that his/her hard work and struggles go unrecognised."

Journalist and author Tim Wigmore, whose *Cricket 2.0* was also released at the festival, said, that it's very obvious in case of journalism that sports writing has

evolved manifold with simultaneous focus on statistics. "These are not a replacement for human interest stories but a supplement to them. I think modern fans are very curious and demand more from sports writing, which is making it grow," added he.

His book talks about how Twenty20 changed the face of cricket over the years. He told us the reason for writing the book. "Since its initiation in 2003, Twenty20 has upended the norms in cricket and turned what was an old, traditional game on its head. We wanted to

understand how and why it has become the most popular format of the sport, take a step back and understand the journey we have been on and where we could be headed next. We wanted to read a book telling this story. And we couldn't find it, so we thought writing it would be the next best thing," he said.

This was also the focus of what Wigmore talked about at the event where he said, "There are many ways in which T20 has changed cricket both on and off the field — encompassing everything from the rise of club cricket, hyper-commercialisation and cricket as entertainment. It has also changed the market for this sport, creating certain tensions. This festival is a great way to connect with those interested in sport on a deeper level and generate stimulating debate."

So how can we involve sports literature in education? Apart from RK Narayan's *Swami and Friends*, there is no other prominent Indian author's sports fiction that is a part of literature courses in graduation colleges. Shireen said, "For that, universities need to introduce writing courses like the ones in the US, especially Columbia, which is famous for its creative writing. I think it's time we take sports writing seriously like the rest of the arts."

Kristen added, "The festival is vitally important as it can encourage more people to tell stories and even hear the authentic voice of athletes who are willing to share their tales. It can broaden the understanding and create a system that supports sportspersons and make their stories of victory as well as struggle more inclusive."

While most of them would argue that sports is something that is best experienced live or visually rather than being read, she argued, "There is something very powerful about the written word as it is limitless and draws on our imagination with no restrictions, whereas the lived experience is limited to that moment in real-time."

Wigmore disagreed too, "It has never been an either or. The best sports writing can enhance our enjoyment of what we see live on the field of play, providing a deeper perspective and way to appreciate the sport. Indeed, with relentless coverage, I'd say the benefits of this deeper perspective through writing are greater than ever."

TECH TALK

The dominant shift

Here's how streaming and #MeToo shaped TV decade of change



Game of Thrones was both an unprecedented achievement and old-school role model in the TV decade that's rolling its final credits. Instalments of the elaborately produced hit were doled out one at a time by an established outlet, premium cable channel HBO. That was standard TV operating procedure until, suddenly, it wasn't. The new era arrived in 2013 when a full season's worth of *House of Cards* popped up amid Netflix's on-demand movies and old TV shows.

The drama's unexpected home appeared simply to be an option to the 500-channel universe born in the 1990s. But *House of Cards* foreshadowed a streaming gold rush and volume of programming dubbed Peak TV in 2015 — and with no drop in altitude in sight.

The result — nothing is the same, whether it's how much television we consume; how and where we do it; who gets to make it, and the level of respect given the creatively emboldened small screen. We don't just watch TV, we binge it until we're bleary-eyed if not sated. We still change channels with a remote control, but more often we're logging in to watch shows on our phones or other devices and on our schedules, not network-dictated appointment TV.

A comic strip, *Zits*, recently summed up the current reality in three panels. "What's on?" a father asks his teenage son, who's sitting cross-legged in front of a TV set and is bracketed by a smart phone on one side and a laptop on the other. "Everything ever videotaped, filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise documented whenever I want to watch it," the teen answers, nonchalantly tossing popcorn into his mouth. "I miss television," the downcast dad tells his wife.

ALL HAIL STREAMING

Generational nostalgia aside, consumers have embraced the change in their media world, said Robert Thompson, director of Syracuse University's Bleier Center for Television & Popular Culture. "This was the decade that streaming became for many, many people the dominant way in which they watch television," said Thompson. It's a rapid shift that bears little relation to the previous entertainment industry revolu-

tion, cable TV.

Only about a quarter of the US homes had cable in 1980 despite its availability since the mid-20th century. While growth finally exploded in the 80s, it wasn't until the tail end of the 1990s and the arrival of HBO's *The Sopranos* and *Sex and the City* that premium cable received critical praise and honours, Thompson said.

In contrast, it took less than a decade for leader Netflix to skyrocket from about 12 million US subscribers at the decade's start to 60 million this year and 158 million worldwide. The streamer reportedly lavished \$15 billion on programming for 2019 alone, and earned buzz with series including *The Crown*, *Stranger Things*, and *Orange is the New Black*. Even major films, among them Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman*, are making themselves at home on Netflix while still in theatres.

Others in the fray include Amazon Prime Video, although "streaming wars" became the aggressive phrase applied to the increasingly competitive marketplace. With newly emboldened (and sometimes mega-expanded) media companies intent on getting a piece of the streaming action, there was a growth surge that won't abate in the new decade.

Apple TV Plus launched on November 1 with Oprah Winfrey and Steven Spielberg among its

first wave of producers, and was quickly followed by Disney Plus. The latter has a storehouse of Disney movies and TV shows to draw on, along with acquired properties from Marvel Entertainment and Lucasfilm and its *Star Wars* franchise.

While cord-cutting became a quest for viewers seeking to shed hefty cable bills, there is still a price tag for the gusher of riches, as much as \$14.99 monthly for HBO Max alone. A bonus for viewers as they sort through the competing options — more programming doesn't just mean more of the same.

VARIETY STORE

If retailers can provide every type of yogurt known to humanity, why can't TV take the same eclectic approach? It has in the past 10 years, as the increasing demand for content and the growth of niche programming created opportunities for diverse and candid voices. Ongoing efforts by advocacy groups also contributed to the gradual but unmistakable shift.

Ryan Murphy, already established as a successful producer with *Nip/Tuck* and *Glee*, exercised his clout to make FX's *Pose*, set in the LGBTQ ballroom culture scene of the 1980s and 90s. Its star, Billy Porter, became the first openly gay man to win the best actor Emmy.

Even mainstream broadcasting expanded its field of vision, with ABC the first network in 20 years to air an Asian American family sitcom, *Fresh Off the Boat*, ending this season. Nahnatchka Khan was its executive producer, one of the women who gained prominence behind the camera in a sector long dominated by men.

African American women took the spotlight in creator-star Issa Rae's *Insecure*, while Jenji Kohan's *Orange is the New Black* featured characters notable for their ethnic, sexual and class diversity. Some established female producers further cemented their success. Shonda Rhimes added *Scandal* and *How to Get Away with Murder* to her body of work, with the latter's star, Viola Davis, becoming the first African American to win a best drama actress Emmy. Ava DuVernay, already a filmmaking force, spearheaded *When They See Us* and *Queen Sugar*.

Reese Witherspoon, adding producing to her portfolio, made good on her vow to bring strong female characters to the screen with the hit series *Big Little Lies* and *The Morning Show*.

Statistics confirm the anecdotal evidence. Across all TV platforms in 2017-18, women accounted for a historic high of 31 per cent of those working in key behind-the-scenes jobs including directors, writers and editors, according to research by San Diego State University's Center for the Study of Women in Television & Film.

While television moved toward better reflecting the world at large, it was forced to look inward as well.

#METOO FALLOUT

Revelations of sexual misconduct hit the TV industry hard and with more lasting effect than any other sector of Hollywood, even compared to producer Harvey Weinstein's fall from filmmaking heights. Two of media's top power-brokers were brought down in the #MeToo era — Les Moonves and Roger Ailes.

Top-tier actors also lost their jobs, including Jeffrey Tambor of *Transparent* and Kevin Spacey of *House of Cards* and Louis CK, whose TV projects included *Louie*, which he starred in and produced. —AP

WEBBED



THE GIFT

A painter in Istanbul embarks on a personal journey as she unearths universal secrets about an Anatolian archaeological site and its link to her past. Starring Beren Saad, Mehmet Günsür and Metin Akdülger, season 1 releases on December 27 on Netflix.



CRASH LANDING ON YOU

A paragliding mishap drops a South Korean heiress in North Korea and into the life of an army officer, who decides he will help her hide. Created by Lee Jeong-hyo and Park Ji-eun, starring Hyun Bin, Son Ye-jin and Seo Ji-hye, the show releases on December 21 on Netflix.



AFTER THE RAID

A large immigration raid in a small town leaves emotional fallout and hard questions for its church-goers about what it means to love thy neighbour. The documentary film release on December 19 on Netflix.

Teaching at a Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) school has always filled me with a sense of purpose, joy and accomplishment. With every transfer, the experience of mentoring a new set of students has thrown up rich learnings. My stint at Subhash Nagar BMC School in Mumbai's Chembur suburb was no different. If there were challenges, then there were good times too.

I can still recall the day I took charge of the seventh graders as their class teacher. It was a bright bunch, and I was informed that they all came from impoverished homes. While the majority was from the nearby Anand Nagar slum, a few lived in the crowded basti across the railway line. Their parents were rag-pickers and usually set out for work before dawn to ensure they were in time to pick up the 'valuable' trash before their 'competitors' get to it. They came back well past noon, only to queue up at the trash dealer's house to earn their daily wage. Left behind to fend for themselves and their siblings, the children doubled up as household help, baby-sitters and chipped in whenever their parents needed them. Most were either too distracted or extremely exhausted to pay attention in class. There was a general sense of indifference towards education. Their parents, unfortunately, just didn't have the time or energy to pay attention to them or to their future for there were more immediate existential challenges that they faced.

But, with over 28 years of teaching experience, I was prepared to engage with my students. During the roll call, I chatted with them as they introduced themselves. Around 10 students were absent that day. Apart from three girls who were visiting their native place and were supposed to be back in school in two or three days, there were six boys, namely, Amol, Krushna, Amit, Pandhari, Prakash and Kishan, who missed the class.

Things quickly fell into a routine and the girls came back as expected. However, the boys continued skipping school. Every day, I thought they would come, only to be disappointed. I felt sad while marking them absent. When a week went by and the six didn't turn up, I decided to visit them in Anand Nagar. As I reached the slum and asked for Amol and Krushna, I was directed towards a gym in a narrow lane. They were surprised to see me but quickly assured me that they would show up in school the next day. They even apologised for not coming earlier. We had a warm interaction and I treated them to *vada pav*.

I went back home peacefully. I thought, perhaps, home visits were the answer to bringing in the absentees. But I was wrong. They didn't show up and I felt let down. I discussed their absence with my class and that's when I got to know their

SHILPA NAIK, a retired teacher at a Mumbai suburb school, transformed the lives of a few students in her class so that they metamorphosed from child labourers into a music band

TRYST WITH TALENT



story. "They are part of *Banjo Party* (musical group). They are called for events and festivals like *Dahi Handi* on *Gokulashstami*, *Navaratri* and birthday parties in the *basti*. They are also called for playing *dhol*," said their friends from Anand Nagar. I learnt that each one earned ₹300 per event, although sometimes they were not paid the entire amount. "They earn and have a good time. Why would they attend the school?" my informants exclaimed.

What did they mean by 'good time', I asked. "Don't tell them that we have told you all this but they smoke, drink and..." they said and started giggling. I was taken aback. My children are into all this? Yes, I considered them 'my children'. They were kids, who had been forced into child labour, they had taken to substance abuse, they were truanting from school and they have a troubled life. They had been deprived of a childhood and parental care. Clearly, they were not afraid to work hard but their circumstances had denied them the chance to shape their life through education. They were carrying the cross of their life on their young shoulders.

But how could I reach out to them, earn their trust and let them know that I cared? These questions troubled me constantly. If I could just get them to come to school, I was sure I could teach them many things. The empty benches scoffed

at me. I was being defeated daily. I realised that these boys needed vocational training more than bookish knowledge. So I came up with a plan to make sure that they got both. I gathered some students and went to meet them again. "How about forming a *Banjo Party* of your own?" I suggested to Amol, Krushna and company. "But how is it possible?" asked Krushna. "You work for someone else and they don't even pay you enough. They avail all the benefits and you get hardly anything in return," I said. "Yes ma'am, but how can we go about it? We don't have enough money to buy musical instruments," he said.

"Let's discuss this in class tomorrow. We will work out a plan," I told them. Amol, Krushna and others were elated and made sure that all six came to school before the first call for morning prayers. "Ms Naik, your 'heroes' have showed up," remarked the other teachers. I felt a sense of satisfaction when I marked 'P' (present) against their names.

The whole class was eager to discuss the formation of the *Banjo Party*. After the prayer, we returned to the class. The boys started off animatedly, "Ma'am, we will have to purchase instruments from Parel and Lalbaug (South Mumbai localities). We have prepared a list of the things we require — instruments

like small and big *dhol*s, *dholki*, sticks, *khanjira*, and also t-shirts and trousers. We've already prepared the budget." The boys were excellent at calculations, I discovered. "We need around ₹6,000," they announced and added, "But we don't have the cash. Making a list is okay but one needs money at the end."

I said, "Don't worry, I will give you the money. You can repay me in instalments. But I have one condition — you have to attend school every day." They agreed readily. The next day, I gave them the start-up money and a day later, they bought the instruments. The group proudly showed off their talent after class while their classmates danced to their tunes.

The boys not only started attending school regularly, they also practised music under a banyan tree near the local railway station. Many of their classmates visited them. I, too, dropped by a few times. As their peers and elders encouraged them, their confidence and self-esteem grew. The 'P' against their names in the roll call shone.

A few days later, the school had been shut for 10 days for Ganesh Chaturthi. When the school reopened, I came back to find a packet of money, a box of sweets and flowers on the table. The beaming *Banjo Party* greeted me. "You don't have to pay me back so soon. Have you received proper

payment?" I inquired.

"Ma'am, during the Ganapati festival, we were invited to play on all 10 days. In fact, we played during the procession on the first day when the Ganapati idol was placed. That honour is normally reserved for a well-known musical party. We have made so much money that even after paying you, each one of us has ₹3,000 left. Additionally, we have kept aside ₹2,000 in the group's joint kitty," they shared with delight.

The boys had brought kilos of *peda*, which were more than enough for the class of 29. Instead of distributing more than one *peda* each, I requested them to cut them into quarters and distribute them to the entire school. "While doing so, please tell them that we are talented businessmen but we are studying, too," I said.

That was one of my most rewarding days in the school. My small experiment had changed the lives of these amazing, gifted boys. From being labelled as 'absentees', 'ruffians' and 'child labourers', they had transformed themselves into shining examples of hard work and enterprise. What's more, they started attending the school regularly.

(The author is a retired BMC teacher. The article has been translated from Marathi by English by Alka Gadgil.)

—Charkha Features

Time to bridge the age gap

Youth should be seen as an effective instrument of social change rather than of conflict, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Most of us are aware about the 'generation gap,' which can be defined as "wide difference in cultural norms between the younger generation and their elders." It can also be described as a situation where the older and younger generation have conflicting views because of a difference in experiences, opinions, habits and behaviour. Though the generation gap is not seen as a serious issue but it often becomes one.

It is a known fact that the youth are filled with energy, stamina, strong will and zest. But certain other valuable characteristics of youth, which can be great tools for social transformation are not fully realised or utilised by the society, as a result of which they get confused and disturbed. One such important personality trait of the youngsters is that they strongly aspire to do something new.

They want to initiate change and are open to new challenges. Hence it is easier for them to adapt to any kind of change as compared to the older generation. The latter is undoubtedly more experienced but most of their ideas have already been applied to real-life situations and they may not have new concepts and enthusiasm to work for a change. So the old order has to transform, giving place to the newer generation who will play an active role in social evolution. It has, therefore, rightly been said that if the youth are awakened, the whole world will follow their lead including the generations that follow their example. They will prepare themselves mentally and physically for the dawn of new era. But have the youth's potential been utilised for national reconstruction so far? Is it given the opportunities and the guidance to fulfill their dreams of taking the world into a new era of peace and prosperity? Well, with reference to our country we can say that the youth is restless and disappointed because it is not provided enough channels for self-expression. Today the youth complains about the society and people in power. It believes that its energies, both mental and physical, are not fully utilised for national development because the older generation denies the young adequate participation, thinking that they are inexperienced and immature. On one hand, the youth says that the "experience" and "maturity" of elders is, in fact, a hindrance in breaking new ground. The need of the hour is to bring forth new initiatives, ideas and innovation. On the other hand, elders feel that the youth is



indifferent to their spiritual heritage which is responsible for the crisis of morals and values. This, in turn, has created an ever-widening emotional gap and an atmosphere of violence in the society.

An impartial analysis of the present Indian conditions would lead us to the conclusion that, to some extent, both sides are right. The more relevant question here is: How can this gap be bridged? Who will work as the link between the two generations? Who will catalyse this change?

Everyone would agree that, to bridge this ever-widening gap between the two generations, the formal and informal educational centres and institutions should inculcate higher principles and ideals among the youth. The institutions should provide a new interpretation of society where there is no violence and everyone lives peacefully in the family of mankind. These educational centres should have people of noble character, pleasing manners and loving demeanour who can utilise the youth's potential and also enable the older generation to contribute in nation building. Unless the youth is given this new vision and co-operation to work towards this goal, the society will remain split by various divisive forces and acts of violence. And the youth will continue to be exploited by various sections of the society for their parochial ends and narrow objectives.

We are aware of the fact that the population of the young is higher than the middle-aged and the elderly. So they should be seen as effective instruments of social change. Otherwise they will drift towards violence and drug abuse which will result in a dark future for our society. Let us, therefore, be wiser to consider our youth to be our strength and prospective nation-builders, for, "the youth is not only the leaders of tomorrow but also the partners of today."



BLOSSOM ALL THE WAY

Now is the time to ensure that your garden is a riot of colour even before spring sets in

Daffodils sitting on a windowsill against a backdrop of white snow make a fragrant and pretty midwinter scene. This picture, with bulbs "forced" for early bloom, takes planning that should start now. Choose plump, fresh-looking bulbs from those now on display at garden centres, hardware stores and supermarkets.

PREP THE BULBS

Unless you buy pre-planted bulbs in pots, you have the choice of growing them in water, pebbles or soil. For growing in water, use special bulb glasses pinched in with a neck to support a single bulb

with its base in the water or support them in a drinking glass with three toothpicks stuck around its side.

Growing bulbs in pebbles is just like growing them in water except the pebbles support them (and you don't get entertained watching the roots grow).

In a flowerpot, plant bulbs shoulder to shoulder in potting soil with their tops level with the soil surface. Once planted, they are ready for the first of four stages of forcing.

FOUR STAGES OF GROWTH

The first stage awakens the flower buds buried within the bulbs and allows for some root growth. Cool temperatures — about eight weeks' worth — are needed to fool the flower buds into feeling that winter is over and it's time to wake up. Provide those temperatures by plunging the containers into holes outdoors, then mulching with

leaves or straw, or by putting containers into an unheated garage or room. No light is needed at this point.

Cold can keep bulbs waiting in Stage One until you are ready to move on. The goal in Stage Two is to slowly draw out the stems, and the way to do this is with a little warmth and a little light. The amount of light that peeks through the drainage hole of a flower pot or a paper cone inverted over your bulb container is about right. After a couple of weeks, depending on the temperature, the bulbs are ready for Stage Three.

In this third stage, we hasten growth along with the warmer temperatures and bright light of a sunny windowsill. A daily turn of the plants toward the light prevents lopsided growth. Be careful not to coax growth along so rapidly that the blossoms blast open and fall apart.

Step Four: beautiful, fra-

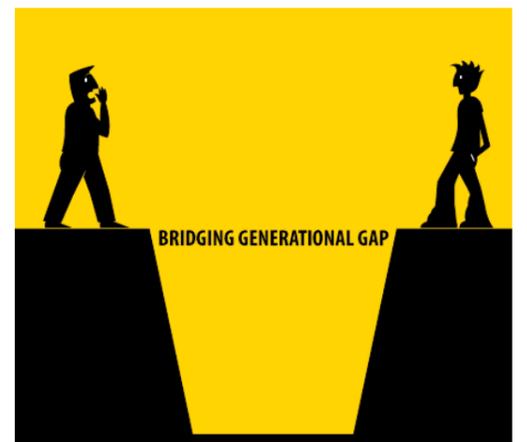
grant blossoms. We want to drag this step out the longest, so keep the bulbs where the light is bright but out of direct sun. If the indoor temperature can be maintained on the cool side, and the air humid, these harbingers of spring provide delight for two weeks or more.

FLOWERS ALL WINTER

With good planning, you can have new pots full of blooms ready to open and waiting in the wings as old blooms fade. Or you could have mixtures of different bulbs, blooming at different times, filling each pot.

Any spring-flowering bulb can be forced indoors, although some are easier than others. Easiest of all are paper-white daffodils. Native to year-round warm climates, they start growth and flower without any cool treatment at all, so they're also the first to bloom.

—AP



The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. —Mahatma Gandhi

BRAIN PROTEIN PROTECTS FROM ALZHEIMER'S

Researchers have found that a protein that regulates white blood cells in the human brain could protect against Alzheimer's disease. The results published in the journal *Communications Biology* suggest that this protein, called CD33, could have important implications in the fight against Alzheimer's disease.

"Immune cells in the brain, called microglia, play a critical role in Alzheimer's disease. They can be harmful or protective. Swaying microglia from a harmful to protective state could be the key to treating the disease," explained study co-author Matthew Macauley, Assistant Professor at University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.

"The fact that CD33 is found on microglia suggests that immune cells can protect the brain from Alzheimer's disease under the right circumstances," said Abhishek Bhattacharjee, first author and postdoctoral fellow in the Macauley lab.

PRESCRIPTION OF ANTIBIOTICS HIGH IN LMICs

Kids in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are receiving an excessive amount of antibiotic prescriptions that could harm the children's ability to fight pathogens as well as increase antibiotic resistance worldwide, warns a new study.

Children in these countries received 25 antibiotic prescriptions through age five, a "remarkable" estimate, given that two antibiotic prescriptions per year is considered excessive in many high-income settings, said the study published in the journal *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*.

"We knew children in LMICs are sick more often, and we knew antibiotic prescription rates are high in many countries. What we did not know was how these elements translate into actual antibiotic exposure and the results are rather alarming," said lead author of the study Gunther Fink from Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH), Basel, Switzerland.

WHY CASUAL DRINKERS TURN INTO ALCOHOLICS

Don't just blame it on his friends if your husband has suddenly started drinking more in recent times.

Scientists have found neurons that might be responsible for triggering sudden uptick in alcohol consumption.

Researchers have long known that central nucleus of the amygdala in brain (CeA) plays a role in behaviours related to alcohol. A team at University of North Carolina's school of medicine have found a specific neural circuit that, when altered, caused animal models to drink less alcohol.

"The fact that these neurons promote reward-like behaviour and that activation of these drive alcohol drinking in animals without extensive prior drinking experience, suggests that they may be important for early alcohol use," said senior author Zoe McElligott, assistant professor of psychiatry and pharmacology. "By understanding the function of this circuit, we can better predict what happens in the brains of people who transition from casual alcohol use to subsequent abuse of alcohol," professor added.

EXERCISE WON'T HELP WOMEN WITH MIGRAINE

Despite doctors recommending regular aerobic exercise to prevent migraine, physical exercise can actually be a trigger of migraine attacks for most women because of "anxiety sensitivity" in them, find researchers. "Anxiety sensitivity" refers to one's fear of experiencing anxiety arousal due to harmful physical activity, cognitive and socially-observable consequences, may be related to physical activity (PA) avoidance in migraine patients.

Migraine affects around 10-15 per cent of the population around the globe and among its most common diagnosis criteria include a throbbing, unilateral head pain, hypersensitivity to lights, sounds, odour, and aggravation by activity.

The researchers assessed 100 women with probable migraine, who filled an online survey covering anxiety sensitivity scores, intentional avoidance of moderate and vigorous physical activity (PA) in the past month, as well as the self-rated perception that exercise would trigger a migraine attack and worse migraine symptoms.

SALIVA TEST DETECTS MOUTH CANCER EARLY

A non-invasive saliva test can detect human papilloma virus-16, the strain associated with oropharyngeal cancer (OPC), showing promise for earlier and easier detection of mouth and throat cancer, report researchers.

The novel technique detected OPC in whole saliva in 40 per cent of patients tested and 80 per cent of confirmed OPC patients. OPC has an approximate incidence of 1,15,000 cases per year worldwide and is one of the fastest-rising cancers owing to increasing HPV-related incidence, especially in younger patients.

Cancers that occur in the back of the mouth and upper throat are often not diagnosed until they become advanced, partly because their location makes them difficult to see. "The successful detection of HPV from salivary exosomes isolated by our acoustofluidic platform offers distinct advantages, including early detection and risk assessment," added Dr Huang in a paper published in *The Journal of Molecular Diagnostics*.



Teenager Greenwood rescues Utd in Everton draw

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester Greenwood came off the bench to rescue Manchester United as the teenage striker's late equaliser secured a 1-1 draw against Everton on Sunday.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side fell behind to Victor Lindelof's controversial first half own-goal after United's appeals for a foul on David de Gea were ignored by VAR.

But Greenwood, introduced in the second half, underlined his vast potential with a clinical strike 13 minutes from full-time.

The 18-year-old is the third youngest player to score a Premier League goal at Old Trafford after former United forwards Federico Macheda and Danny Welbeck.

Bradford-born Greenwood, a product of United's youth academy, now has seven goals in his breakthrough season after netting twice in his previous appearance against Alkmaar in the Europa League on Thursday.

This was his second Premier League goal after his strike against Sheffield United in November and his rapid progress is a bright spot in a difficult season for Solskjaer's sixth placed team.

It was fitting that Greenwood scored in the 4,000th senior match in succession in which at least one youth graduate was represented in United's first-team or matchday squad, an extraordinary record stretching back over nine decades.

After their impressive wins over Tottenham and Manchester

City in their last two league games, United's frustrating draw reaffirmed how much improvement is still needed under Solskjaer despite Greenwood's ascent.

For Duncan Ferguson, Everton's caretaker manager, this spirited performance built on the momentum from last weekend's win over Chelsea.

Hit by injuries and illness, Everton avoided losing for the seventh time in their last eight away league matches.

Another of United's home-grown products should have opened the scoring within 20 seconds when Fred's burst into the Everton area ended with Jesse Lingard swivelling onto the loose ball and shooting wide from 10 yards.

Daniel James' blistering pace

was on full display when the winger raced clear for a low drive that flashed wide of the far post, prompting an angry exchange between Everton keeper Jordan Pickford and team-mate Lucas Digne about who was to blame for the break.

FOCUSED AND COMBATIVE

Marcus Rashford tested Pickford with a swerving free-kick, but United—at their best when counter-attacking—were too often forced into slow build-up play that was easy for Everton's well-drilled defence to stifle.

United were losing their grip and it was Everton who took the lead in bizarre fashion in the 36th minute.

When Leighton Baines sent over an inswinging corner, De Gea

came and missed as he tried to punch clear, with the ball bouncing off Lindelof into his own net.

United protested that Everton forward Dominic Calvert-Lewin had fouled De Gea by putting an arm across his face, but although the goal was reviewed by VAR it was allowed to stand.

The farcical goal meant United had failed to keep a clean-sheet in 12 consecutive top-flight matches for the first time since 1971.

United pressed harder after half-time and Luke Shaw drove forward from left-back for a stinging drive that Pickford pushed away to James, who accidentally drove the rebound into Lingard's face.

Everton were far more focused and combative than under the

sacked Marco Silva.

But Solskjaer introduced Greenwood with 25 minutes left and it proved an inspired move.

Greenwood immediately had an effort saved by Pickford and, with United firmly on the front foot, the teenage starlet equalised in the 77th minute.

Picked out by James, Greenwood steadied himself on the edge of the area with a perfect first touch before drilling his low left-foot shot through a crowd of Everton defenders and past Pickford.

In a tense finale, Alex Iwobi almost won it for Everton with a dipping shot that De Gea pushed away before Ferguson hauled off substitute Moise Kean only 18 minutes after putting him on.

Atletico comeback with 2-0 win over Osasuna

IAN S ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid won a La Liga victory against Osasuna as Alvaro Morata and Saul Niguez found the back of the net successfully.

Atletico's victory was postponed by Osasuna goalkeeper Sergio Herrera with some astonishing saves until well into the second half. Particularly on three occasions, Joao Felix's shots seemed unstoppable, but Herrera was like a wall on Saturday night, reports Efe news.

It was not until minute 67 when Atletico's top scorer Morata took a free kick from Kieren Trippier from the right sideline and headed it into the net that the comeback team went ahead 1-0.

The game was all over for Osasuna, because eight minutes later Saul netted the ball making the final score 2-0 at minute 75.

Juve regain top spot

AFP ■ TURIN

Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice as Juventus bounced back from their first defeat of the season to beat Udinese 3-1 and move top of Serie A on Sunday.

Ronaldo struck twice in the first half to make it five goals in four games as champions Juve move one point ahead of leaders Inter Milan ahead of their trip to off-form Fiorentina later on Sunday.

Maurizio Sarri's side had taken just one point from their last two league games, falling 3-1 to Lazio in Rome last weekend after a 2-2 draw against Sassuolo the previous week.

But Portuguese star Ronaldo

tapped in his first after nine minutes at the Allianz Stadium, and burst through to finish off a Gonzalo Higuain cross on 36 minutes.

Leonardo Bonucci sealed the three points just before the break when he headed in from close range.

Ignacio Pussetto pulled a goal back for 17th-placed Udinese four minutes into injury time with his close range effort beating Gianluigi Buffon in the Juventus goal.

Juventus play their final Serie A game before the winter break at Sampdoria on Wednesday, before a rematch against Lazio in the Italian Super Cup in Saudi Arabia next weekend.

Atalanta fell 2-1 at Bologna just days after the Champions League newcomers sealed their place in the competition's last 16 despite losing their first three matches.

Rodrigo Palacio tapped in the first after 12 minutes for Bologna off a rebound after a Riccardo Orsolini effort came off the post.

Andrea Poli nodded in the second eight minutes after the break, before Ruslan Malinovskyi connected with a Musa Barrow cross to pull a goal back on the hour mark.

AC MILAN LACK PARTY SPIRIT

Atalanta failed to take advantage of their numerical superiority



late on, as Bologna played the last five minutes a man down after Brazilian defender Danilo was sent off for two bookable offences.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side are sixth on 28 points, one point off the Champions League places, with European rivals Cagliari, Lazio and Roma still to play this weekend.

AC Milan were held to a goalless draw against Sassuolo at the San Siro as the former European giants marked their 120th anniversary in tepid style.

Theo Hernandez had a goal ruled out after half an hour following a Franck Kessie handball in the buildup, with Rafael Leao hitting the crossbar and the post.

Stefano Pioli's side failed to make it three wins in a row and sit 10th with Sassuolo four places and five points below.

Hellas Verona battled back from three goals down with all three

substitutes scoring in a 15-minute second-half spell to hold Torino 3-3.

Torino had taken a comfortable lead at the Stadio Bentegodi after Christian Ansaldi scored a brace with Alex Berenguer also on target for the visitors.

But the hosts hit back with three goals after 69 minutes from players who all came off the bench.

Giampaolo Pazzini converted a penalty on 69 minutes after Gleison Bremer was deemed to have used his elbow to block the ball.

Pazzini was then involved in the second with Valerio Verre smashing in off a rebound, before Mariusz Stepinski added a third by punching on to a defensive error from Ola Aina to finish off.

Torino are ninth, with Verona two points back in 12th, in the hosts' final match before the winter break.

Tottenham up to fifth after late win at Wolves

AFP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Jan Vertonghen's stoppage time header continued Tottenham's turnaround under Jose Mourinho as Spurs moved up to fifth with a 2-1 win at Wolves.

Mourinho's men were largely outplayed at Molineux, but were ruthless with their chances to inflict Wolves' first league defeat in 12 games.

Adama Traore's spectacular strike had cancelled out Lucas Moura's early opener before Vertonghen stooped to guide home Christian Eriksen's corner.

Spurs can now move into the top

four before Christmas if they beat Chelsea at home next weekend.

That speaks volumes for the impact Mourinho has made in less than a month in charge as Tottenham trailed Chelsea and the top four by 12 points when he was appointed.

Wolves drop to eighth as their longest unbeaten run in the top flight since 1962 came to an end, but there was little more Nuno Espirito Santo's men could have done to at least avoid defeat.

After an industrious start by Wolves, it was Spurs who scored after eight minutes.

Son Heung-min's drive was beaten away by Rui Patrício but the ball

was worked to Moura, who glided into the area before rifling in high from an angle for his third goal in seven games under Mourinho.

Wolves remained undaunted though and after Paulo Gazzaniga gathered Traore's low effort they began to create openings.

Diogo Jota was a menace and it was from his work Raul Jimenez nearly levelled after 26 minutes but his low effort flashed wide.

Soon after Jota was denied by the recovering Davinson Sanchez after the defender's initial mistake allowed the forward through.

Wolves continued to dominate but should have been 2-0 down nine

minutes before the break.

Referee Stuart Attwell played a good advantage after Moura was fouled to allow Eric Dier forward.

He played a cute one-two with Dele Alli to leave the midfielder with just Patricio to beat but his low strike hit the post.

It would have been harsh on Wolves and they continued to push after the break.

Jota failed to turn in Traore's cross and Gazzaniga pushed away Jimenez's shot.

Spurs' defence had lived dangerously, with Vertonghen in particular struggling against the pace of Traore.

Wolves finally got their reward to get their campaign.

Traore had given the visitors problems all game and he made them pay, collecting Jimenez's pass and unleashing a rocket which flew past Gazzaniga from 20 yards.

Tottenham then never looked like restoring their lead before the late drama.

Wolves remained the aggressors and Romain Saiss' glancing header four minutes later forced Gazzaniga into a fine stop.

But Spurs silenced the hosts in the first minute of injury time when Vertonghen nodded in Eriksen's corner.



Mohun Bagan eyeing full points against Kerala

PTI ■ KOLKATA

On a high after thrashing TRAU FC, city giants Mohun Bagan will look to bag full points against Gokulam Kerala in their I-League fixture at Kalyani Stadium on Monday.

The match will be the Mariners penultimate fixture before the high-voltage derby against East Bengal.

Gokulam have an all-win record from their two games so far and look well organised while Bagan redeemed themselves with a 4-0 victory over debutants TRAU FC in their previous game, after failing to register a win in their first two.

They went down 2-4 to Churchill Brothers at home in their second game.

Ugandan frontman Henry Kisekka and Trinidadian striker Marcus Joseph have scored all of Gokulam's three goals so far

and are their standout performers by a mile, while another Trinidadian, Nathaniel Garcia, imposed himself very well in midfield in the second game against Indian Arrows.

Their Spanish coach Fernando Varela, however, refused to read much into Gokulam's recent form and success against their Monday opponents who they had beaten in their only previous encounter this season, in the Durand Cup.

Sharing his thoughts ahead of the game, he said, "Mohun Bagan are a very competitive side with great players and with quality to make a combined game. We must be concentrating for 90 minutes to beat them and we will concentrate on our improvement as a team and how to play a good game. The league has just begun and we must continue to improve."

Confident Punjab FC face Indian Arrows

PTI ■ LUDHIANA

High on confidence after their impressive win over defending champions Chennai City FC in their previous match, Punjab FC will play host to All India Football Federation developmental side's Indian Arrows in an I-League game here on Monday.

The match against the Arrows will be Punjab's third successive match at home, while for the travelling youngsters, it will be their first on the road this season.

Since losing to Churchill Brothers in their season opener in Goa, Punjab have drawn against East Bengal 1-1 before

beating Chennai City 3-1 in a thoroughly impressive performance on December 10 at home.

Reflecting on his side's impressive display, Punjab FC head coach Yan Law said, "Against Chennai, the boys showed good tactical discipline and a fantastic desire to win."

"Even after a late equaliser from Chennai, the lads showed pure class and pulled back two more goals in the dying minutes of the game. I'm very proud of each and every one of them and I know they are capable of doing much more."

He remains wary of the



threat that the Arrows possess and added, "Arrows are a good side who have tremendous quality and potential. They have given both their oppositions, Gokulam and Aizawl a tough time in their first two fixtures."

"This is a team to take very seriously and not underestimate. It is going to be a tough game as they are quite a compact and structured team."

Indian Arrows, on the other hand, have played twice at home and despite showing grit and tenacity came up short against Gokulam Kerala and Aizawl. A positive result against Punjab in an away trip

could serve as a massive boost to get their campaign.

Speaking ahead of the match, head coach Shanmugam Venkatesh said, "We know that Punjab FC won by a good margin against defending champions Chennai City in their last match and their confidence and motivation levels will be high, for sure."

"It will be their third consecutive home match and for us, we are playing away for the first time this season. We have adapted well to conditions so far and the weather has been really good and ideal for playing football. We will give our best in the game."

Caribbeans taste the first blood

Hetmyer, Hope score hundred to guide Windies to 8 wicket win in 1st ODI

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rishabh Pant struck his maiden half-century at M S Dhoni's spiritual home to silence his critics as India shrugged off a poor start to post a challenging 287 for eight in the first ODI against West Indies here on Sunday.

Shreyas Iyer (70 off 88), who is emerging as a solid number four, and Pant (71 off 69) paired up for a 114-run stand for the fourth wicket after India lost opener K L Rahul (6) and skipper Virat Kohli (4) in the seventh over of the innings. It was Iyer's third consecutive half-century.

Rohit Sharma (36 off 56) too struggled on a slow surface before Iyer and Pant resurrected the innings with their gritty partnership.

A quickfire half-century partnership between Kedar Jadhav (40 off 35) and Ravindra Jadeja (21 off 21), who batted ahead of debutant Shivam Dube, provided the thrust in the slog overs.

Left-arm paceman Sheldon Cottrell (2/46 from 10 overs including 3 maidens), Keemo Paul (2/41) and Alzarri Joseph (2/45) were among the wickets for



West Indies' Shimron Hetmyer, left, celebrates with batting partner Shai Hope after scoring a century during the first one day international cricket match

the visiting team.

The home team appeared to be in a spot of bother at 80 for three in the 19th over on a sluggish pitch when Iyer and Pant came together. After taking their time to get going, the two played some splendid shots and were not afraid to hit the ball in the air when the opportunity presented itself.

The fact that the first six of the innings came in the 28th over when Pant smashed offie Roston Chase over mid-wicket was an indicator of the slow proceedings.

Iyer displayed his class as he came up with some lovely cuts against the spinners-Chase and leggie Hayden Walsh. Pant, on his part, showed patience and hit some powerful shots after gaining in confidence and assessing the nature of the pitch.

The two handled the spinners well and hit a six each apart from some well-timed drives.

Walsh, who had bowled impressively in the T20s preceding this series, was not allowed to settle into any rhythm as Rohit first, and then the Iyer-Pant duo went after him. He was taken for 31 runs in 5 overs.

Iyer perished for a well-made 70 with his dismissal coming against the run of play, when his flick landed in the safe hands of Pollard off Joseph's bowling, ending a brilliant 114-run fourth wicket partnership with Pant.

Pant fell going for a big hit, caught by Shimron Hetmyer in the deep of Pollard's bowling. It was a much needed knock for an under-fire Pant, who is seen as

Dhoni's heir apparent.

Then the duo of Jadeja and Jadhav, who both play for Chennai Super Kings under Dhoni in the IPL, joined hands for a crucial 59-run stand for the sixth wicket during the course of which they batted judiciously and ran well between the wickets.

While Jadhav holed out to Pollard off Paul, Jadeja was run out. Jadeja was beaten by a Roston Chase throw but was initially not given out. An appeal by a West Indian fielder resulted in the on-field umpire going upstairs, following which the Indian southpaw was declared out.

India got off to a slowish start as Sheldon Cottrell bowled two maiden overs to start with and Jason Holder did not give away much as the openers Rohit and Rahul chose to play cautiously.

After Rahul's dismissal, Kohli walked in to a roar from the Chepauk crowd and played an imperious on-drive off the fourth ball he faced. In an anti-climax, he fell the next ball, bowled off the inside edge as he tried to run one from Cottrell down to the third-man area.

Rohit Sharma gained in confidence and scored a couple of boundaries including a superb straight drive off Holder in the 10th over. He appeared set for a big score before he hit Joseph's first ball in the match tamely to Pollard at mid-wicket to be dismissed for 36 (56 balls, 6 fours).

There was a moment of mirth for the spectators as a dog entered the field of play in the 26th over with Pant and Iyer at the crease.

ABID SCORES HUNDRED IN DRAWN TEST

AFP ■ RAWALPINDI

Opener Abid Ali became the first batsman to score hundreds on both Test and one-day debuts as Pakistan's first home match in the long form of the game since the 2009 attack on the visiting Sri Lanka team ended in a tame draw against the same opponents Sunday.

On 95, the 32-year-old hit paceman Vishwa Fernando for a boundary and then drove him through cover for two to complete his hundred, raising his hands in jubilation before kneeling on the ground to offer a prayer of gratitude.

His hundred came in 267 minutes, laced with 11 boundaries, and was the highlight of a Test badly affected by bad weather.

Pakistan finished at 252-2, with stylish batsman Babar Azam knocking his third Test century with a boundary off spinner Dilruwan Perera.

Azam ended with 102 not out, which came in 151 minutes of punishing batting spiced by 14 crisp boundaries.

But the day belonged to Abid, one of 15 batsmen to score a hundred on their one-day international debut - against Australia in Dubai in March his year -- since the inception of limited over cricket in January 1971.

None of the others also scored a century on their debut in Test cricket, which started in 1876.

Abid is the 11th Pakistani batsman to score a century on Test debut.

Abid's feat spiced up the historic Test, the first in Pakistan since the 2009 attacks on the Sri Lankan team bus left international cricket suspended in the country.

Only 91.5 overs were possible on the first four days as rain, bad light and overcast conditions affected play. The fourth day was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

But there was bright sunshine on Sunday as Sri Lanka batted for 20 minutes to declare their first innings at 308-6 with middle-order batsman Dhananjaya de Silva scoring an unbeaten 102.

With gates opened to the crowd for free, about 12,000 fans were kept entertained by Dhananjaya and then Abid.

Pakistan lost opener Shan Masood for nought when he drove a full toss from paceman Kasun Rajitha straight into the hands of Dinesh Chandimal at cover Skipper Azhar Ali scored a shaky 36 before he was caught off Lahiru Kumara.

Dhananjaya finally completed his sixth Test century in the morning.

The 28-year-old right-hander drove paceman Mohammad Abbas for his 15th boundary to bring up the hundred in his 28th Test.

De Silva remained unbeaten on 102 after 241 minutes of batting, having come in with the score on 127-4 on Thursday. Dilruwan Perera remained unbeaten on 16.

The pick of the Pakistan bowlers were 16-year-old quickie Naseem Shah, who took 2-92, and Shaheen Shah Afridi with 2-58.

The second Test is in Karachi starting December 19.



Abid Ali raises his bat PCB/Twitter

Lyon, Starc power Aus to massive win

AFP ■ PERTH

Australia recorded one of their biggest wins over New Zealand on the fourth day of the first Test at Perth Stadium on Sunday.

Having trailed by 250 runs on the first innings the Kiwis were set a mammoth 468 to win - which would have been a record chase in Test cricket - on a deteriorating pitch after Australia declared at 217 for nine in their second innings.

The visitors were never in contention after losing their first wicket with just six runs on the board and were unable to push the match into a fifth day after Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins cleaned up the Kiwi tail under lights in Perth's first ever day-night Test.

New Zealand were dismissed for 171 and were beaten by 296 runs, the last five wickets falling in a hurry for just 17 runs.

It was just one run shy of their biggest losing margin to Australia - in runs - in a match where both teams batted twice.

Australia's biggest win, other than innings victories, was 297 runs in Auckland in 1974.

Starc (4-45), who claimed nine wickets for the match, and Cummins (2-31) used the pink ball to good effect under lights to bring the match to a quick conclusion after none of the recognised Kiwi batsmen offered significant resistance.

The chase started poorly, with opener Jeet Raval making just one before being caught at



Mitchell Starc celebrates after taking wicket of New Zealand's Neil Wagner

Cricknet.com.au/Twitter

gully by Nathan Lyon (4-63) from the bowling of Starc.

Star batsman and captain Kane Williamson then made just 14, before falling to Lyon's first ball of the innings.

Williamson got off to a fast start with boundaries for the first two balls he faced, but was caught at short leg fending a ball that bounced and turned sharply off his glove into the hands of Matthew Wade.

Ross Taylor was their last real hope of making a revival but on 22 he tried to pull a Starc delivery and got a bottom edge through to wicketkeeper Tim

Paine to give the left-arm quick his seventh wicket of the match.

Tom Latham showed plenty of application to face 68 balls for his 18, but was given out leg before wicket to Lyon after an Australian DRS review, with umpire Aleem Dar initially giving him not out.

BJ Watling attempted to stem the tide with a gritty 40 and enjoyed a bit of luck as Australia didn't review when he got a faint outside edge through to Paine.

Smith then dropped a tough chance off the bowling of Lyon at first slip. He was given out on review caught down leg side by

Paine off the bowling of Starc after umpire Nigel Long had turned down the appeal - a dismissal that signalled the end of the Kiwi resistance.

Earlier, Australia's second innings fell away dramatically after being 131 for one at one stage on the third day.

The home team lost seven wickets for 58 runs, as they struggled against a sustained barrage of short-pitched bowling on another hot Perth day.

Tim Southee again impressed with 5-69, after also picking up four wickets in the first innings.

Aussies on the rise again: Paine

AFP ■ PERTH

Skipper Tim Paine believes Australia is climbing back towards the top of Test cricket after a third successive powerhouse victory at Perth Stadium on Sunday.

The home side went into the Perth Test ranked fifth on the International Cricket Council rankings, while New Zealand were second.

"We are getting there, but we can get better," he said.

"We are still improving, but certainly over the last 18 months there has been drastic improvement in this cricket team.

"We've got some players back, which are helping, but we have also seen some real improvement in the guys who got a chance 18 months ago, and the experienced guys have come back and put a bit of icing on top.

"We are moving in the right direction and happy with the way we've played in the last three or four Tests."

Paine said it was also pleasing to see other players stepping up, after Smith almost single-handedly retained the Ashes for Australia with his batting heroics in his first series after suspension.



Tim Paine celebrates after Kane Williamson's wicket Twitter

For the first time in his career Smith has gone three Tests without a half-century, but Paine actually views that as a positive.

"We touched on at the end of the Ashes," he said. "We needed other guys to stand up and can't be reliant on Steve."

"Obviously Marnus (Labuschagne) has been unbelievably good, and Davey (Warner) and Joe Burns have been scoring runs."

"If we want to be one of the better teams in the world guys have got to stand up and we can't be reliant on too few."

"We are really happy with how our batting has developed."

Lakshya wins Bangladesh international challenge

PTI ■ DHAKA



Lakshya Sen in action during Bangladesh International challenge BAI/Twitter

Fast-rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen notched up his fifth title of the season, claiming the men's singles crown at the Bangladesh International Challenger with a straight game win over Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao in the final here on Sunday.

The 18-year-old Indian has capped a superb year with a 22-20, 21-18 win over Hao in the summit clash to clinch his fifth title in last seven tournaments.

"Happy to end the year on a winning note with my 5th international title here in Bangladesh!! Hope to continue my good form in the next year 2020. Like to thank all my sponsors @OGQ_India @HerbalifeIndia @YonexIndia @Sports_PDCSE @ppba @bai_media," Lakshya tweeted.

Momota wraps 11th title

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

World number one Kento Momota fought back from a game down to win a record 11th title of the year on Sunday with victory at the BWF World Tour Finals.

The peerless Japanese player defeated Indonesia's Anthony Ginting 17-21, 21-17, 21-14 in 87 high-quality minutes in the final at the season-ending showpiece in Guangzhou.

Momota celebrates a new mark in men's badminton, overtaking Malaysian great Lee Chong Wei's 10 tournament wins in 2010.

"At this World Tour Finals I played carefully from the first match partly with the aim of winning an 11th title," the 25-year-old Momota said.

"Even in tough games I did not give up."

Momota was pushed all the way by the speedy Ginting and the Japanese fell 12-5 down in the deciding third game to the world number eight.

However, the reigning two-time world champion surged back.



Kento Momota poses for a photo

BWF/Twitter

Ginting was trailing 17-14 when he called the doctor on court for treatment on his right foot.

The fading Indonesian continued but Momota rammed home his advantage to seal a stellar season in style.

The 23-year-old Ginting has now tasted defeat in all five of his finals this year.

"He led (in the deciding game) but I was patient," said Momota, who was banned for a year in 2016 for illegal gambling. "And then I got to know that he was suffering pain so all I needed to do was stay calm."

In the women's final China's Chen Yufei also roared back from a game down to defeat Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying 12-21, 21-12, 21-17.

Chen, who will replace Tai as world number one in the latest rankings, had lost 14 of their previous 15 clashes.

"I'm very excited," said Chen. "I didn't think much about my 1-14 record against her, I had to focus on the task today."