

NATION 5
KEJRI: AAP NEEDS TO TARGET OVER 67 SEATS

MONEY 6
'NO NEW RATION CARD NEEDED FOR INTER-STATE PORTABILITY'

SPECIAL 7
POWERPUFF GIRLS

VIJAYAWADA, SUNDAY DECEMBER 22, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3

sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



AN IPS OFFICER WITH IRON FIST

12

INDIA LEADS THE WORLD IN INTERNET SHUTDOWNS

As of 2018, India led the world in internet shutdowns, according to a report by internet advocacy group Access Now, accounting for 67% of the total recorded worldwide. An internet shutdown is a suspension of internet access ordered by the authorities. Telecom companies then turn off the cellular networks at transmitting towers providing mobile phone internet services in the area. Countries with far more restrictive control over the internet, such as China and North Korea, did not feature prominently in the numbers compiled by Access Now because of the lack of publicly accessible data, the group noted.



UDDHAV: CMOs TO BE SET UP IN ALL DIVISIONS IN MAHARASHTRA

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said divisional-level 'chief minister's office' will be set up across the state to ensure people need not have to travel to Mumbai for governmental work. Speaking in the Assembly, Thackeray said these CMOs would be connected to the main one in Mantralaya, and claimed the move was part of his government's efforts to decentralise power. He also announced that a Rs 10 per meal scheme for the poor, called 'Shiv Bhojan', will be started on a pilot basis at 50 places in the state.



EXIT POLLS PREDICT JMM-CONG-RJD WILL FORM GOVT IN JHARKHAND

Various exit polls have predicted the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress-Rashtriya Janata Dal alliance to form the government in Jharkhand. India Today-Axis My India has claimed that the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance will get 38 to 50 seats in the 81-member Jharkhand Assembly while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will get around 22-32 seats. According to the Kashish News exit poll, JMM-Congress-RJD will get around 37-49 seats while the BJP will get 25-30 seats.



SUNDAR PICHAI GETS WHOPPING \$242 MILLION STOCK PACKAGE

Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai will take home \$240 million stock package (\$90 million of it tied to Alphabet's performance) on top of a \$2 million annual salary in 2020. Alphabet said in a Securities Exchange Commission filing on Friday that Pichai will also start receiving a substantial raise from January 1 to \$2 million a year, reports the Mercury News. The compensation package is being given in recognition of Pichai's 'expanded role as CEO of Alphabet and Google'.



UP rocked by anti-CAA violence, toll rises to 15

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Fresh cases of stone pelting took place in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur and Rampur on Saturday against the Citizenship Amendment Act, while 15 people, including an eight-year-old boy, were killed since Thursday in violent agitations in different parts of the state.

Over 260 policemen were also injured, of whom 57 received gunshot wounds, IG (Law and Order) Praveen Kumar told PTI on Saturday. "Women and children were used as shields by the protestors," Director General of Police O P Singh said on Saturday maintaining that police did not open fire.

"All the deaths that took place have been in cross firing and this will become clear in postmortem examination," the DGP told reporters.

"We are clear and transparent in this. If anyone died due to our fire we will conduct a judicial inquiry and take action. But nothing happened from our side," the DGP stressed. Police had no option but to resort to lathi charge to chase them away, he said, adding that tear gas shells for



Protests show anger spilling out on the streets: Pawar

PNS ■ PUNE

Targeting the revised Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register for Citizens, Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar on Saturday said the opposition against the laws is "mass anger

spilling out through protests and processions all over India".

He said the people are strongly against these laws and their angst is coming out through nationwide protests in the past one week.

Continued on Page 3

dispersing the mob. In Kanpur, anti-CAA protestors on Saturday set Yatimkhana police post on

fire and indulged in heavy brickbating, leading to injury to some people.

Continued on Page 3

Chiru wants everyone to welcome 3 capitals concept

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

'Mega Star' Chiranjeevi on Saturday lent his support to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's idea of having three capitals in the state. The proposal, put forth by Jagan in the Assembly, kicked off a controversy across the state. The actor-politician exhorted one and all to welcome the concept, saying: "Development is feasible with decentralisation of authority and administration. Moreover, I have faith in Jaganmohan Reddy that he will strive for development of the state in a planned way." The actor-politician wanted everyone to welcome the decision to have legislative capital at Amaravati, executive capital at Visakhapatnam and judicial capital at Kurnool.

Continued on Page 3

Vijaya Sai: Exercise on to increase AP districts to 25

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Justifying the need to go for three capitals in Andhra Pradesh to ensure equal development of all the three regions of the state, YSR Congress Party general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP V Vijaya Sai Reddy on Saturday said that YSRC government was planning to increase the number of districts from 13 to 25 in the state for easy and effective administration.

Speaking at the birthday celebrations of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at the party office in Vizag city, Vijaya Sai Reddy said the they had begun the exercise to increase the number of districts to 25 and all the big dis-



tricts in the state will divide into two to three districts.

"There is lot of advantage with the small districts in terms of administrative purpose and also to reach the welfare schemes to all the needy people without any delay," Vijaya Sai Reddy said.

He said that there was nothing wrong in setting up an

executive capital at Vizag, legislative capital at Amaravati and judicial capital at Kurnool and increase the number of districts to 25 to ensure uniform development. TDP leaders are opposing the proposal of the three capitals for their selfish gains and real estate business, Vijaya Sai Reddy alleged.

During the election campaign, YSR Congress Party had promised to create one district in each Lok Sabha constituency, he reminded.

The MP said the decision on making the Coastal city Vizag as the executive capital was a gift from Jaganmohan Reddy to north coastal Andhra Pradesh on his birthday.

Continued on Page 3

Amaravati farmers continue protests against 3 capitals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Amaravati Capital region remained tense on Saturday, with farmers continuing their protests for the fourth consecutive day.

The protesters poured onto the streets in all the 29 villages under CRDA limits. They staged dharnas at various places and burnt tyres while raising slogans like 'Save Andhra' and 'Down Down GN Rao Committee Report'.

At Velagapudi, the seat of temporary Assembly, the agitators painted the panchayat office black. The villagers stopped vehicles by squatting on the Seed Capital road lead-



Farmers stage a novel protest against the three capitals proposal by putting up a board comparing the government with a buffalo, in Amaravati region on Saturday.

ing to the Secretariat. They even burnt the flexis put up to greet the Chief Minister on the occasion of his birthday.

Elsewhere at Velagapudi centre, the relay hunger-strike

by farmers is continuing. Protests were reported from villages in Mangalagiri mandal where the farmers staged dharnas and took out rallies.

Continued on Page 3

PM greets Jagan on birthday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a tweet, conveyed birthday wishes to Jaganmohan Reddy. He said he was praying for his long and healthy life. Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari wished Jaganmohan Reddy. In a tweet, he said 'May you be blessed with good health and long life.'

Telangana MP Santosh Kumar tweeted his photograph with Jagan and conveyed his wishes to the Chief Minister. Santosh Kumar said that the new State would reach new heights and the people would cherish Jagan's leadership for ages.

'Centre won't remain silent on 3 capitals'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP MP YS Chowdary on Saturday warned the State Government that the Centre would take 'appropriate measures at the appropriate time' on three state capitals for Andhra Pradesh and that it would not keep silent on the state government's change of stand.

Change of state capital from Amaravati to elsewhere is not a joke, Sujana said, expressing apprehensions over the report on state capital submitted by the expert committee headed by GN Rao.

Talking to a section of the media here, he said that there should be decentralised development but not mere change of state capitals. Moreover, it is not proper to change the capital without any forethought, he said.

The YSRC government, instead of focusing on administration, continuing with the personal vilification and wasting precious time, the MP said, criticising the style of functioning of the government.



YS Chowdary

Changing the state capital whenever the ruler changes is not feasible, Sujana said adding that none knows the contents of the GN Rao Committee report.

The places the committee visited to obtain public opinion on state capital are shrouded in mystery, he commented. "The committee gave the report the government wanted", he hinted.

"If the state capital is relocated elsewhere, what would be the fate of farmers who had pooled their land for the capital city," Sujana asked.

Continued on Page 3

Devotee offers Rs 1 cr to Lord Balaji

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A devotee from Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh donated Rs 1 crore to the famous temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala Hills, near here, on Saturday.

The devotee requested the temple authorities to use the fund for its pilgrims free meal trust called Sri Venkateswara Anna Prasada Trust, a temple official said.

The trust offers about one lakh meals daily to the visiting devotees, the official said.

The donor, who did not wish to be named, handed over the DD for the amount through a saint Swaroopanandendra of Visakhapatnam to an official of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) that governs the hill temple, the official said.



CITIZENSHIP ACT

BJP to contact over 3 cr families, hold rallies across country in next 10 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday announced a mass contact programme to expose opposition parties' 'lies' and apprise people of the details of the amended citizenship law to assure them that it is not against existing citizens.

The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by BJP working president J P Nadda and convened to formulate the



party's strategy over the issue amid protests in various parts

of the country against the new provision in the Citizenship

Act and the proposed creation of a National Register of Citizens.

Continued on Page 3

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

Continued on Page 3

Act and the proposed creation of a National Register of Citizens. Party general secretary Bhupender Yadav told reporters that the BJP in the next 10 days will contact more than three crore families, organise rally in every district and hold over 250 press conferences across the country to inform masses about the new law.

Continued on Page 3

Continued on Page 3

Over 1,100 academicians, scholars release statement backing CAA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 1,100 academicians and research scholars from various universities across India and abroad as well as prominent persons released a statement in support of the amended Citizenship Act on Saturday. The signatories to the statement include Rajya Sabha member Swapna Dasgupta, Shishir Bajoria, Chairman, IIM Shillong, Sunaina Singh, Vice Chancellor, Nalanda University, JNU professor Ainal Hasan, Abhijit Iyer-

Mitra, Senior Fellow, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies and journalist Kanchan Gupta.

The statement comes in the midst of countrywide protests against the new citizenship law. Students from various universities have also joined the agitation.

In the statement, the signatories appealed to every section of the society "to exercise restraint and refuse to fall into the trap of propaganda, communalism and anarchism."

"We also note with deep anguish that an atmosphere of

fear and paranoia is being created in the country through deliberate obfuscation and fear-mongering, leading to violence in several parts of the country," the statement said.

Two weeks ago, over 1,000 scientists and scholars had signed a petition demanding that the Citizenship Amendment Bill in its current form be withdrawn, with noted academican Pratap Bhanu Mehta saying the legislation will transform India into an "unconstitutional ethnocracy".

Continued on Page 3

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Margashirsha & Krishna Paksha Panchangam
Tithi: Ekadashi: 03:22 pm
Nakshatram: Swati 06:38 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 04:21 pm - 05:43 pm
Yamagandam: 12:14 pm - 01:36 pm
Varjyam: 12:01 am - 01:33 am
Gulika: 02:59 pm - 04:21 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 10:16 am - 11:47 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:52 am - 12:36 pm
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 32/20
Humidity: 68%
Sunrise: 06:41
Sunset: 05:47
Current Weather Conditions Updated December 21, 2019 5:00 PM

Two Skill Development Institutes to be set up at AU

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Two Skill Development Institutes would be set up in Andhra University soon.

Hoon Maritime Institute, Kolkata, in association with the varsity will set up its Hoon Maritime Skill Development Centre on the Andhra University campus to offer post-sea training courses.

The project is estimated to cost about Rs 5 crore. On the other hand, Avanti Feeds, a private shrimp exporter of the city, will establish Avanti Aquaculture Skill Development Centre with Rs 4 crore.

Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof PVGD Prasad Reddy said that in the absence of institutes offering post-sea oriented courses in Andhra Pradesh, the aspirants are forced to go to other metro cities. "About 750 students from the city, including the marine engineering students of Andhra University, are travelling all the way to Kolkata to get training in the Hoon Institute.



Prof Reddy added that the Hoon Institute will fund for the infrastructure, simulation equipment and others. "The swimming pool on the campus, which was closed several years ago, will be excavated for the training purposes. Swimming pool will be allocated to Andhra University students for two hours a day. Andhra University and the people of Vizag city will reap the social advantages of the institute, while we will also charge rent for the institute on the campus," said Prof Reddy.

The Vice-Chancellor said that they already entered into an MoU (memorandum of understanding) with Avanti Feeds to set up the Aquaculture Skill Development Centre. "Apart from training 1,000 fishermen every year in shrimp exporting related activities, the organisation will recruit all the 30 students of the Department of Marine Living Resources of the varsity for the next five years as part of the MoU. The shrimp exporter will also recruit all the trained personnel at the Centre," said Prof Reddy.

- Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof PVGD Prasad Reddy said that they
- already entered signed the memorandum of understanding with Avanti Feeds to set up the Aquaculture Skill Development Centre
- "Apart from training 1,000 fishermen every year in shrimp exporting related activities, the organisation will recruit all the 30 students of the Department of Marine Living Resources of the varsity for the next five years as part of the MoU. The shrimp exporter will also recruit all the trained personnel at the Centre," said Prof Reddy

Poets are 'unacknowledged legislators', says Governor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan said that poets are 'unacknowledged legislators'. He was inaugurating the 5th International Multilingual Poet's Meet, 'Amravati Poetic Prism' here on Saturday. It was organised by the Cultural Centre of Vijayawada & Amaravati (CCVA) and supported by the AP Creativity and Culture Commission, APCRDA, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, Ashoka Builders, Novotel and Pragati printers.



Addressing a gathering, the Governor said that foreigners like the Amaravati Poetic Prism, which serves as a platform to share the ideas of the creative minds. He also mentioned about the great messages given by Raghuvamsa and Kumara Sambhava written by Mahakavi Kalidasu, who was acclaimed as Kavikulaguru (poets poet) and complimented Y Harish Chandra Prasad for organising the event. The Governor applauded the efforts of Malaxmi Group and CCVA in propelling world poetry to the next level in the form of Amaravati Poetic Prism.

He stressed the importance of safeguarding art and culture and stated that poets and poetry should be welcomed to showcase their works and encourage their rare talent. The Governor launched the 5th edition of Amaravati Poetic Prism (APP) and also the special postal cover on APP. Poets Dr Sitakant Mahapatra, Dr Vizai Baskar, Shiva Kumar Verma, Mukesh Kumar Meena and Papineni Shiv Shankar rendered their poems. Y Harish Chandra Prasad felicitated the Governor. Sandeep Mandava, Malaxmi Properties, proposed a vote of thanks.

- Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan said that foreigners like the Amaravati Poetic Prism, which serves as a platform to share the ideas of the creative minds
- He also mentioned about the great messages given by Raghuvamsa and Kumara Sambhava written by Mahakavi Kalidasu, who was acclaimed as Kavikulaguru (poets' poet)



Kids order goods worth \$700 on mom's credit card

NEW DELHI: A woman in the US was in for a huge shock as she discovered that her two children had ordered toys worth \$700, including PJ Masks toys and Barbies, on her credit card. And she didn't know till the order had arrived, a media report said. Veronica Estell posted a hilarious video on her Facebook page to tell what had happened. In the viral video, she opens the packages, while the children give a guilty look. She soon found that more ordered stuff was on the way. "UPS showed up with boxes of gifts and all it had on the shipping tag was my name. So I'm like, 'OK, who sent all these great gifts?! Whoever it is got moneyyyyyy,'" The Sun quoted her as saying.

Service to devotees is service to God, preaches Sarada Peetham seer

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

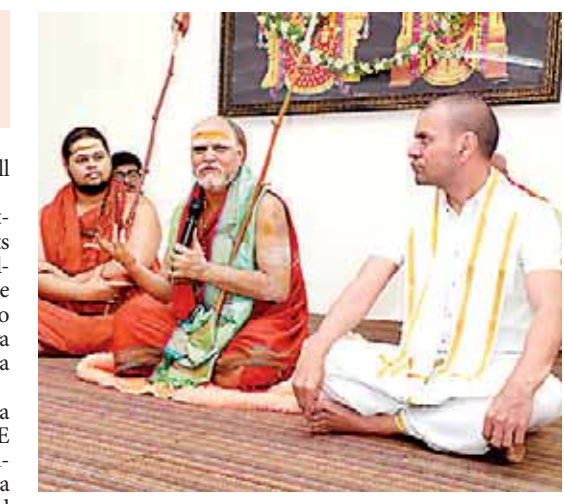
Pontiff of Vizag Sarada Peetham Swaroopanandendra Swami exhorted Srivari Sevaku to take up the propagation of Sanatana dharma in a big way.

Addressing the Satsang at Srivari Sadan for Srivari Sevaku here on Saturday, the pontiff said Srivari Sevaku had the unique opportunity to serve the devotees, who came from across the world to redeem their vows. Their service to devotees was as good as service to Lord Venkateswara. TTD Executive Officer Ashok Kumar Singhal and additional executive officer AV Dharma Reddy welcomed the pontiff on his arrival at the Seva Sadan. He said

- Pontiff of Vizag Sarada Peetham Swaroopanandendra Swami said Srivari Sevaku had the unique opportunity to serve the devotees, who came from across the world to redeem their vows

it was heartening to meet the Srivari Sevaku, who left their families for days and served the devotees and Lord Venkateswara whose service almost guaranteed bliss and 'moksha'. The TTD EO highlighted that Srivari Sevaku service, which began in 2000 with just 200, has accounted for 12-lakh sevaku offering service at Tirumala and other locations. He said sevaku rendered devoted service during festivals during Brahmotsavams, Vaikunta Ekadasi and Ratha Saptami and exhorted them to fur-

ther extend their services in all runs of TTD activity. Earlier, PRO T Ravi highlighted the activities of Srivari Seva, its origin and its essence and the facilities provided by the TTD for the convenience of Srivari Sevaku to the pontiff. Members of Sri Sathya Saibaba Seva Institute presented a devotional bhajan sanget. TTD Board members Subba Rao, VSO Manohar, EE Mallikarjun Prasad, catering officer GLN Shastri, Srivari Seva AEO U Ramesh, SI Varaprasad and Srivari Seva staff participated.



Pontiff of Vizag Sarada Peetham Swaroopanandendra Swami addresses a gathering of Srivari Sevaku in Tirumala on Saturday



Jewellery expos will forge business ties among traders, says minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Endowments Velampalli Srinivas said the Grand Abhushanam Jewellery and Gems exhibition will enable people from the jewellery trade to interact and forge strong business ties. He complimented the organisers at the inaugural programme of the two-day B2B jewellery expo organised jointly by All India Gems and Jewellery Domestic Council and Andhra Pradesh Bullion Merchants Association here on Saturday. He said the event brings together prominent manufacturers and retailers at regional levels, thereby encouraging face-to-face interactions to promote business across the various regions and boosting businesses besides allowing a healthy exchange of opinions and views with the view to address various challenges faced by the industry at local levels.



Speaking on the occasion, Anathna Padmanabhan, Chairman of GJC, said, "It is a proud moment for the entire Gems and Jewellery fraternity that Grand Abhushanam is successfully entering into its 3rd edition, wherein there will be a varied range of latest and finest collection of gems and jewellery from South India. It has been consistent in its endeavour to meet the expecta-

tations of both the exhibitors and visitors. Like the previous two editions, it will showcase the latest designs." Shaankar Sen, Vice-Chairman, GJC, Ashok Jain, Convener, Grand Abhushanam, Director GJC, Manoj Jha, Joint Convener, Grand Abhushanam, Vijay Kumar, President, AB Shantilal Jain, Chief Organiser, AB Bullion, were present.

Special trains to clear extra rush

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In order to clear extra rush of passengers, five special trains will be run between Secunderabad - Kakinada town and Machilipatnam - Secunderabad.

Train No. 07053 Secunderabad - Kakinada town special train will depart Secunderabad at 20.00 hrs on December 24 and 27 and arrive in Kakinada town at 08.30 hrs the next day. In the return direction, Train No. 07054 Kakinada town - Secunderabad special train will depart Kakinada town at 20.50 hrs on December 26 and 29 and arrive in Secunderabad at 08.50 hrs the next day. En route, these special trains will stop at Nalgonda, Miryalaguda, Piduguralla, Guntur, Vijayawada, Gudivada, Kaikalur, Bhimavaram town, Nidadavolu, Rajahmundry and Samalkot stations in both the



directions. These special trains will have AC II Tier, AC III Tier, AC Chair Car, Sleeper Class and General Second Class Coaches. Train No. 07051 Machilipatnam - Secunderabad special train will depart Machilipatnam at 23.15 hrs on December 23 and arrive in Secunderabad at 08.25 hrs the next day. En route, this special train will stop at Gudivada, Vijayawada, Guntur, Piduguralla, Miryalaguda and Nalgonda stations. These special trains will have AC II Tier, AC III Tier, AC Chair Car, Sleeper Class and General Second Class Coaches.

Second case of espionage from Vizag, home to ENC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The arrest of seven personnel of the Indian Navy over an alleged espionage racket may have turned the spotlight back on Vizag, this being the second time a case of espionage has been reported from the coastal city.



Vizag is the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy. In 2001, four naval personnel and the then chief security officer of the Naval Armament Depot (NAD) were arrested for alleged spying and leaking sensitive information to ISI agents in Nepal. Sources said two of those four had passed on microfilms containing pictures of the Naval Command, including the dockyard and shipbuilding centres, to ISI agents in Nepal. While the trial was still on, Raj Kumar Singh, the chief security officer of NAD,

hanged himself at the Visakhapatnam Central Jail. The others were handed various terms of imprisonment. The city assumed importance for the Navy after Pakistan's submarine PNS Ghazi was sunk a few km off the Vizag Coast during the 1971 war. This played a major role in ending the war. Later, Vizag became the headquarters for Navy's submarine wing. It also houses two nuclear submarines - INS Chakra and indigenously built INS Arihant. The latest arrests of the seven naval personnel, who were allegedly honey-trapped

by the ISI, were carried out under a covert plan code-named Operation Dolphin's Nose. A hill resembling a dolphin's nose sits adjacent to the Eastern Naval Command. Dolphin's Nose is home to residential complexes and offices of the Indian Navy. Falling prey to a Facebook honeytrap set up by four women, the sailors allegedly leaked sensitive information about the locations of Indian naval ships and submarines to a Pakistani handler. Following their arrest, the Andhra Pradesh Intelligence Department on Friday claimed to have busted an espionage racket in the Navy. Central Intelligence officials were seen camping at the Vizag branch, though they declined to speak about the case. Citing the name of the operation, police sources said the spying activities were perhaps being conducted from Vizag itself.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 38,190 (10 gm)	
₹ 50	
SILVER	
₹ 44,900 (1kg)	
₹ 200	
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹180
Without Skin	₹205
Broiler at Farm	₹124
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	425
VIJAYAWADA	452
VISAKHAPATNAM	470
RETAIL PRICE (IN APPROXIMATE)	₹4.52

AI can detect blood cancer with high reliability

IAN S ■ LONDON

Artificial Intelligence can help detect one of the most common forms of blood cancer - acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) - with high reliability, new research has found. Their approach, based on the analysis of the gene activity of cells found in the blood, could support conventional diagnostics and possibly accelerate the beginning of therapy, said the study published in the journal iScience. In the early stages, the symptoms of AML can resemble those of a bad cold. However, AML is a life-threatening disease that should be treated as quickly as possible. "With a blood test, as it seems possible on the basis of

our study, it is conceivable that the family doctor would already clarify a suspicion of AML," said Joachim Schultze, a research group leader at the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE). "And when the suspicion is confirmed, the patient is referred to a specialist. Possibly, the diagnosis would then happen earlier than it does now and therapy could start earlier," added Schultze, who is also Head of the Department for Genomics and Immunoregulation at the LIMES Institute of the University of Bonn in Germany. For the study, the researchers focused on the "transcriptome", which is a kind of fingerprint



of gene activity. In each and every cell, depending on its condition, only certain genes are actually "switched on", which is reflected in their profiles of gene activity.

- In the early stages, the symptoms of AML can resemble those of a bad cold. However, AML is a life-threatening disease that should be treated as quickly as possible
- "With a blood test, as it seems possible on the basis of our study, it is conceivable that the family doctor would already clarify a suspicion of AML," said Joachim Schultze, a research group leader at the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE)

Exactly such data - derived from cells in blood samples and spanning many thousands of genes - were analysed in the current study. "The transcriptome holds important information about the condition of cells. However, classical diagnostics is based on different data. We therefore wanted to find out what an analysis of the transcriptome can achieve using artificial intelligence, that is to say trainable algorithms," said Schultze. Data from more than 12,000 blood samples - these came from 105 different studies - were taken into account for the study. Approximately 4,100 of these blood samples derived from individuals diagnosed with AML, the remaining ones had been

taken from individuals with other diseases or from healthy individuals. Scientists fed their algorithms parts of this data set. The input included information about whether a sample came from an AML patient or not. "The algorithms then searched the transcriptome for disease-specific patterns. This is a largely automated process. It's called machine learning," said Schultze. Based on this pattern recognition, further data was analysed and classified by the algorithms - categorised into samples with AML and without AML. Put into application, this method could support conventional diagnostics and help save costs, said Schultze.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

'ALL AND SUNDRY'

Finally, Jaganmohan Reddy is having his way for building three new capitals for Andhra Pradesh at Visakhapatnam, Amaravati and Kurnool with each serving a different purpose. In reversing the ambitious plans of his predecessor N Chandrababu to build a megapolis at Amaravati, Jagan is aiming to put his solid stamp on Andhra's future and simultaneously axe the TDP president's socio-political base in Krishna and Guntur districts. The triple-capital recommendation of the G N Rao Committee, which Jagan knew in advance and whose broad contours he disclosed in the Assembly, has plunged Andhra into confusion and laid the foundation for further delay in building the capital. The com-

Capitals can't be built or shifted on personal whims

mittee picked up the presently irrelevant ideas from the mothballed report of K C Sivaramakrishnan opposing a greenfield capital city and from the 92-year-old Sribagh Pact. Under this agreement, if the High Court were to set up in coastal Andhra, the capital would be located in Rayalaseema. Indeed, Kurnool became Andhra's capital after it was hived off from the erstwhile composite Madras State and Guntur became the seat of the High Court. Neither city flourished because the capital shifted to Hyderabad three years later in 1956 once the erstwhile Hyderabad State and Andhra were merged. How Kurnool will prosper now with a truncated High Court with benches in Amaravati and Vizag defies understanding. Capitals cannot be built or shifted on the whims of a sin-

The former began building a grandiose capital spread over 33,000 acres and costing thousands of crores, while Jagan wants three small capitals that would facilitate "decentralised development of the State"

gle leader, be it Chandrababu Naidu or Jaganmohan Reddy, for the simple reason that they cost a lot of money. The former began building a grandiose capital spread over 33,000 acres and costing thousands of crores, while Jagan wants three small capitals that would facilitate "decentralised development of the State". The latter is a rather naïve formulation because decentralisation does not happen simply by having multiple capitals. Even the four commissionerates proposed by the

GN Rao panel are a poor imitation of the erstwhile Regional Planning Boards which served no purpose beyond rehabilitating defeated and disgruntled politicians. What we need are micro-level administrative units which N. T. Rama Rao created decades ago by setting up revenue mandals. The present regime seems intent on dispossessing TDP leaders of land they acquired through irregular means in and around Amaravati. While none would condone 'insider trading' by the cohorts of



S NAGESH KUMAR
Former Resident Editor, The Hindu

Naidu, this could be tackled through the sky-high powers that Government enjoys, instead of scrapping the core capital concept. Telugu Desam Party has failed to effectively rebut the charges of insider trading, purchase of prime land by Heritage Foods,

Naidu's son Nara Lokesh and their relatives. Still, Jagan may be throwing the baby out with the bathwater considering that Rs. 5,860 crore has already been sunk into Amaravati. The TDP leaders' irregularities are also no justification for leaving high and dry the genuine farmers who had voluntarily surrendered land in anticipation of windfall returns. Jagan may be right in arguing that the huge amount of money required for a mega capital could be better spent on priority sectors like irrigation and health. However, where is the guarantee that the three capitals, their attendant infrastructure and logistical expenses of shifting bureaucrats and Ministers every few months will cost any less? The Government put forth a weak argument and even tout-

ed misleading information in the Assembly about the three-capital system in South Africa, a failed idea, besides making amazing claims that the area of Delhi was less than Amaravati's, forgetting that the National Capital Region extends to several neighbouring States. A Minister P. Ramachandra Reddy even claimed that AP did not require Centre's permission to build its capitals; it could build thirty if it so wished and not just three. Indeed, the Centre is acting as if it has no stake in these developments though Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for Amaravati while his Government has given over Rs. 2,500 crore for building the capital. As a consequence, the BJP is at odds with itself. Each leader is welcoming or criticising the three-capital concept

depending on his native place. Government is a continuous process and new regimes can make tectonic shifts in policies only at the risk of slowing down the pace of development. Instead, they must come up with new ideas in new spheres and not just undo existing ones. The High Court and the judiciary complex at Kurnool cannot generate significant economic productivity nor can the Legislature at Amaravati. Andhra has the distinction of having had four capitals so far - Madras, Kurnool, Hyderabad and Amaravati. It will create an unwanted record by having a few more capitals because Naidu did not have the savvy to wait out the 10-year window to continue the capital in Hyderabad and Jagan lacked patience. Now, everyone will have to pay the price.

CAPSULE

YSRCP worker paints Rayapudi panchayat office black

AMARAVATI: Tension prevailed for some time on Saturday evening at Rayapudi in the Capital Region when an YSRCP activist replaced the party colours on the panchayat office with black colour in protest against the GN Rao Committee report. The protester said he had earlier painted the office with party colours with a lot of enthusiasm with the hope that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy would develop the region by continuing the capital project. "However, with that hope fading away with the swift turn of events in the past few days, I have decided to erase the party colours on the panchayat office with my own hands," he said. Soon, more YSRCP activists gathered at the place, prompting the police to rush to the place. The police were in a dilemma on whether to arrest the protesters or not. The villagers said, "When the government is taking the capital away from us, there is no need for our panchayat office to have YSRCP colours."

Swaroopandendra Swami offers prayers at Tirumala

VIJAYAWADA: Swaroopandendra Swami of Sarada Peetham, Vizag, visited Sri Vari Temple at Tirumala on Saturday. On his arrival in front of Sri Vari Temple, TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal, additional executive officer AV Dharma Reddy and priests welcomed him with temple honours and led him to sanctum sanctorum. TTD Board member Subba Rao, special invitee Sekhar Reddy, temple deputy executive officer Haridranath, Temple Peishkar Lokanadham and others were present.

Devotee donates Rs 1 cr to SVAT

VIJAYAWADA: A devotee of Vizag Sarada Peetham Pontif Swaroopandendra Swami has donated Rs 1 crore for the Sri Venkateswara Nitya Annadanam Trust. The devotee presented a cheque for the amount to the pontiff in front of the Srivari temple on Saturday, who in turn handed it over to the TTD EO Anil Kumar Singhal and Additional EO AV Dharma Reddy.



BJP to contact over 3 cr families, hold rallies...

Continued from Page 1
The new law seeks to give citizenship to minorities from three neighbouring countries, who arrived in India before December 2014 due to religious persecution. He also accused opposition parties, especially the Congress, of spreading misinformation in a bid to disturb peace across the country during recent protests which have claimed several lives. Yadav said the party will also involve beneficiaries of the amended law in its information campaign about the statute.

Middle class in Vizag wary of capital raising cost of living

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam is already one of the costliest cities to live in the country. And, the middle strata of the Vizag population now fear that the cost of living will shoot up drastically if the City of Destiny is made Executive Capital of Andhra Pradesh as proposed by Chief minister Jaganmohan Reddy in the State Assembly a few days ago.

While their plans to buy apartments would remain a dream for thousands of families, the house rent would also surge. The proposed Executive Capital in Vizag would lead to more traffic snarls, mushrooming of brokers, middlemen and land grabbers and above all the cost of living in Vizag will shoot up by at least 40 per cent, anticipated B Lokanadham of CPM.

"The middle class and poor families in Vizag may face so many problems if the Executive Capital was realised and the city may face water crisis also with rapid urbanisation," Lokanadham pointed out. "We are paying Rs 7,000 rent per month for a one-bedroom house at MVP area. If Vizag city turned as Executive Capital, the house rental may



further increase and it will become a big burden for people like us," said P Raju, a resident of Kommadi area in the city. The land prices in the core city may not increase much as the prices for the lands in the core area almost reached the saturation point around two years ago. In the Rushikonda area, the price of land is Rs 15,000 per square yard, which may go up to Rs 25,000 per square yard in the coming days, he added.

Realtor, investors, rich upbeat over capital plan. The real estate businessmen are expecting a big boost in the sector after Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's proposal to develop Vizag city as Executive Capital. However, the common people and representatives of the Left parties are worrying that the cost of living in the Vizag region will further increase if the proposal translated into action. The President of CREDAI, Vizag Chapter, B Srinivasa Rao, predicted that the demand for the housing and cost of the flats in the apartments at Yendada, Madhurawada, Bheemili, Tagarapavalasa and a few other places in the city will witness a steep jump as the majority of the people will buy flats as an investment in the wake of Chief Minister

- Plans to buy apartments would remain a dream for thousands of families
- The real estate businessmen are expecting a big boost in the sector after Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's proposal to develop Vizag city as Executive Capital

dropped strong hints of developing Vizag as an Executive Capital, he added.

Since Vizag is a beautiful coastal city and most liveable place, the city will witness more high-rise buildings in the coming days as the demand for the flats and land from various parts of the state will increase, he added. The realtors opined that the prices of land and flats in the city may increase at least 30 per cent after the government takes a concrete decision on the Executive Capital. At present over 5,000 flats in the apartments and housing societies are up for sale at various places in the city, mostly on the city's outskirts, said B Ramachandra Rao, a realtor in Vizag city.

Change of capital not good for State: Kanna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP State president Kanna Lakshminarayana on Saturday expressed surprise at capital changing with the change of Chief Minister and noted that this was the first time he encountered such a phenomenon in the State's history. He termed the decision not good for the State's development.

He noted that the Centre would not interfere with the mindless decisions taken by the YSRCP. However, the BJP's State unit president's remarks run counter to the remarks passed by the BJP MP.

Kanna said that the BJP was committed to decentralised development of the State and remarked that development under the leadership of YS Jaganmohan Reddy would be a myth. He advised the Chief Minister against misusing the taxpayers' money. With 150 Assembly seats under his belt, the Chief Minister was in the grip of sense of insecurity, he alleged and said that he was at a loss of comprehension why Jagan was in the grip of fear. He advised the Chief Minister against harassing the people out of vendetta for Opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu. What steps Jagan contemplated against those who indulged



in insider trading in Amaravati during the past six months, he demanded. Who stopped Jagan from taking disciplinary action against the corrupt, he wondered.

The State government went on record three months ago on the corruption in the Polavaram project, but so far there was no action against the erring, why? The government reviewed the power-purchase agreements (PPAs) without exposing the corruption in reaching the PPAs, he observed and reiterated that the government should not harass the people. He asked the government to take action against the corrupt, if it can. He alleged that the government foisted cases against the BJP workers for their fault of resisting the YSRCP leaders from encroaching the public park in Kakinada.

Builders' JAC opposes three capitals in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Members of CREDAI, NAREDCO, BNI, AITUC and other construction workers' organisations JAC strongly condemned the GN Rao Committee recommendations, proposing three capitals for AP.

Addressing media persons here on Saturday, CREDAI president A Siva Reddy said that the JAC was worried over the proposal on change of capital.

He reminded that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy compared AP with South Africa and announced three capitals even before the GN Rao Committee submitted its report on the issue.

He said that the government should rethink on the decisions and take corrective steps if it is wrong. He said that the people of Krishna and Guntur districts will not accept the government's decision but oppose it strongly. Siva Reddy said that AP has a long coastline and is geographically well spread, making travelling between Kurnool and Srikulam difficult.

Chiranjeevi supports three capitals concept

Continued from Page 1

"The expert committee recommendations pave the way for removal of socioeconomic inequalities. Earlier, the development of the state was concentrated in addition, and around Hyderabad, while other regions faced neglect leading to socioeconomic and regional imbalance." "What would be the fate of the North Coastal AP and Rayalaseema if the state government were to spend an additional Rs 1 lakh-crore on development of state capital at Amaravati having amassed debt to the tune of Rs 3 lakh-crore," Chiranjeevi asked. He said that the three capitals concept would provide security to children of migrant labour-



ers, who are leaving their villages for greener. At the same time, Chiranjeevi wanted the government to dispel the sense of insecurity and apprehensions from the minds of farmers of capital region and initiate measures to render justice to them and so as not to cause any loss to them.

'Centre won't remain silent on 3 capitals'

Continued from Page 1

He advised the state government to focus on decentralisation of development rather than decentralisation of administration. He said that he is at a loss to understand, who was advising the government on capital issue. "If the YSRCP government behaves as it likes and wastes taxpayers' money, Centre won't keep mum", he said. "Moreover, the Centre would not give financial support to the State for change of capital," he said. The MP said that the Centre gave funds for Amaravati, which was unprecedented in country's history, adding that he would discuss the issue with the senior functionaries in the government.

UP rocked by anti-CAA violence, toll at 15

Continued from Page 1

Police had to lob tear gas shells and use canes to chase them away, and fire tenders were rushed to control the flame. ADG (Kanpur) Prem Prakash said RAF has been called out along with 'Vajr' vehicles to control the situation. Samajwadi Party MLA Amitabh Bajpai and former MLA and SP leader Kamlesh Tewari have been arrested as a precautionary measure and their vehicles have also been seized. Officials said that crowds gathered in areas like Babupurva, Nai Sadak, Moolganj, Dalepurva and Haleem College and police in large numbers was deployed to keep a watch over the situation. Clashes broke out in

Rampur between anti-CAA protesters and police on Saturday, resulting in injuries to several people, including policemen, officials said. Around 400 to 500 people gathered here to protest against the amended Citizenship Act amid a bandh call and five of them were taken into preventive custody, they said. Five protesters were hospitalised and the condition of one of them was stated to be critical, District Magistrate (DM) Aunjaneya Singh said. "Over a dozen policemen also suffered minor injuries during stone-pelting by the protesters, including children aged between 12 and 18 years," he told PTI. Another dozen protesters suffered minor injuries due to tear gas shelling by the police, Singh said.

Protests show anger spilling out on the streets: Pawar

Continued from Page 1

"It is felt that these laws may disturb the country's social and religious harmony; a particular religion seems to be the target. The government has created an atmosphere of instability," Pawar said. He said that in view of this, the NCP voted against the CAA in Parliament, intellectuals and litterateurs are opposing it and now at least eight states have announced they would not implement it.

"It appears a rift is being deliberately created between the Centre and states. The country is facing a severe financial crisis. Attention is sought to be diverted from the economic woes through all this. For no reason at all, such a situation has been created," the senior leader said. Pawar said the proposal to give citizenship to "NRIs" from only three countries - Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan -- is also questionable, and asked why all others were kept out of its purview.

CM launches YSR Nethanna Nestham

Continued from Page 1

Every handloom weaver would get Rs 24,000 as part of the scheme launched by the government, he said. The Chief Minister said nearly 85,000 weaver families in the State would benefit from the scheme. Every weaver would get Rs 1.2 lakh in five years. Recalling that 57 weavers of Anantapur district committed suicide during the Chandrababu Naidu rule, Jagan said the families of the weavers who committed suicide would get a financial assistance of Rs 3.5 crore. He said all the Navaratnas promised in the manifesto were being implemented in the past six months of his assuming power. In all, 25 lakh poor people would be given house sites by the next Ugadi. From January 9, every mother would be getting Rs 15,000 through Amma Vodi



programme to educate her children. Auto and taxi drivers were benefited by the Vahana Mitra scheme. Agrigold victims who were suffering for the past five years were given financial aid by the government, he said. Similarly, the government has gone to the aid of the fishermen, he added. The Chief Minister said his strength was the people's blessings and God's grace. He said while the previous gov-

ernment had spent only Rs 500 crore in five years towards social pensions the present government was spending Rs 1,500 crore every month and thereby given confidence to the senior citizens. He said the government has passed a bill reserving 75 per cent of jobs to locals and started village secretariats and village volunteers system to reach out to the people in every nook and corner of the state. The government was following the principle of social justice by providing a place for SC, ST, BC and Minorities in the State Cabinet and has set up a permanent BC Commissionerate. He said the government has provided 4 lakh jobs within four months of coming to power and ensuring that the government schemes reach even the remotest villages in the State.

Vijaya Sai: Exercise on to increase AP districts to 25

Continued from Page 1

Speaking to newsmen, Vizag District Collector V Vinay Chand said that they are yet to receive any communication from the government on making Vizag city the Executive Capital of Andhra Pradesh. Vizag has huge chunk of government lands at the city's outskirts and is ideal for the Executive Capital, Vinay Chand, said. Sources said that district administration was on the job to identify the suitable lands between Madhurawada and Anandapuram for the proposed Executive Capital.

Farmers' protests continue to rock Amaravati

Continued from Page 1

At Mandadam, which has emerged as the nerve centre of the farmers' agitation, and also at Rayapudi and Velagapudi, the situation is volatile. Farmers at these places have been gathering on the roads for the past four days and staging novel protests. Demanding that Amaravati remain the only Capital of the State, the farmers said centralised governance would not hamper decentralised development. The farmers said that the GN Rao Committee report had not only destroyed the future of their children but also dealt a deadly blow to their sources of income. They said that they would not call off their agitation until the proposal of three Capitals in

the State was withdrawn. The farmers said when the YSRCP was in the Opposition, it had supported the Naidu government's decision to build the State Capital at Amaravati. Even YSRCP president YS Jaganmohan Reddy had endorsed the Capital at Amaravati, but now he was setting the regions against one another, they alleged. Questioning the very constitution of the GN Rao Committee, the farmers alleged that the panel had taken unilateral decisions and not holding consultations with those who had parted with 33,000 acres of land. The farmers said the GN Rao Committee's recommendations were unethical and wanted them not to be implemented.

Over 1,000 academicians support of CAA, release statement

Continued from Page 1

The petition had come after the Lok Sabha had passed the bill and before it was passed in the Rajya Sabha. Later, 600 artistes, writers, academicians, former judges and former bureaucrats had urged the government to withdraw the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, terming it as "discriminatory, divisive" and violative of the secular principles enshrined in the Constitution. The signatories to the statement congratulated Parliament for "standing up for forgotten minorities", "upholding the civilisational ethos of India" and "providing a haven for those fleeing religious persecution".

Shiv Sena: Atmosphere free as burden of ties with BJP ended

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena on Saturday said that the Uddhav Thackeray-led party has "eased the burden" of relationship with the BJP resulting into a "free atmosphere" not only in Maharashtra but also in the BJP camp.

The Sena, a long-time ally of the BJP, had last month joined hands with ideological rivals Congress and NCP to form a government in Maharashtra with Thackeray as Chief Minister. In an editorial in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana' on Saturday, the Sena took a dig at the BJP over disgruntled leaders Eknath Khadse and Pankaja Munde.

"The BJP should stop making comments like it is ready to talk to us. Some members of the BJP have even said that they will not sit in the Opposition for long. However, as the Shiv Sena has eased the burden of relationship with the BJP, Maharashtra is also feeling lighter and there is a free atmosphere now," it said.

In fact, the atmosphere is so free and lighter now that BJP



leader Eknath Khadse is speaking his mind openly, the Sena said, apparently referring to Khadse's open criticism of certain BJP leaders for the electoral losses. Khadse's recent meeting with NCP chief Sharad Pawar and CM Thackeray had triggered a speculation over his future political journey.

"He (Khadse) met Sharad Pawar and also held discussions with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. He now courageously says that he is free to take his own decision. The same is true with (former BJP minister) Pankaja Munde. Everybody is

feeling relieved of stress now," the Sena stated.

The Sena also fired barbs at former chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis over his criticism of Thackeray. Fadnis had questioned whether Uddhav Thackeray had promised his late father Bal Thackeray to install a CM of the Sena in Maharashtra by taking the help of the Congress. "It seems that the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly (Fadnis) is still obsessed with power. It will take him some time to adjust. Those who aimed for power by break-

Armed forces owe success to intel, says Naravane



PNS ■ PUNE

No military operation is successful without the support of intelligence agencies, Vice Chief of Army Staff and Army Chief-designate Lt General Manoj Naravane said here on Saturday.

The Lt General was speaking at the launch of former journalist Nitin Gokhale's book 'R N Kao: Gentleman Spymaster'.

"Military operations and intelligence go hand in hand. In fact, whenever we have an operational briefing, it always starts with 'khabar dushman ke bare main' (news about our enemies) and that 'khabar' is what we get from our intelligence operatives," Lt. General Naravane said.

'IAF will continue to play critical role in security domain'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Asserting that the Indian Airforce will continue to play a critical role in the security domain, IAF Chief R K S Bhaduria said on Saturday the present decade is likely to witness significant changes in nature and methodologies of warfare.

Since inception, the IAF has always undertaken challenging roles, he said. "The present decade is likely to witness significant changes in nature and methodologies of warfare, particularly in the sub-conventional domain," Bhaduria said.

"The Indian Air Force will continue to play a critical role in the security domain and you will be part of the core set of people who will be called upon to deliver," he said at the Combined Graduation Parade held at Air Force Academy, Dundigal near here. He expressed confidence that the Flight Cadets, who successfully completed training, would meet all challenges head on in the endeavor and accom-



IAF Chief R K S Bhaduria

plish every task to perfection.

"While we prepare to fight the enemy across the entire spectrum of warfare, we must also proactively assist the nation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations and any other support role that emerges," he added. He exhorted the newly-commissioned officers to be professionally competent, confident and fearless in order to deliver as future leaders of the Air Force. The Parade marked the successful completion of training for 127 Flight Cadets of Flying and Ground Duty branches of IAF, according to an official release.

SHORT READS



Modi reviews performance of ministries

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the progress made by various ministries in the last six months after the BJP returned to power for the second consecutive term. In the meeting that is likely to continue till the evening, brief presentations are being made by ministries on various decisions taken by them, sources in the government said. The sources said the focus would be on agriculture, rural development and the social sector. The meeting comes in the backdrop of protests in various cities against the amended citizenship law and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens exercise.

2 Pak soldiers killed in retaliatory action along LoC in J-K

JAMMU: At least two Pakistani soldiers were reported to have been killed on Saturday in an exchange of fire with the Indian Army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Akhnoor sector of Jammu and Kashmir, defence sources said. They said the Pakistani troops violated ceasefire and fired on forward posts in Pallanwalla area of Akhnoor which was effectively retaliated. In the morning, the Indian Army spotted two bodies near the LoC. However, a physical verification could not be carried out because of tense situation along the border, the sources said.

Gambhir says he received death threats over phone

NEW DELHI: BJP MP Gautam Gambhir has approached the Delhi Police, alleging he has received death threats from a caller using an international number. The East Delhi MP has written to the deputy commissioners of Shahdara and Central districts about the threats received by him on Friday. He urged police to ensure the safety and security of his family.

Situation improving in Delhi, security tight

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The situation in areas hit by violence during protests against the new citizenship law is gradually returning to normal, police said on Saturday, and assured that a heavy deployment of security personnel has been made in Old Delhi and Seemapuri areas.

Stone-pelting and incidents of violence were reported from Daryaganj in Old Delhi and Seemapuri in northeast part of the national capital on Friday.

Manish Seth, secretary of Daryaganj Traders' Association, said all shops in the area opened on Saturday morning and there's no unrest. He said police have been keeping a tight vigil. A senior police officer from Shahdara district said situation was under control in the area. "Delhi Police have dominated the area and are conducting flag marches since Friday evening to ensure that no untoward incident is reported," he added.

Venkaiah Naidu to give away '19 National Awards

DADASAHEB PHALKE FOR BACHCHAN



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

President of India. According to sources, President Ram Nath Kovind will host high tea for the winners later. In 2018, President Kovind had presented only a handful few set of awards during the ceremony which was divided into two phases.

The first set of awards were conferred by Union Ministers Smriti Irani and Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, while the President presented the second lot. The winners of 66th National Film Awards were announced in August this year with Gujarati film "Hellaro" bagging the Best Film honour.

Calm prevails in Mangaluru; curfew relaxed for two hours

PNS ■ MANGALURU

Mangaluru city which is under a curfew remained calm under heavy police security on Saturday while prohibitory orders were lifted for two hours from 6 a.m to enable people to purchase essential items.

City police Commissioner P S Harsha said the curfew will continue till Sunday night in the commissionerate limits as a precautionary measure after the violent clashes between protesters agitating against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the police on Thursday. Owners of some shops who had only a little stock left on Saturday, sold their items within the two hours.

Many people complained that they were not aware of the relaxation of the curfew as it was announced only on local television channels.

Mobile internet services which were suspended are expected to be restored by



Saturday night. Vehicles barring city buses, autorickshaws were seen plying.

District in-charge Minister Kota Srinivas Poojary, who held meetings with the district Deputy Commissioner and senior police officers on Friday, said the situation here is stable and briefed the Chief Minister on the developments.

Meanwhile, a case has been booked by the Mangaluru South police against former state minister and Mangaluru

9 women rescued from prostitution racket at posh spa

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Nine women were rescued from a prostitution racket at a popular spa in Prabhadevi area of Central Mumbai, police said on Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off, officials from the Mumbai police's Anti-Narcotics Cell raided the spa, situated in a plush residential tower, on Friday and rescued nine women from the premises, an official said.

The police found immoral activities being carried out at the spa, deputy commissioner of police (ANC) Shivdeep Lande said.

The police have arrested Salim Shaikh, who owns the establishment, the official said, adding that the woman who was in-charge of the illegal activities has been issued a notice under Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

An offence has been registered under Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act and relevant sections of the IPC at Dadar police station, he said.

Cong steps up campaign against CAA in Kerala

PNS ■ KOCHI

Vowing to "protect the Constitution of India", the Congress in Kerala led by its top leaders on Saturday organised massive protests in all district headquarters as part of strengthening its campaign against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

Senior Congress leaders including Ramesh Chennithala, Mullappally Ramachandran, Shashi Tharoor, Benny Behanan and M M Hassan participated in the campaign.

Leaders including MPs MLAs and workers of the party courted arrest in many districts. In some places including Kochi, Wayanad and Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram the workers tried to break the police barricades and tried to enter central government institutions, leading to minor scuffles with police personnel.

Inaugurating the protest in



Malappuram district in North Kerala, which has been witnessing a series of agitations against the CAA, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, Chennithala alleged the BJP and its government at the Centre were trying to divide the people of the country as Hindus and Muslims.

"It is a fight against authoritarianism and fascism. The government is using brute force to

"Networks are down in many cities including the national capital and the basic rights of the people are denied in Modi's new digital India," he alleged

Shah are trying to change the basic structure of the Constitution. How can they undermine the Supreme Court verdict in the Kesavananda Bharati case and bring such an unconstitutional amendment. Now we have challenged the CAA in the Supreme Court. I am certain that the new law would be thrown into dustbin," Chennithala said. State Congress chief Mullappally Ramachandran

inaugurated the agitation in Kasargod district.

Addressing the Congress workers, he said students and academics in universities across the country are on the path of agitation against the CAA.

"Networks are down in many cities including the national capital and the basic rights of the people are denied in Modi's new digital India," he alleged.

He accused the BJP and the RSS of trying to demolish the basic structure of the Constitution and convert India a Hindu Rashtra.

Criticising the government for denying Muslims citizenship on the basis of religion and branding the ongoing protests by the people a communal issue, Ramachandran said, "the Congress will always stand with India's minorities. We are ready to die for you. It is the party of Mahatma Gandhi who sacrificed his life for the people of the country".

UP police did not open fire during anti-CAA protests: DGP OP Singh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Police chief on Saturday maintained that police did not open fire during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, suggesting that those who died were caught in cross-firing between protesters.

At least 11 people, including an 8-year-old boy, died as protests against the contentious law in the state turned violent on Friday.

According to officials, four deaths were reported from Meerut district and two from Kanpur and the boy was killed in a stampede in Varanasi when a violent mob was being chased by policemen. Two people lost their lives in Bijnor and one each in Sambhal and Firozabad, they said.

"All the deaths took place in



cross-firing and this will become clear in the post-mortem examination," said Director General of Police (DGP), Uttar Pradesh, O P Singh. "We are clear and transparent on this. If anyone died due to our firing, we will conduct a judicial inquiry and take action. But nothing happened from our side," he asserted.

On Friday, protesters clashed with police at several places in the state, hurling stones at them and torching vehicles. Fifty policemen were seriously injured in the violence, the officials said.

Of the 75 districts in the state, one-fourth have been affected. Thousands gathered after Friday prayers and defied the law, Singh said.

He said "outsiders" were involved in the violence and members of political parties and NGOs could also have been present.

According to the DGP, police had reached out to religious leaders and they had assured that there would be peace. "But still protesters gathered and indulged in violence and at some places they also fired with illegal weapons," he said.

We Assamese are fighters to the core, our voices will prevail: Samujjal

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The opposition to the amended citizenship law will go on in a Gandhian way till it is revoked, says AASU's chief advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya, asserting that Assamese people are fighters to the core and their voices will prevail.

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which led the historic Assam agitation from 1979-85, is now spearheading the anti-citizenship law movement.

The protesters are seeking that the new legislation be revoked, saying it "violates" the Assam Accord of 1985.

"We fought the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB) tooth and nail, and we are against this CAA, and people of Assam will continue to oppose this with

unrelenting spirit. We will not give up, our fight shall go on till the CAA is revoked," Bhattacharya said.

The AASU leader, who was also part of the Assam agitation, asserted that the anti-CAA movement has witnessed "unprecedented solidarity" from people who defied curfews like never before to protest peacefully and democratically to make their voices heard.

"I saw how people protested in Assam movement of 80s, but the way Assamese have come out in such huge numbers in such a short period, and at times spontaneously, speaks volumes for the pain they are suffering due to the imposition of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. People of Assam have rejected the CAA," Bhattacharya told PTI in an



interview.

When asked whether the AASU and the masses will be able to sustain the momentum in the long run if the government does not respond to their demands, he said, "We Assamese are fighters to the core."

"And this movement is not about Hindus, Muslims or Bengalis, but about all Assamese, irrespective of their religious faith or economic class, it's about our Assam and Assamese pride. Practising Gandhian values, we have uncompromisingly protested

When asked whether the AASU and the masses will be able to sustain the momentum in the long run if the government does not respond to their demands, he said, "We Assamese are fighters to the core."

with 'satyagraha' and 'ahimsa'. And, I feel that voices of people will prevail eventually," he said.

Hearing a batch of pleas challenging the CAA, the Supreme Court on Wednesday decided to examine the constitutional validity of the act but refused to stay its operation.

The newly-amended law seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslim migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Parsi com-

unities who came to the country from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014.

"We Assamese people protested peacefully when the curfew was on, defied it and courted arrest as it our right to protest against a law which we know is against Assam and its people. And the CAA violates the Assam Accord of 1985," said the chief advisor of AASU, who has been one of the vocal

faces of this movement.

The accord clearly mandated that all illegal Bangladeshi immigrants coming after the all-accepted cut-off date of March 24, 1971 will be detected and deported, irrespective of their religion, he said.

"Our premise is very simple, we don't want any more illegal foreign immigrants coming and settling in Assam, we have already accommodated far too many beyond our capacity. And we don't want our Assamese culture to be diluted, or become a minority in our own home state," Bhattacharya said.

The AASU has been holding protests across Assam. In Guwahati, a huge number of people have been gathering at two main venues -- Latasil playground and AEI grounds in Chandmari -- to register their dissent.

In a protest called by the artiste community of Assam and supported by the AASU and other outfits on Thursday, Bhattacharya had alleged that the government seeing the "unflagging spirit" of the people was using the "triple play" of "daman, pralobhan, and vibhajan (suppression, enticement and division) to "weaken the movement".

"But we will not bend or relent but fight for our motherland," he said, as slogans of "Jai Ai Axom" (Glory to Mother Assam) and "CAA aami namanu" (Will not accept CAA) rent the air. Men and women, many wearing traditional 'gamosas', raised their hands in unison, reaffirming the resolve to fight the contentious legislation.

SHORT READS



Historian Guha terms CAA as 'immoral'

BENGALURU: Eminent historian and writer Ramachandra Guha on Saturday termed the Citizenship Amendment Act as "immoral" and "against the spirit of the Constitution" and said a wise and just government would withdraw it. He also noted that immediate withdrawal of the NRC was a necessary first step to restore trust and heal the nation. "To make two things absolutely clear: 1. The immediate withdrawal of the NRC is a necessary first step to restore trust and heal the nation. 2. The CAA is immoral and against the spirit of the Constitution. A wise and just Government would withdraw it too," Guha tweeted. Guha was among many others who were detained on Thursday for staging a demonstration against the Citizenship Amendment Act and NRC near the Town Hall here, in defiance of the prohibitory orders imposed in the city.

Two nabbed from Guj for robbing jewellery store in Pune

VADODARA: Two armed robbers, who had allegedly decamped with valuables worth over 10 lakh from a jewellery store in Maharashtra's Pune city, were arrested in Vadodara, police said on Saturday. The Vadodara crime branch helped the Maharashtra police nab Sushil Ashok Madhre and Amit Sudershan Prasad Chaudhary from a guest house in the railway station area on Friday, inspector J J Patel of the crime branch said. The accused had decamped with valuables worth over Rs 10.19 lakh from a jewellery store in Pune's Kothrud area on November 24, he said, adding that the act was captured by CCTV cameras. Madhre, a dismissed police constable, has been involved in three cases of robbery in Maharashtra, Patel said. The duo had been on the run since last month and had stayed in Delhi and Kolkata before coming to Vadodara, he said.

Daryaganj violence: Bhim Army chief arrested

NEW DELHI: Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad has been arrested in connection with the violence in Old Delhi's Daryaganj, police said on Saturday. Aazad's outfit had organised a march from Jama Masjid to Jantar Mantar on Friday against the new citizenship law, despite not having permission from police. On Friday evening, after security personnel tried to detain him during the march, Aazad surfaced inside the mosque. He had given the Delhi police a slip to reach the mosque. He came outside Jama Masjid early Saturday and was detained. He was arrested later, police said. After being detained, Aazad was kept at the Crime Branch office in Chanakyaपुर since he said he was unwell. He was later handed over to the central district police, they added. Following his arrest, he was taken to a hospital for a medical check-up and will be produced in a court. Police suspect he instigated the crowd which turned violent near Delhi Gate and burnt a car.

NRC, CAA ploy to divert people's attention from eco slump: MNS

PNS ■ PUNE

MNS president Raj Thackeray on Saturday virtually dubbed the new citizenship law and proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) as ploys by the Centre to divert the attention of people from the "economic crisis".

Thackeray also raised questions over the proposed "influx" of immigrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh to India under the recently-passed Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

"There is a riot-like situation in the country due to the violence over CAA and NRC. I wonder how many people have understood these two decisions. There are different aspects to these two issues," he told reporters.

For the first time, I would like to congratulate (Union Home Minister and BJP chief) Amit Shah for the "political game" he has played for suc-



MNS president Raj Thackeray

cessfully diverting the attention of people from recession and economic crisis, Thackeray said.

The CAA proposes to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslim refugees escaping religious persecution from

Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which has triggered massive protests across the country.

"If you can cast your vote showing Aadhaar card as proof then why can't that document prove your citizenship? Why

Referring to CAA provisions, the MNS chief said India with a '135 crore population' do not need more people

were people made to undergo biometric screening?" he asked.

Referring to CAA provisions, the MNS chief said India with a "135 crore population" do not need more people.

There is no need to paint it as an issue between Hindu and Muslims, he said.

Thackeray also said India is not a "dharma-shala" or a charity shelter where illegal immigrants can come and settle down.

"It is important to check how many Bangladeshis, Pakistanis have entered India from the Nepal border," the MNS chief

said even as he appealed to Muslims in India to not feel insecure.

He demanded an inter-state migration act to enable government authorities to identify illegal migrants.

Thackeray also criticised the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena for joining hands with the Congress and the NCP to form a new government.

He said that that decision was not gone down well with the common people, who will express it in the next elections.

"The good part of the (October 2019) Assembly elections was that most of the defectors who crossed over to other parties got defeated," he said.

Thackeray said the first state-level convention of the MNS will be held in Mumbai on January 23.

The Raj Thackeray-led party has only one MLA in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly.

AAP needs to set target of winning over 67 seats: Kejri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party needs to set a target of winning more seats in the upcoming election than it won in the 2015 polls when it secured 67 of the 70 assembly seats, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal told party members on Saturday.

Kejriwal said the party members should fight the upcoming election with all their strength.

"There is just over a month left for assembly elections in Delhi and since Delhi is party's base from where it started we have to strongly fight the election," he told party members at the eighth national council meeting. "Our target is also very big. Last time, we won 67 seats and this time, we should not get less than that but more than that number"

Our target is also very big. Last time, we won 67 seats and this time, we should not get less than that but more than that number



— ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Chief Minister of Delhi

the national capital for preparation and campaigning for the election due in Delhi next year. Kejriwal said his party has changed the political discourse and forced the BJP to talk about development issues in Delhi. "It is the same BJP that ask for votes based on Jat and non-Jat in Haryana and Hindu-Muslim in rest of the country but in Delhi, it has been forced to talk about development. The agenda of BJP of Hindu-Muslim politics does not work in Delhi.

Jaishankar begins 2-day visit to Iran

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar will embark on a two-day visit to Iran from Sunday, where he will co-chair the 19th Joint Commission Meeting with his Iranian counterpart, Javed Zarif.

Jaishankar is also expected to call upon Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

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

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

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



The Chabahar port — jointly being developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan — is considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade with central Asian nations by the three countries

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

RJD's bandh brings normal life in Bihar to a grinding halt

PNS ■ PATNA

Bihar was rocked by large-scale vandalism and disruption of rail and road traffic on Saturday during a bandh call by the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal in protest against the amended Citizenship Act and the proposed country-wide implementation of the NRC. Carrying bamboo sticks and party flags, bandh supporters gathered at bus stands, railway tracks and other vantage points in all districts of the state since the crack of dawn, unfazed by the winter fog and chilly winds.

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

The protesters also smashed windshields of taxis and three-wheelers and damaged cycle-rickshaws that plied on the roads in defiance of the call for the shutdown at the towns of Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and outskirts of Patna.

At many places, the bandh supporters included children of not more than 10-15 years of age and some of the agitators were in their underwear.

Tejashwi Yadav, leader of the opposition in the state Assembly and heir apparent of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, marched in a large procession from the party office in Bir



The protesters also smashed windshields of taxis and three-wheelers and damaged cycle-rickshaws that plied on the roads in defiance of the call for the shutdown at the towns of Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and outskirts of Patna

Chand Patel Marg here to Dak Bungalow crossing, throwing traffic on the busy Fraser Road and Bailey Road out of gear.

At some places in Patna, workers of the party known for their strong arm tactics to enforce bandhs, tried an image makeover by presenting people with roses and urging them with folded hands to support the shutdown in "national interest".

The shutdown, that came two days after a bandh was called on the same issue by Left parties, is being supported by other constituents of the Grand Alliance like the Congress and

the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP). RLSP chief Upendra Kushwaha, a former Union minister, took part in a march in Patna.

Asked about the rationale behind the bandh despite an assurance given by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar that NRC will not be implemented in the state, Kushwaha said, "Such assurances by state governments are meaningless. We must prevent the Centre from taking such a step. The ball has been set rolling with the Citizenship Amendment Act which Kumar's party supported."

MP Binoy Viswam, five CPI activists arrested

PNS ■ MANGALURU

CPI Rajya Sabha MP from Kerala Binoy Viswam and some party activists who staged a protest here against the CAA on Saturday defying curfew, were detained, police said.

The protesters raised 'Save India, Save Democracy' slogans and criticised the Yediyurappa government for its actions against those protesting against the new law.

Six protesters including Binoy Viswam were detained, police said.

Meanwhile, police have restricted the entry of former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to the city, which was rocked by violent protests against the CAA leaving two dead in



police firing, during the period when curfew is in place.

City police commissioner P S Harsha has served notice on Siddaramaiah restraining the latter from entering the city limits till Sunday midnight, police said.

The notice bars Siddaramaiah from flying into the city from Bengaluru, Hubballi, Mysuru, and Goa airports.

His entry through road, rail, and air has also been barred. The notice also mentions

that no one can facilitate his travel into the city.

A delegation of senior Congress leaders who landed in Mangaluru to meet those injured and bereaved families of the two deceased on Friday were denied permission and detained at the airport here.

The delegation included Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council S R Patil, former Home Minister and MLA M B Patil, former Speaker and MLA K R Ramesh Kumar and former MP V S Ugrappa. Siddaramaiah also had to cancel his trip to Mangaluru from Bengaluru on getting information that the chartered aircraft he was to take was denied permission to land at the airport.

CPI(M) URGES PROTESTERS TO CONTINUE THEIR AGITATION

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) on Saturday appealed to protesters to continue their agitation peacefully against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and demanded that the contentious legislation be withdrawn and the NRC process be discontinued. Thousands of people have been agitating in various parts of the country since December 11, when the contentious citizenship bill was passed in Parliament.

"We appeal to the people to continue the protests peacefully against the anti-Constitutional Citizenship Amendment Act and the connected NRC/NPR. We



condemn the prohibition on protests and excessive use of force by the police against peaceful protesters in many places," CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury tweeted.

"India has long been respected globally for its democratic credentials, freedom to protest, commitment to pluralism, with commitment to a progressive constitution," he said.



'Activists' arrest in Elgar Parishad case wrong'

PNS ■ PUNE

Terming the arrest of activists in the Elgar Parishad case "wrong" and "vengeful", NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday demanded that a Special Investigation Team be set up under a retired judge to probe the action taken by Pune police.

Pawar also demanded that the police officers involved with the arrests be suspended. "It is wrong to imprison the activists on the charge of sedition. Voicing extreme views is allowed in democracy. The action of Pune police is wrong and vengeful. It is a misuse of power by the police commissioner and some of the officers. They had attacked the basic freedom of speech and one cannot be a mute spectator to all this," Pawar said.

"We will demand the chief minister that an SIT headed by a retired judge be instituted to probe the police action," he said.

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

PNS ■ FAIZABAD (UP)

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



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

Quasim and Mohammad Akhtar while the third accused in the case, Sajjad Ur Rahman, was acquitted due to lack of evidence.

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

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

Students cut short field trip under threat?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A group of students from Jamia Millia Islamia on Friday claimed they had to cut short their field trip to Haryana's Panipat district after some villagers asked them to "leave or face the consequences".

Panipat's Superintendent of Police Sumit Kumar, however, denied any such incident and said the students did not complain about anything during their stay in the district.

One of the students, part of the 43-member group from Jamia's Social Work Department, said the incident happened on Tuesday when they were attending a 10-day rural camp in Patti Kalyana,



Haldana and Garhi Tyagyan villages. "The rural camp started on the morning of December 15, the day violence erupted near Jamia Millia Islamia (against the new citizenship law). Two teachers and two non-teaching staff accompa-

nied us on the trip," said the student, who did not wish to be identified.

Another student said the group stayed at the Gandhi Ashram near Patti Kalyana village. "We were to carry out awareness drives in the villages

The rural camp started on the morning of December 15, the day violence erupted near Jamia Millia Islamia. 2 teachers and 2 non-teaching staff accompanied us on the trip

as part of the rural camp. The 43 students were divided into three sub-groups, each for a village. On the third day, we went to Patti Kalyana, where we visited a primary school and an anganwadi centre and talked to villagers," he said.

CAPSULE



Bharat Bond ETF oversubscribed 1.7 times

NEW DELHI: The ambitious Bharat Bond ETF has closed for subscription on Friday with over-subscription of 1.7 times, garnering Rs 12,000 crore to be utilised for capex of PSUs. The base size of issue of Rs 7,000 crore. India's first corporate Bond ETF, Bharat Bond ETF, has received a great response from investors across different segments. The issue was over-subscribed approximately 1.7 times, collecting about Rs 12,000 crore. Information is subject to further update," DIPAM Secretary Tunin Kanta Pandey said in a late evening tweet. The exchange-traded fund will invest only in AAA-rated bonds of public sector companies and will have target maturity structures. The ETF with a 3-year maturity will follow the Nifty Bharat Bond Index-April 2023 and the one with a 10-year maturity will follow the Nifty Bharat Bond Index-April 2030. The yield as on 5 December 2019, of Nifty Bharat Bond Index-April 2023 is 6.69 per cent and the Nifty Bharat Bond Index-April 2030 is 7.58 per cent.

'No new ration card needed for inter-state portability'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

No new ration card will be required for availing the portability benefit under the government's ambitious 'one nation, one ration card' initiative to be rolled out across the country from June 2020, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Friday.



Currently, the initiative is being implemented on a pilot basis. Inter-state as well as state level portability is being tried in a cluster approach. The government's aim is to implement the initiative across India from June 1, next year

Currently, the initiative is being implemented on a pilot basis. Inter-state as well as state level portability is being tried in a cluster approach. The government's aim is to implement the initiative across India from June 1, next year.

Under the initiative, eligible beneficiaries would be able to avail their entitled foodgrain under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) from any Fair Price Shop in the country using the same ration card. Paswan, who reviewed the implementation of the initiative, said, "There were reports in some newspapers that new ration cards will be needed for this scheme. It is baseless. No new ration card (is) required. Existing card will be valid pan India".

Beneficiaries will avail subsidised foodgrain using their existing ration card by biometric authentication on electronic point of sale (ePoS) machines, he said in a series of tweets.

The minister said the state

level portability of ration card is fully operational in 12 States and partially in four states.

The 'state-level portability' allows the ration card holders to lift their foodgrain from any ePoS enabled fair price shops (FPS) within their district or state.

Whereas 'inter-state portability' is operational in eight

states in clusters of two-adjointing states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana; Gujarat and Maharashtra; Haryana and Rajasthan and Karnataka and Kerala, the minister added.

"Four more states Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Jharkhand and Tripura will be clubbed with these 8 states from January 1, 2020 to make one cluster,"

Paswan said. He said the beneficiaries from all these 12 states will be able to lift their entitled food-grain from any FPS of these 12 states.

Paswan said the e-biometric authentication of beneficiaries and state-level portability is essential for distribution of foodgrain under the 'One Nation One Ration Card' scheme.

However, Tamil Nadu and Delhi governments are not using ePoS devices in ration shops. Assam government has not taken any initiative so far to install ePoS devices, he said.

In Tamil Nadu, the use of ePoS devices in 34,700 FPSs has not started despite achieving 100 per cent Aadhaar seeding in ration cards.

In Delhi, the use of ePoS devices remain suspended since April 2018 despite implementation of 100 per cent biometric based distribution through ePoS in all its FPSs.

Whereas the Assam government has not yet taken any initiative so far towards the installation of ePoS devices in 38,300 FPSs even after continuous persuasion by the department, he added.

Under the NFSA, about 75 crore beneficiaries have been covered so far against the target of 81.35 crore, as per official data.

Govt allows import of urad dal up to 4 lakh tonne

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has allowed import up to 4 lakh tonnes of urad dal this fiscal only by millers and refiners to boost domestic supply and prevent spike in prices.

Earlier, the government had allowed import of urad up to 1.5 lakh tonne for the fiscal ending March 2020.

"Import of urad shall be subject to an annual quota of 4 lakh MT. Import of urad under the quota restriction will be allowed only to the millers/refiners," said a notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

The restriction, however, will not apply to the government's import commitments under any bilateral or regional agreements.

India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA) Chairman Jitu Bheda had demanded relaxation of norms for import of urad dal.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to offload 8.47 lakh tonne of pulses from its buffer stock to boost domestic availability and ensure stability in prices.

The Centre has offered 3.2 lakh tonne of tur (arhar), 2 lakh tonne of urad, 1.2 lakh tonne of chana, 1.5 lakh tonne of moong and 57,000 tonne of masoor.



Trump signs \$1.4 tn in spending, avoids shutdown

AP ■ WEST PALM BEACH

President Donald Trump has signed off nearly USD 1.4 trillion in spending that will keep the government funded through September 30, dodging the possibility of a shutdown ahead of what's expected to be a contentious election season.

White House deputy press secretary Judd Deere said Trump signed the legislation on Friday aboard Air Force One as he travelled to his Mar-a-Lago resort, where he will be celebrating Christmas and New Year's.

The spending measures, which will add roughly USD 400 billion to the deficit over 10 years, include money for the president's US-Mexico

border fence, pay raises for military and civilian federal workers, and federal funding for election security grants.

The massive spending measures were made public earlier this week and headed off a repeat of last year's end-of-the-year impasse that led to a 35-day partial government shutdown. That showdown stemmed from Trump's demand that Congress sign off on nearly USD 6 billion in funding for the border wall.

Hundreds of thousands of government workers were furloughed or forced to work without pay during the shutdown. Trump skipped his holiday vacation and remained in Washington through the impasse.



TBZ Original says it has no connection with Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri & Sons

NEW DELHI: Leading jeweller Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri or TBZ Original on Friday clarified that it is in no way connected with Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri & Sons Retail, which is facing bankruptcy proceedings. The company, also known as TBZ-The Original, in a BSE filing said it is neither connected nor does have any relation with Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri & Sons Retail Pvt Ltd, which has gone into insolvency proceedings, nor do its promoters or the management hold any shares in the bankrupt jeweller. TBZ-The Original has actor Sara Ali Khan endorsing its brands, and is promoted by industry veteran Shrikant Zaveri, the filing said. This clarification came in after the resolution professional of Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri & Sons Retail put up a public notice on December 16 seeking claims from lenders and non-financial creditors.

'Banking industry's NPA situation to improve by fiscal-end'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar on Saturday said most banks will be in a good position with respect to stressed assets by March and there is no dearth of liquidity in the system for lending.

He added that there are opportunities to lend in sectors such as infrastructure and consumer lending as there is not much of a decline in demand from consumers.

"By March 31st, most of the banks will be in a good position with respect to stressed assets," Kumar said at the 92nd Annual Convention of industry chamber FICCI here.

On transmission of monetary policy, he said the banks cannot lower rates beyond a threshold due to asset liability mismatch issues.

Kumar stated that there is no shortage of capital in the system, but the corporates are not borrowing enough and not utilising their capacities well.

On lending to the telecom sector for the next round of spectrum auctions, he said,



By March 31st, most of the banks will be in a good position with respect to stressed assets —RAJNISH KUMAR, SBI Chairman

"For us lending to the telecom sector for spectrum is completely unsecured. On paper it is secured as the auction is to be done by government but practically it is totally unsecured."

"So in such circumstances, banks will have to evaluate carefully before lending to the sector as the probability of default is very high," Kumar said.

STT GDC India plans to double data centre capacity in 3 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Data centre company STT GDC India on Friday said it plans to double its capacity in next 3 years to capitalise on data growth in the country.

Majorly owned by Singapore based ST Telemedia, the company on Friday touched 100 megawatt of IT load capacity with launch of new facility in Bengaluru.

"With Bengaluru facility coming up, we have reached 100 megawatt of IT load capacity in India. We are planning to invest beyond this. In next 2-3 year we plan to double our capacity," STT GDC India CEO Sumit Mukhija told PTI.

JSW STEEL'S PLANT AT JAGATSINGHPUR IN ODISHA

Public hearing passes off peacefully

PNS ■ PARADIP

Public hearing for JSW Steel's proposed plant at the site earlier selected for the Posco project, passed off peacefully here on Friday with the district administration of Jagatsinghpur assuring the people that their legitimate demands would be met.

Around 10,000 people from nearby villages participated at the hearing, held at Gadakujang, but the people who are likely to be affected by the proposed project, the residents of Dhinkia, Nuagaon and Noliassahi villages, boycotted the public hearing.

More than 300 people placed their views on the impact of the proposed mega project on the environment.

"The public hearing was absolutely peaceful and many



Odisha State Pollution Control Board's regional officer Ramesh Chandra Ekka and JSW officials were also present in the public hearing

people were allowed to give their opinion on the proposed project," Jagatsinghpur district collector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra told reporters.

"The district administration is aware about the people's grievances and steps will be taken to protect interest of the locals," Mohapatra said.

Odisha State Pollution

Control Board's regional officer Ramesh Chandra Ekka and JSW officials were also present in the public hearing.

The district administration had deployed 25 platoons (one platoon comprises 30 personnel) of the police force, keeping in view the prevailing resentment among the locals.

South Korean steel major

Posco had to abandon its Rs 52,000 crore project at the same site due to stiff opposition of the local people.

However, the situation for JSW's project appears to have changed as the former secretary of Posco Prarodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS), Sisir Mohapatra, has welcomed the project and demanded an ideal rehabilitation and resettlement package for the affected people.

PPSS was the local body of farmers which was opposing the South Korean steel major's project tooth and nail.

All the participants spoke of employment, rehabilitation and impact of pollution on the local community.

All of them demanded that jobs should be provided to the people who would be affected by the project.

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

AFP ■ MUMBAI

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

The ministry of economy, trade and industry on Friday removed photoresists -- used to coat semiconductor circuit



boards -- from Tokyo's export restrictions against Seoul, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper and other reports said.

Japan tightened export controls on three materials essen-

tial to key products of South Korean tech companies such as Samsung in July after a series of South Korean court rulings ordered Japanese firms to compensate war-time forced labour victims.

The move infuriated Tokyo, which insists the matter was settled in a 1965 treaty normalising diplomatic relations between the two countries, which included significant reparations.

AI employee unions seek waiver of loans

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Several employee unions of Air India on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding waiver of the airline's loans and run it by a professional management.

Against the backdrop of the government working out the modalities for Air India disinvestment, seven employee groupings have also said the carrier can be turned around.

"Air India has been reporting operational profit for as long as three years. Servicing the loans is a major challenge as the annual outgo is an upwards of Rs 4,000 crore," they said in a letter.

The letter has been signed by representatives of seven



unions -- Indian Commercial Pilots' Association, Indian Pilots' Guild, Air Corporations Employees' Union, All India Cabin Crew Association, Air India Employees' Union, Indian Aircraft Technicians' Association and All India Aircraft Engineers' Association.

The unions have urged the government to consider waiving the credits and have the airline run by a professional management.

"We have immense faith, that taking these actions will indeed find Air India in the league of profit making carriers, once again."

"... Air India can be turned around and run successfully in the hands of professionals if the government intends for it to," the letter said.

Govt reforms special economic zones framework

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Friday announced reforms to the existing SEZ legal framework whereby provisions for minimum land area and sector specific and multi-product SEZs have been amended.

Henceforth, all existing and new SEZs would become multi-sector SEZs thereby enabling coexistence of a SEZ unit from any sector along with any other SEZ unit.

Further, the provisions governing the minimum land area requirement for setting up of SEZs have also been relaxed and simplified, an official statement said.

"The amendment which were notified today are expected to be a major step in unlocking the potential of SEZs to attract investments and boost exports," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said.



Soldiers in remote areas can now use VSAT to call families

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 1,400 remote locations where Indian soldiers are posted will be connected with satellite communications system or VSAT which will help these jawans to communicate with their families over phone, the government said on Friday.

Military and paramilitary soldiers stationed in those remote locations will get 1 GB data per day through VSAT facility.

"Digital Communication Commission (DCC) today approved to use VSAT for connecting 1,409 remote locations provided by the Ministry of Defence and Home Ministry where jawans are posted. We will provide free 1 GB data daily which they can use to make calls to their families," Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash told reporters.

He said that at present these soldiers at these locations depend on community or village telephones to connect with their families.

"With this system, soldiers

Military and paramilitary soldiers stationed in those remote locations will get 1 GB data per day through VSAT facility

will be able to subscribe connections at very cheap rate and make calls to their families at a nominal price," Prakash said.

The VSAT will provide data download speed of 1-10 megabit per second.

The DCC, apex decision making body at the Department of Telecom, approved providing digital connectivity to 4,087 uncovered villages in 112 aspirational districts across the country. This will also include connectivity to all 144 unconnected villages in Jammu and Kashmir and Leh union territories, Prakash said.

'Steel industry may face disruption on expiry of mining leases'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-run SAIL on Saturday said the steel industry may face disruption post March 2020 when a number of mining leases expire.

A clutch of mining leases for coal and iron ore are slated to expire by March next year.

According to the amended Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, these licences will not be renewed and the mines will be allotted through fresh auctions.

"Today perhaps because of the change in the legislation everything has to go through the auction route, which is creating lots of issues and the steel



industry may face disruption by 1.4.2020 because of the auctions of coal mines," SAIL Chairman Anil Kumar Chaudhary said. He was speaking at a session

Today perhaps because of the change in the legislation everything has to go through the auction route, which is creating lots of issues and the steel industry may face disruption by 1.4.2020 because of the auctions of coal mines — ANIL KUMAR CHAUDHARY, SAIL Chairman

on India: Roadmap To A USD 5 Trillion Economy' organised by industry chamber FICCI here.

Another concern for the industry is high input cost, Chaudhary said.

Today the production cost of steel in India is the highest and one of the major factors contributing to this are the taxes, he said.

Royalty is close to 20 per

cent on the input material, whether it is coal or iron ore. Freight cost is higher than what is being paid in other countries. Electricity also adds to the high production cost, Chaudhary said.

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

sised.

Coking coal and iron ore are the two key raw materials needed for making steel.

"As far iron ore is concerned, we have it in abundance. The only thing is the judicial allocation has to happen. Coking coal is not available in our country and the whole industry is dependent on import of coking coal, particularly integrated steel sector imports from Australia, Indonesia, the US etc," he said.

All these challenges need to be addressed for meeting the ambitious 300 MT steel production capacity target set by the government under the National Steel Policy, he added.



POWERPUFF GIRLS

MUSBA HASHMI meets young crusaders from Jharkhand and Rajasthan who have been making a difference in their respective villages with their body of work defying age barriers. Their fight is against age-old contentious issues like child marriage, casteism, illiteracy and child labour. A report

At an age as young as 13, when most girls tend to live in a make-belief world, where everything is sweet and nice, two little warriors decided to initiate a fight against the evils in the society. Meet Arti Kumari and Champa Kumari who feared none and raised their voice against the villains like casteism, child marriage, child labour and illiteracy, that are there in the society since time immemorial.

Hailing from Raipura in Alwar, Rajasthan, Arti is a Class VII student and the second eldest of the four siblings in the family. Her father is a *jawaan* in the Army and is posted in the conflict areas of Kashmir.

Arti's village comprises of many families from backward castes and tribes. The access to social spaces and village infrastructure depends very much on the caste of the person. Arti's family belongs to a higher caste, and therefore is economically and socially more comfortable than many in the community.

Despite the fact that Arti has never faced any discrimination, her zeal to take up the issue of casteism at such a young age amazes everyone. "How can you decide how to treat another person based on their caste? This isn't even something they choose for themselves," she asks passionately.

To eradicate this evil practice, Arti started interacting with the people from the lower castes. But this didn't sit well with many people in her village, not even her family. "My mother used to ask me what I was doing and that the whole village will boycott me, but I told her that they too are human and there is nothing to avoid them. Gradually, my family understood what I was doing, but I had to go through a lot of resistance from the villagers who used to ask my parents whether I am in my senses or not," she tells you.

Not only this, Arti took a step ahead by having a meal in the house of one such family on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

The other thing that kept disturbing Arti was that none of the children from lower castes or the Banjara community went to school. "Initially, it never bothered me. But after I was told about the opportunities that open up when you get educated, I started wondering, 'How would the future for these children be, without education?'" she tells you. This thought made Arti and other children determined to work to change the situation. As a result, today, all 96 children in her village are enrolled in schools around the area.

When Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) started its work here in 2015, every third child in the village was either out-of-school, or not enrolled. Many children worked in the stone quarries for a meager sum of money. The area is also considered to be a source point for child trafficking. Lured by traffickers disguised as contractors, many poor families agree to send their children to work in cities. As a result, many children end up trafficked for illegal purposes.

The Banjara community, a historically nomadic

tribe, lives on the outskirts of the village, ranking the lowest in the societal hierarchy. None of the Banjara children from here ever went to school until 2015.

Guided by the activists, Arti along with other children, tried to understand the rights children have. They were astonished to see how the rights of many children around them were violated regularly. This was especially common in the case of children from the Banjara and other low-caste communities. This realisation made the group ready to take the matter into their own hands.

Driven with the motivation to change the situation of children, Arti contested the Bal Panchayat elections and became an elected member.

"Along with other children, I used to organise rallies, door-to-door campaigns, and personal meetings with parents, highlighting the consequences of ill-practices like child marriage, child labour, and abuse and exploitation of children. However, initially all of them used to drive us away, showing no interest of engaging into any kind of conversation. But, I kept trying until the day they agreed to sit and talk," she says.

Arti and the other members of the Bal Panchayat also played a pivotal role in stopping child marriages happening in their village with the support of village elders and activists.

Among all the challenges, the biggest challenge was to convince the Banjara community people to send their children to school. "Who will take the cattle out for grazing?" "Who will go earn for the family?" "Will the children from the upper caste even talk to our children?" Questions like these hounded the Bal Panchayat members.

Therefore, the group changed their strategy. They started regularly engaging the Banjara children in sports and playing with them. "When we first went to the community, they showed no interest of talking to us. They used to say *hamare bachchon ko bigad degi yeh ladki* and various other things. That time, I felt like giving up. It felt bad because what we were doing was for their own good but still we had to hear such bad things that demotivated us. In this phase of time, what kept us going was the words of BBA activists. They told us that fighting evil is not as easy as it seems and that this was just a small portion of it.

"We started visiting the community regularly. We tried conversing with the children but all went in vain. The parents gave strict instructions to the children to not indulge in any talks with us. Then we started playing games amongst each other. This lured the Banjara children and gradually we earned their trust. We developed a deeper relationship with them. We then were able to convince the children about the importance of education and play. And eventually, both the parents and the children agreed to go to school," she tells you.

The Bal Panchayat also had a Banjara boy elected as the *sarpanch* (head), which was groundbreaking. Arti, as the secretary of the council, continued focusing on regularisation of education for children from the Banjara community. The group



Arti Kumari

I AM HAPPY TO SEE THAT SOME AMOUNT OF EMPOWERMENT HAS COME TO THE GIRL CHILD. TODAY, ANY GIRL GOING TO SCHOOL DOESN'T NEED TO BE ESCORTED FROM HOME — ARTI KUMARI

also campaigned against caste-based discrimination, and for improving the quality of education and infrastructure in their schools.

Arti has also spoken fearlessly against the caste system and reservations on many platforms like rallies and campaigns at the village level. She debates that reservations should be on the basis of one's economic condition, and the benefits should percolate down to the ones who need it the most.

The Gram Panchayat also recognises this Bal Panchayat and thus acts swiftly on children's concerns. Due to their impact, the Block Development Officer and other administrative officials also cooperate with them.

They have collectively been able to contribute to the village's development tremendously, especially the condition of schools. Improved attendance of enrolled children in school owing to regular teachers, improved meals, better student-teacher ratio, and better play grounds have been some of the major achievements of this collaboration.

At this point, the challenge for this group of resilient children is to get the route of an open drain adjacent to their school diverted. The drain overflows during the rains and spews waste around the school and on the play ground, making it inaccessible, and also creating foul smells.

"We have already communicated about this to the Gram Panchayat, and they have told us that they will act on this soon," Arti says, with a twinkle in her eyes that speaks of the confidence these kids have in themselves.

There is a lot of many changes that Arti hopes to see in the girls of her village. "I would want that the girls should feel empowered. Though, the change has come. Earlier, these girls never went to the school without a companion. So if one was absent from the school, the other will not go as well. Most of them preferred staying back at their homes. But now, none of them wants to miss the school. Even if someone is absent, the other will go by her own. This is the change that I would like to see on a larger scale that the girls should come forward and stand for their rights," she says.

While Arti is much wiser than her age, Champa, a resident of Jhamdar village, is no less. She is the Vice President of National Maha Bal Panchayat. She has also won the prestigious Diana Award for her work against child marriages in mica-mining areas of Jharkhand and was felicitated by Dropdi Murmuat, Jharkhand Governor at Raj Bhawan in Ranchi.

Champa Kumari was once a school dropout and used to go to mines to collect mica as her education was never the priority of her family. In the year 2016, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation intervened in Champa's village with the aim to put an end to evil practices like child marriages, child labour, child trafficking and all forms of child exploitation as well as ensuring 100 per cent enrolment of children in school.

"Like me, there were a lot of children in my area who were taken to the mines to collect mica by their parents. Their age was never a concern for the par-



Champa Kumari

ents. Even children as young as eight years were involved in the work. Once the parents thought that the child is big enough to become a helping hand, they would take them to work," she says.

Being a child who had been into mica mining, she understands how hazardous it is and all she wanted was to stop other children from falling prey to such jobs.

Apart from being a mica hub, her village practises child marriage as a tradition, but Champa wanted to put an end to this. Therefore, with the intervention of Champa Kumari and other members of Bal Panchayat two child marriages were foiled in her village.

"I got to know about the marriage through some villagers. A 12-year-old girl was being married off to a man much older to her. I went there along with other members of the Bal Panchayat and we stopped that horrendous act. It was difficult to convince the parents to not marry their daughter in one go, but after multiple attempts we were able to save the girl," she says. In her village, girls aged between 12-14 are usually married to boys between 18-19 years of age.

The whole village stood against Champa, but the young heart had no plans of backtracking. "My parents told me not to intervene in such matters. The villagers used to call us names for not abiding by the so-called laws of the village. But *maime kabhi himmat nahin haari*. I told me parents that the way I was rescued from child labour, it is my responsibility to help others and somehow they were convinced and supported my decision," she tells you.

The largest impact of Champa's efforts that could be seen is the reduction rate of child marriages in her village. She has become a catalyst of change not only in her village, but in the nearby villages as well.

There are many children like Champa who are dedicated to making child friendly nation through developing the collective leadership by children themselves using democratic process across India.



the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Ruler: Strictly for fans

Outdated storyline, tried and tested drama scenes, slow narration, non-practical action scenes, unflattering makeover of Balakrishna, and the list goes on.... makes the film nothing but a huge disappointment

10



11

No shortcut to fixing issues

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

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



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

Lentils and pakodas



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

Just think of the lentils you can recognise by taste and if all you can come up with is *kali dal* and *peeli dal* and may be *sambar*, you need to educate yourself better. The amazing variety of lentils available in India has a potential to make our everyday food much more nutritious and bring a wider flavour profile to our plate. In fact, the awareness about the variety of real foods and ingredients available around us can be instrumental in bringing a desired change in our own health management and the environment of the planet. The regional variety of foods within the country is mind boggling and when I see people lugging gluten-free flours from the west, I wonder when and how would we market our millets better. Recently, when I moved to Dehradun, I was most excited about the local seasonal vegetables, lentils and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

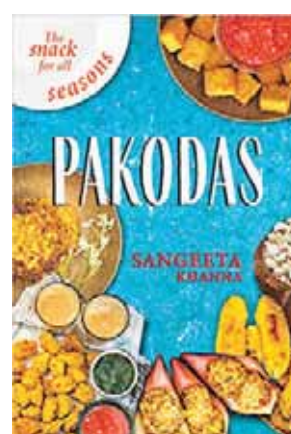
The stone grinders in the southern states are more adapted for the ways the lentils are processed before cooking. To make the lentils digestible and suited for the warm climate, they are soaked and ground into a wet paste before fermenting them in most cases. The stone grinders for wet grinding are in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

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

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

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

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



Pakodas
The Snack for All Seasons

The book explores the regional *pakoda* variants that are deep fried, shallow fried and even steamed or poached in water. There are *pakodas* made of lentils, cereals, millets, roots, shoots, leaves and even flowers, some are made of wild foraged herbs and some even medicinal. Such is the rich heritage of Indian cuisine that each geographical region with a specific set of produce has a bunch of special *pakodas* or deep fried foods that are absolutely healthy if made the right way.

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



FASTING OF A DIFFERENT KIND

Everyone has heard of fasting and dieting. But do you know there is something called skin fasting? Yes, you heard that right!

Skin fasting is a concept which is relatively new and is slowly paving its way into society.

However, for the uninitiated, we bring to you a small guide providing an insight into this practice.

Listed here are a set of do's and don'ts, if you'd like to incorporate it into your skin care regime along with some good ol' doctors' advise, writes ANUSHKA PRADEEP

WHAT IS SKIN FASTING?

Skin fasting encourages the concept of taking a break from one's usual skin care routine in an effort to provide the skin a break from the excessive skin care product usage. The concept revolves around detoxification of the skin by allowing the skin's natural system to work by temporarily distancing oneself from skin care aides.

The trend toward abstinence and "skin fasting" came into being with an upsurge of multiple products flooding the market. It aims to prevent people from falling trap to the 'new and latets' product available on the shelves.

HOW TO PRACTICE SKIN FASTING?

Just like regular fasting, skin fasting can be done by simply applying nothing to your face and cleansing it with luke-warm water.



BENEFITS OF SKIN FASTING

Just like our body, even the skin needs to detox once in a while. And skin fasting is a practice similar to diet restrictions to give your body a break and cleanse from, say food binges.

Skin detox can be helpful for those who use a lot of stimulants like anti-ageing creams, or skin lightening creams, or those who wear too much make-up regularly.

"A slight improvement, however, is advisable to be made into the skin fasting regime, by incorporating the basic essentials of skin care into the fasting practise. One should follow this method by customising the regime based on what suits them best," said Dr Rupa, Consultant Dermatologist, elaborating on the technique.



There are a set of people for whom, it is mandatory to follow a skin care routine. People who have eczema, acne-prone skin, or sensitive skin in general, have to use certain products to keep their skin healthy. Abstaining from these products even for a couple of days may have adverse effects on their skin. Skin fasting is hence, not suggested for such people



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

"There are a set of people for whom, it is mandatory to follow a skin care routine. People who have eczema, acne-prone skin, or sensitive skin in general, have to use certain products to keep their skin healthy. Abstaining from these products even for a couple of days may have adverse effects on their skin. Skin fasting is hence, not suggested for such people," Dr Rupa adds.

"People with a skin type compatible for skin-fasting can definitely try it as long as they ensure they don't skip on the basic essentials. Basic skin care products, such as cleansers, moisturisers and sunscreens only benefit your skin with regular application and fasting from these basic essentials might do more harm than good," she concludes.

OTHER BENEFITS

A skin detox lets one know whether they are using the wrong product for their skin type or if they are unknowingly using harsh or drying ingredients. If you distance yourself from the products that aren't good for your skin, you'll see a visible change. The key is to find the right combination of products that can help your skin.

If you're over-exfoliating, skin fasting lets your skin recover.

Our skin produces an oily substance called sebum that helps prevent moisture loss. Cutting out on external products will let the skin neutralise and let sebum take over.

It is to be kept in mind that skin fasting is not a procedure that is to be practised throughout the year. It is done to give your skin some healing time so that you can restart using skin-care products as needed.



SEVEN simple tips for winter hair care

HERE ARE SOME EASY STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO MAINTAIN YOUR GORGEOUS LOCKS THIS COLD SEASON:

- * **KEEP SHAMPOOING TO THE MINIMUM**
Chemical shampoos are notorious for consuming essential natural oils from your scalp. And your hair is going to need all the oil it can get this winter season. First things first, switch to shampoos or shampoo bars that don't have parabens or sulfates that exhaust all-natural oils from your scalp. Shampoo your hair only once or twice a week. And if you are prone to greasy hair and need to shampoo more often, then worry not as all-natural shampoos will keep your scalp safe.
- * **OIL 'EM BEFORE YOU WASH 'EM**
Oiling hair is a must in most Indian households. But this time, warm your hair oil and massage the scalp well. Leave it in overnight. Not only will the warm oil nourish your scalp but also give your hair a gorgeous smooth texture.
- * **NEVER FORGET THE CONDITIONER**
Your hair is going to need it the most during the cold days and freezing nights. Every time you shampoo this winter season, apply conditioner from the mid-length to the tips. Keep it on for a couple of minutes before washing it off. Pat dry

- your hair and voila! Frizz-free, silky soft hair!
- * **CONTROL THE TEMPERATURE THIS WINTER SEASON**
We know, we know. Hot showers are the best and especially in winters, they are irresistible. But the steaming hot water will strip all-natural oils from your scalp and skin. Take warm baths, use lukewarm water and avoid super hot showers as far as possible.
- * **NO HEAT STYLING EITHER**
While we are on the topic of hot showers, don't heat-style your hair either. Frequent blow-drying, straightening or curling damages your hair and make them brittle. While you need to control excessive styling all year round, winters make your hair especially vulnerable and so, you need to switch off the hair appliances. Having said that, stepping outside the home with wet hair is also a bad idea. Pat hair with a soft towel and air dry them before heading out.
- * **KEEP DANDRUFF AWAY THIS WINTER SEASON**
Winter hats are in! Not only are they fashionable, but they'll also protect your hair from pollution and dust that is likely to settle as the temperatures

- drop. But with that, there's also the chances of scalp sweat, itchy head and ugh, dandruff! But make sure you keep your scalp free from the flakes
- * **NOT JUST YOUR HAIR, YOU NEED TO KEEP HYDRATED TOO!**
It's not just your hair that needs to stay hydrated this winter season. You need to too. Unlike summers, it's easy to forget drinking water or juices in the cold months. But make it a point to stay hydrated because your dehydration will reflect on your hair too! Keep a bottle of water or juice on your desk and sip regularly.
- * **BONUS TIPS:**
"Whether you have long or short hair, winter weather can make the ends of your hair dry and brittle. Regular trims will keep your hair in good condition and reduce the chance of split ends. Take the extra time to blow-dry your hair or let it dry naturally before going outside. In cold weather, your hair will take a long time to dry - and if your hair freezes, you risk breakage," advises Head and Shoulders regarding winter hair care.

— Source: The Better India; Head and Shoulders

S weather weather is here! T's the season of snuggling into warm knitwear, feet tucked into soft sock, a steamy cup of coffee or tea. But T's also a season of diligent winter skin-care and haircare routines. Winter is here and it is most likely to result in frail, dehydrated, weak-looking hair often accompanied by hair loss. Fortunately, these problems can be kept at bay through simple precautionary measures.



Prathi Roju....

A SHORT-LIVED 'PANDAGA'

K RAMYA SREE

Prathi Roju Pandage is a simple non-fuzzy film filled with laughter and a bag full of other emotions which doesn't go in sync with each other.

The film starts with Sai (Sai Dharam Tej), son of Rao Ramesh and grandson of Satya Raj, flying to India after hearing the news that his grandfather has lung cancer.

Since Satya Raj cannot survive for more than five weeks, Sai wants to make the last few days a *pandaga* for his grandfather, hence the title.

The sons and daughter of Satya Raj are NRIs and do not want to fly down to India leaving their work. Sai, meanwhile, gets introduced to Angel Aarna (Raashi Khanna), his grandfather's best-friend's granddaughter, whom he wants Sai to tie the knot with.

From here on the film revolves around how Sai's family members fly down

to India and wait for Satya Raj's death so that they can perform his last rites and return to their routine life.

This is a routine family drama a la *Shatamanabhavati*, where they want the elderly to spend time with their busy NRI kids.

The humour in the film is an added bonus without which the film would've been a disaster as it has a pretty boring storyline.

Speaking of performances, let's begin with Sai. This is a comeback trail for him as his last didn't do well at the box office. His makeover has helped the film and his acting is okay during the clichéd comic scenes, but when it comes to showing emotions, he falls flat. There were rumours that Sai would sport a 6-pack abs in the film. That could have been photoshopped as he still has a long way to go.

Satya Raj's over the top acting was not in sync with Sai's weak emotional scenes. Rao Ramesh has delivered a good perfor-



Cast: Sai Dharam Tej, Rashi Khanna, Sathyaraj, Rao Ramesh

Rating: 3 stars

mance as a possessive father.

Raashi Khanna, who plays a social media fanatic, has done a fairly good job and the comedy revolving around her scenes arte a plus point. Like any other big film, even here, Raashi's character feels like it was used just to up the glamour quotient. Hari Teja deserves a special mention for playing the character of Kukatapally Canteen owner.

Apart from the aforementioned actors, the film has a slew of other characters like Naresh, Suhas, Murali Sharma and Ajay.

Speaking of the direction, script and screenplay, Maruthi fails to deliver a good story. The film could've had a better ending or at least a different message. He opts for the tried and tested emotional family drama as one gets to know where the film is headed. He is good with the comic aspects through Angel Aarna's character and others. The comedy despite providing relief from the

bland script is a hit and miss.

Then there are a few plugs in the screenplay. Satya Raj who will die in five weeks is all chirpy and happy except for the climax scenes. The movie fails to connect with the audience. At no point does one feel bad about the old man or get emotional.

Speaking of music, Thaman does a better job than his previous film, *Venky Mama*, where the music turned out to be a minus for the film.

Although it had some unnecessary songs, the composition is better than what it was earlier.

VERDICT: Prathi Roju Pandage fails to impress in terms of emotions. Predictable, unflattering storyline might not leave you thrilled as you know what's going to happen next. The film has a messy and random ending. This film is a miscalculation from the very reliable Maruthi.



Dabangg 3: HAS EVERYTHING HARDCORE CHULBUL FANS WANT

At one level, it is easy reviewing *Dabangg 3*. It has everything the hardcore Chulbul fans want, so it's a great film. For them.

For a 160-minute celebration of recycled kitsch that is vying to be the year's biggest blockbuster, simply pleasing Salman Khan's hardcore fan base may not be enough — especially when there is a killing to be made in the Christmas season against a renowned 90-crore budget. So, *Dabangg 3* opens well beyond the superstar's familiar turf, in three languages — Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada — besides the original Hindi version.

That last bit is important to understand how saleability quotient drives the efforts of the makers to craft a commercially profitable product rather than mainstream cinema with some amount of originality. This is Salman's show all the way, but the villain is a Kannada superstar (Kichcha Sudeep). Calling the shots is Prabhudeva, actor-filmmaker who holds considerable sway in Tamil and Telugu markets. As Bollywood's mightiest Khan goes down South to explore fresh box office, this new sequel tries rehashing the trademark

Dabangg spirit that has always revealed a massive hangover of the vintage *Madras Cut* movie.

This time, Salman and company show us Chulbul Pandey's life before the first film, pushing a prequel text of sorts in the first half before tying the loose ends in the second. It gives us a back story of Chulbul tracing his romance of the past, marking the debut of actress Saiee Manjrekar in what seems like an extended cameo and little else.

Having Salman romance a much-younger Saiee looks like a mere ploy to let him revisit all that worked in the first *Dabangg*. The chemistry for one — across those smalltown marketplace sets in the song *Naina lade* — would hark back to what he did with Sonakshi Sinha's Rajjo in the first film (remember *Tere mast mast do nain?*). Much of the rom-com situations between Salman and Saiee, as well as the melodrama, are also repeats of winning scenes we have seen before.

Long before the film hits intermission mark, you realise this truth: The instruction given to Prabhudeva was obviously clear — churn out a sequel that's a rerun of the first two films, in terms of romance, violence, humour and drama ped-

dled. It has to be bigger and glossier, if not as stylish.

The *Dabangg* flicks follow a classic narrative structure of commercial Indian cinema. The hero, an invincible do-gooder, after initial mooning about with the heroine (and a possible minor build-up conflict with the villain), will prepare for a second half that is heavy with action and retribution. Chulbul's adventure in this film does not waver.

The film, incidentally written by Salman, retains every formula, as Chulbul's enmity with bad man Balli Singh (Sudeep) finds its roots in the back story of the first half, before being resolved by the hero with typical violent elan in the climax.

Given that most of what happens just seems to be an amped-up repeat of the past two films, Salman must be hoping the seven-year gap between the last film and this one has whetted audience appetite — that fans are game to watch familiar Chulbul Pandey antics all over again.

To be fair, Salman is in his elements, and that's what wholly drives this film. If Bollywood ever had a comic action hero worth his smoking barrels, it has to be the maverick

CAST: Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha, Saiee Manjrekar, Kichcha Sudeep; **DIRECTION:** Prabhudeva;

Rating: 3 stars

Chulbul Pandey. With *Dabangg 3*, the superstar is clearly trying to raise Chulbul's stature as an invincible superhero a few notches higher. He is a natural winner in the fight sequences (personally, I felt the action scenes were Chulbul's highlights in the film). He clearly continues to relish spewing those witty oneliners, too. But he looks fatigued in the drama and romance scenes.

Salman's flamboyance as Chulbul the supercop, however, fails to hide the fact that you are essentially paying to watch the same film for the third time. Hardcore fans may not complain, because Chulbul Pandey's world is still woven around their hero.

You feel sorry for poor Rajjo, though. In a film where various sharp objects play a major role in the killings, the only action Sonakshi Sinha gets with a knife is chopping vegetables in the kitchen.

Ruler: STRICTLY FOR FANS

Balakrishna has believed the magic of KS Ravi Kumar yet another time with his latest flick *Ruler*. The fans had high expectations on the Nandamuri actor's latest one as his two-part biopic on his father tanked at the box office. With *Jaisimha*'s hit, Balakrishna gambled big by giving another chance to KSRK.

Trailers of the film showing Balayya donning multiple get-ups has increased curiosity among the audience to watch the film.

Did the movie meet the expectations it created? Let's find out

The film begins with Sarojini Naidu (Jayasudha) meeting an injured stranger, who suffered multiple stab wounds. The next minute, the two are in the ICU with Sarojini facing a serious threat to her life. But when someone attempts to kill her, the stranger miraculously wakes up from his coma and saves her. Sarojini is so grateful that she raises him as her own son and makes him the chairman of her group of companies and that stranger. Balayya who doesn't remember his past becomes Arjun Prasad, son of multimillionaire Sarojini Naidu and has a lavish life travelling in choppers and romancing Harika (Sonal Chauhan), the chairman of a rival company. Soon after Arjun remembers his past that he was a dare devil cop before he lost his memory and he goes on to take revenge from his enemies.

Speaking of performances, *Ruler* is a one-man show. Balayya uses his standard dialogue delivery style, cringe-worthy dance moves with heroines, unpractical action scenes. One of the character Balakrishna dons, Dharma, didn't at all

suit his personality. Neither the outfits nor the make-up went well and Balayya has to reconsider doing such roles again. There is nothing in the movie for Vedhika and Sonal performance-wise except for adding some glamour quotient.

Despite less screen time, Bhoomika has a more powerful role. Prakash Raj and Jaya Sudha play their roles with conviction as usual.

KS Ravikumar has chosen a very bad storyline which would've worked some 15 years ago. The film has no novelty or surprise value. Although the first half of the film can be watched once for the sake of Balakrishna, the second half puts one to sleep with tried and tested drama scenes, slow narration and cli-

max plays a spoilsport. Music was also drab in the film that makes you feel 'why are we watching this?' — PNS

VERDICT: Outdated storyline, tried and tested drama scenes, slow narration, non-practical action scenes, unflattering makeover of Balakrishna, and the list goes on.... makes the film nothing but a huge disappointment.

CAST: Balakrishna, Balakrishna and more Balakrishna

Rating: 1.5/5 stars





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

YOUR WEEK AHEAD



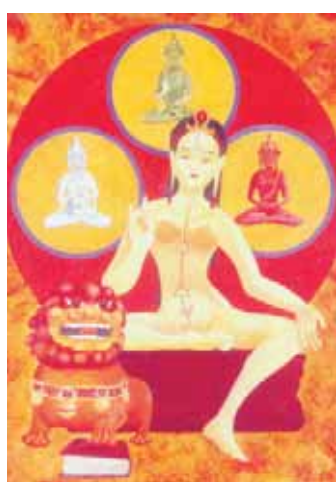
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

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

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

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

Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

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

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

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

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Camel brown
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

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

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

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

Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

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

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

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

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

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

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Wednesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

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

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

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

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

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

Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Tuesday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

No shortcuts to fixing problems

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Write to him at G-102, Bharat Nagar, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110 025
Tel: 91-11-49848475/9818037273
Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com

AN IPS OFFICER WITH IRON FIST

From starting her career in the Indian Forest Service and making a quick switch to IPS, Shikha Goel has done many things to move out of her comfort zone. She talks to **NAVEEN KUMAR** about how she joined the police force, being the only lady IPS officer in Jammu and Kashmir, fighting Naxalism in the erstwhile united AP and much more.

RAPID-FIRE

- Most proud of:** Being able to live by my values
- Best advice for an aspirant:** You might not be able to move the earth. But little changes make a lot of difference.
- Biggest strength:** Family support and self-motivation.
- Weapon of choice:** The Glock pistol
- Fav color:** Blue and green
- What scares me the most:** Cats!
- Three words that describe me:** Innocent, strong will power and stubborn.
- Favorite countries traveled so far:** Had an amazing time in Scotland and Netherlands.
- Last movie watched:** *Bala*
- Biggest addiction:** In general, I would say music but also bags and footwear.
- Fav dish:** Always *maa ke haath ka khana*. Comfort food is *rajma chawal* and chocolates.

excited to learn that I was making the switch from forestry to policing. 'You will surely shine, go ahead' were his words that helped me make the decision. I have three siblings — brothers, Prachur and Pramuch and sister Deepa Rastogi.

Investigation is thrilling

The beauty of this job is that, unlike in other professions, nobody and nothing can prepare you for what's coming. Each step teaches you something new and pushes you to take a call on your own. Policing is a lot about common sense and I love the investigative part of the job as it's thrilling. Also, that is the core of the job. We derive most of the power and zeal from the investigation. It was thrilling to be in different unimaginable situations. Be it bandobast, regular crime, team management, or dealing with staff to keep them motivated, it's always a challenge.

Marrying college sweetheart

My husband, Vijay Kumar, who is currently with the Intelligence Bureau, and I studied together at Delhi University. Ours was a love marriage. He first asked me out and I obviously said 'no'. But he was persistent and I accepted his proposal eventually. We dated for a while before telling our parents about us. My side of the family had an issue with the relationship, but eventually accepted him. We got married in 1997 and are blessed with a son and daughter, Tavashya and Yutika.

each other's achievements. We believe in collaborative partnership rather than a competitive one.

If not IPS, I would've chosen teaching

We can achieve anything provided we set our mind on it. All you need is willpower and perseverance to go ahead. I believe that good education and financial independence are a must for every girl, no matter what financial background they come from. You don't know what life has in store for you and these two things will boost your confidence and change your personality. It is also important to have a Plan-B in life, just in case. For me, the Plan-B would be to get into teaching and put my Master's degree to good use.

Winning best contingent prize

Patriotism is not something you carry on your sleeve, it's a discipline. If you follow the rules and regulations, abide by the law of the land and maintain self-discipline, the sense of responsibility you have for everything you do qualifies as patriotism. In 2016, while I was on deputation with the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), I oversaw the training of its contingent that took part in the Republic Day parade. That year, we won a prize for being the best contingent among all. As soon as the boys marched, I knew we were going to win. I was sitting amongst the audience when the march began and it was simply inspiring to receive the accolades that followed immediately. It made me nostalgic about the first time I went to see the parade at Rajpath in Delhi. I was about 11-years-old and the weather was bad that day — extremely cold and rain. But seeing the contingents march, we completely forgot about the weather.



With husband Vijay Kumar, son Tavashya and daughter Yutika

Always need music around me

My biggest stress-buster would be hugging my children before going to bed. The other things I do to unwind include reading, listening to music and watching movies. I tend to select light-hearted comedy movies over the strong, suspense/crime thrillers since it is in contrast with my profession. Also, I always need music around me whether I'm in the car or at home.

Arresting my senior officer

While I was stationed in Jammu and Kashmir, I had to arrest my senior and he ended up getting a life term. Cases like these taught me to push my boundaries. Only when one is put in a challenging spot do they push their boundaries and discover their true potential. Another important case was when I was the DCP, North Zone, and diamonds worth several crores were recovered. It was the doing of an inter-state gang and the property was distributed at various places. A lot of planning and strategising went into their recovery. In my earlier days, I had even roughed up an eve-teaser with a lathi, which is probably one of the few times I beat someone up.

Moving out of the comfort zone

I was known to be an introvert and an indoor kid throughout my childhood as the upbringing was quite sheltered. I initially chose to be in the Indian Forest Service as it was more in line with my interests back then and the fact that I was a Botany student. However, I thought I must get out of my comfort zone and took up the challenge of becoming an IPS officer. It was a very conscious decision and introduced me to a life I never imagined.

J&K stint boosted my confidence

Post my training in Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie for a foundation course as an IPS officer, I got Jammu and Kashmir as my first posting. I chose police as my profession for the challenges it offered. It was the first time I moved out of home and the training itself made me step outside my comfort zone. It gave me a lot of confidence and taught me how to make my own decisions. Though the two and a half years of my tenure there during the late '90s was filled with tense moments, I always cherish how my team and people made me feel comfortable.

Dad's words inspired me to choose IPS

My father, S.K. Goel, was a scientist at IARI (Indian Agricultural Research Institute) and has been supportive of all my decisions. I decided to become an IPS officer because of him. He was a

Three-year-old Shikha



"I chose police as my profession as it was in sync with the life I had lived until then and for the challenge it offered. It was the first time I moved out of home and the training itself made me step outside my comfort zone. It gave me a lot of confidence and taught me how to make my own decisions



With one of her school friends (left)



With parents



Things to change about myself: I'm very sensitive and get easily hurt. Want to change that and also try to stop bothering what others think.

The toughest thing about being a cop: Keeping your sensitivity and empathy intact while dealing with negativity day in and out.

If given a chance, would like to go to: Would love to see the Northern Lights and go to Spain.

Most illegal thing ever done: Stealing and eating supari when I was 10 years old.

Most prized possession: My kids.

Any regrets: Regret not learning any artistic skills.

What best describes me: I'm a dreamer. I firmly believe that if we work towards our dreams, they come true. Dreams are realities in waiting.

Favorite books: *Gone with the wind*, *Fountainhead*, PG Wodehouse series and was recently introduced to the Harry Potter series by my daughter.

Cherished time: The time spent at Forest Academy, Dehradun. It was the first time I was out of the nest and found my wings.

Best qualities about myself: Honesty, humility and resilience.