

OPINION 8
BEING DECEIVED,
EVERYTIME

WORLD 12
EU MUST TAKE BACK OVER
800 ISIS FIGHTERS: TRUMP

SPORT 16
CHELSEA TO HOST
MAN UTD IN FA CUP

BHUBANESWAR, MONDAY FEBRUARY 18, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



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Pak-funded separatists off safety net J&K Govt strips 4 of security cover as a first step after Pulwama

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu & Kashmir Government on Sunday stripped four separatist leaders, including Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, of their security cover and allied arrangements with immediate effect.

The order was issued by the State Government three days after a CRPF convoy was attacked in which 44 CRPF jawans were killed in Lethpora area of Pulwama.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had said earlier that the security provided to those who "receive money from Pakistan would be reviewed."

According to the State Government order issued by the office of Principal Secretary of Home Department, on Sunday, "as a first step the security and allied arrangements provided to Moulvi Umar Farooq, Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, Bilal Gani Lone and Shabir Ahmad Shah are withdrawn immediately."

During a high-level review meeting Government of India had emphasised the need to immediately review the

wastage of police resources in providing unnecessary security to a large number of non-government persons in the State.

Reacting to the withdrawal of security, the Mirwaiz-led All Parties Hurriyat Conference spokesperson said that the separatist leaders never asked for security and that they had repeatedly said that the Government can withdraw it.

Meanwhile, J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina welcomed the Government decision to withdraw security cover of the separatist leaders and said he would "like them to be arrested and jailed" outside the State.

"The Hurriyat people are the real enemies of the Kashmiris and they are the ones who ruined the Valley. Their security has been withdrawn which is a welcome step and I would like them to be arrested and jailed in Tihar and Jodhpur jails (in Delhi and Rajasthan, respectively)," he said.

Describing Hurriyat leaders as "sinners", Raina alleged that they were the ones responsible for the killings in



Kashmiri women walk past a paramilitary soldier as he stands guard during restrictions in Srinagar on Sunday

Pulwama. "If Kashmir is facing terrorism today it is because of

(Syed Ali Shah) Geelani, Mirwaiz (Umar farooq), Shabir Shah and Yaseen Malik," Raina

said. Their own children are studying in London and enjoying in Europe and they have properties in Dubai but are instigating Kashmiri children to pelt stones and orchestrating innocent killings," he alleged.

Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party on Sunday said its chief Shabir Shah was never provided any

security by the State. In a statement, the JKDFP said that

Shah, currently undergoing detention at Tihar jail in New Delhi, was never provided any kind of Government security. "...so the announcement of withdrawing it is nothing but a big lie," read the statement.

Security cover was, however, deployed outside his residence in Srinagar where his family resides.

CRPF cautions against 'fake posts' on internet

Advices to report any such thing by sending an email

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF on Sunday issued an advisory cautioning the public against "fake pictures" being circulated online of body parts of its 44 troops killed in the Pulwama attack, the deadliest terrorist strike on security forces in Kashmir Valley in three decades.

"Fake news about harassment of students from Kashmir is being propagated by various miscreants on social media. CRPF helpline has enquired about complaints about harassment and found them incorrect. These are attempts to invoke hatred. Please DO NOT circulate such posts," it said in its second post on Twitter.

"It has been noticed that on social media some miscreants are trying to circulate fake pictures of body parts of our martyrs to invoke hatred



CISF members pay tribute to CRPF soldiers who lost their lives in Pulwama terror attack, at Connaught Place in New Delhi on Sunday

while we stand united. Please DO NOT circulate/share/like such photographs or posts," the CRPF tweeted on its official Twitter handle — @crpfindia.

The CRPF advised the people to report any such content by sending an email to webpro@crpf.gov.in.

Officials said a number of such photographs of badly mutilated bodies were being circulated and the development was brought to the notice of paramilitary officials after which the advisory was issued.

The paramilitary force, that has deployed about 65,000

personnel as part of 61 battalions in Jammu & Kashmir, issued another advisory on bogus messages being circulated on social media vis-a-vis Kashmiri students based in various places in the country.

Investigators suspect the attack that killed 40 CRPF personnel in Pulwama on February 14 was executed by a lone wolf Jaish-e-Mohammed suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar alias Waqas Commando who rammed an SUV packed with explosives and inflammable gas into a bus of 78-strong convoy of CRPF on Thursday.

ICJ hearing in Jadhav case begins

PTI ■ THE HAGUE

Amid fresh Indo-Pak tensions, top legal eagles of the two countries will present their arguments in the high-profile Kulbhushan Jadhav case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) here from on Monday during four days of public hearings.

Jadhav, a retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017.

India moved the ICJ in May the same year against the "farfetched trial" by the military court of Pakistan against 48-year-old Jadhav. India first approached the ICJ on May 8, 2017 for the "egregious violation" of the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963 by Pakistan by repeatedly denying it consular access to Jadhav.

A 10-member bench of the ICJ, which was set up after World War II to resolve international disputes, on May 18, 2017 had restrained Pakistan from executing Jadhav till adjudication of the case. The ICJ has set a timetable for the public hearing in the high-profile case from February 18 to 21 in The Hague.

Hotel Arpit Palace owner lands from Qatar into jail

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Five days after a fire at Hotel Arpit Palace in Karol Bagh left 17 dead, the Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested its owner Rakesh Goel after he landed in New Delhi from Qatar on Saturday late night.

According to Rajesh Deo, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Crime Branch, they had received a tip-off that Goel, who founded Hotel Arpit Palace in 1993, was travelling to Delhi from Qatar by IndiGo flight 6E 1702.

"A lookout circular (LOC) had already been issued on Thursday and Goel was detained upon arrival in Delhi and handed over to the Crime Branch officials. Goel was arrested after brief questioning," said the DCP.

Delhi Police produced Goel in court on Sunday. "The court has sent Goel to two-day police custody. Besides Goel, two people have been arrested so far - hotel general manager



Rajendra Kumar (47) and assistant manager Vikas Kumar (21). The court on Sunday also extended their police custody for two more days," said the DCP.

"A LOC has also been issued against the owner's elder brother Shardendu Goel, who is still absconding. It has been found that all licences of the hotel were in Shardendu's name," said a senior police official.

Tragic death of 17 people took place in Hotel Arpit Palace fire on Tuesday. According to

Like you, fire raging in my heart too: PM

Nitish, Sushil Modi press for strong action over Pulwama

PTI ■ BARAUNI (BIHAR)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that he was filled with grief and outrage, just like the people of the country, in the wake of the terrorist attack in Pulwama which claimed the lives of 44 CRPF personnel.

In this north Bihar town to launch a number of development projects, Modi began his speech with a few lines in the local dialect 'Angika' before paying tributes to two of the slain jawans who hailed from the State.

"I salute and pay my tributes to Sanjay Kumar Sinha and Ratan Kumar Thakur," the Prime Minister said.

The two martyred CRPF personnel hailed from Patna and Bhagalpur districts, respectively.

"I condole the bereaved families. And to the large number of people who have gathered here, I would like to say the fire that is raging in your bosoms, is in my heart as well," Modi said, evoking a thunder-



ous response from the crowd.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi also expressed hopes of a strong response from India in the wake of the Pulwama attack.

After the evocative beginning, the Prime Minister concentrated his nearly 30-minute speech on various projects, worth more than ₹33,000 crore, which were launched at the function here.

Modi explained how each of these projects will bring all-round development in the lives of people. He said the National Democratic Alliance's strategy of development was two-pronged — one was development of infrastructure and the other uplift of deprived sections of society.

CAPSULE

CASH-STRAPPED PAK ROLLS OUT RED CARPET FOR MBS

Islamabad: Amid heightened Indo-Pak tensions, cash-strapped Pakistan on Sunday received Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, whose maiden trip to Islamabad was delayed by a day for unknown reasons.

AMU ASKS KASHMIRIS NOT TO MOVE OUT

Aligarh: The AMU has issued an advisory to its Kashmiri students asking them "not to move out of the campus" as a precautionary measure after protests broke out in this city in the aftermath of the Pulwama terror attack.

JAITLEY TO ADDRESS RBI BOARD TODAY

New Delhi: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is scheduled to address the customary post-Budget meeting of the central board of the Reserve Bank on Monday and highlight the key points of the interim Budget, including the fiscal consolidation roadmap.

'CONG CANNOT NURTURE COUNTRY'S DEMOCRACY'

Guwahati: Launching a blistering attack on the Congress, BJP president Amit Shah said on Sunday that the opposition party cannot "nurture" the country's democracy and for it only "family matters". Naming Congress leaders from the Nehru-Gandhi family, Shah claimed that the oldest party of the country does not have "internal" democracy.

CRPF JAWAN ALLEGES ASSAULT BY POLICEMEN

Pune: A 28-year-old CRPF jawan alleged that he was "assaulted" and "handcuffed" by police personnel in Baramati taluka here on Sunday without any provocation when he went to invite them for a condolence meet for the 40 CRPF soldiers who were killed in the Pulwama terror attack.

ARGENTINA PREZ ARRIVES IN INDIA ON 3-DAY VISIT

New Delhi: Argentina's President Mauricio Macri arrived here on Sunday on a three-day India visit during which he will hold talks with PM Narendra Modi to enhance cooperation in key sectors such as economy, nuclear technology and space. President Macri was received at the airport by Information and Broadcasting Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore.

'Follow advices to run Puri temple smoothly'

SAROJ KUMAR MISHRA ■ PURI

The problems in the Shree Jagannath Temple could be no more if the shrine is run as per a religious path shown 2,500 years ago, said Sankaracharya Nischalananda Saraswati on Sunday in a high-level meeting of Government authorities, academics, legal luminaries, priests and servitors of the temple.

"An environment must be created where everybody accomplishes his duty honestly as a prime duty bestowed by the Adiguru after re-establishing the trinity in the shrine," said Saraswati.

Exhorting to bring the old glory of the temple back, the top seer of Hindus advised to follow a 14-point charter of norms and doctrines to end the crisis for all time to come.

The 14-point charter of advices, the Sankaracharya issued, included preparation

of Jagannath Sahmita by religious experts as per the guidelines of Rig Veda, Skanadapurana, Bamadev Sahmita, Niladrimahodaya and their implementations, establishment of educational institution and professional training for the children of servitors and Brahmins, use of genuine goods in the rites and rituals, on-time practices of rites and rituals of deities, brotherly behaviours of servitors towards pilgrims, lands to poor servitors and priests, retrenchment of erring servitors from their rights, maintaining quality of Mahaprasad and sales in genuine prices etc.

In the meeting Gajapati Dibyasinghadev, chief of the temple administration Pradipta Mahapatra, Vice-Chancellor of KIIT Harekrusna Satapathy, besides the Law Secretary, Endowment Commissioner and Puri Collector were pre-



sent.

The Sankaracharya on Tuesday last had invited the Governor, the Chief Minister, the Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, Gajapati Maharaja,

Muktimandap, besides the servitors to the mutt premises on Sunday for deliberations on the temple problems.

In an emotional appeal from Kumbhamela in UP,

Saraswati had said he felt it urgent to call upon the stakeholders for a permanent solution to problems before the situation spins out of control in the Puri temple.

CPI to form alliance against BJD, BJP: Raja

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Sunday announced that it would form an alliance in Odisha by joining hands with the Congress and other regional political parties to take on the BJD and the BJP in the coming elections.

CPI general secretary D Raja said, "At the State level, we think the BJD's politics of equidistance from communal forces and secular parties will not help Odisha in any way; so, we will fight against the BJD. Besides, taking into account State-specific issues and balance of political forces in Odisha, our party is trying to create an alliance with the Congress, the CPI(M) and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) to fight the elections collectively."

He further alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has failed to fulfil the promises he had made before the 2014

PCC chief says formalities yet to be finalised

elections. "He talked about black money, but he has not stopped talking about it. He promised to create jobs for youths but failed to do so. Farmers are in distress across the country while all institutions are under attack, be it the CBI, the RBI or the Medical Council," said Raja.

Adding that "Desh Bachao BJP Hatao" has become a slogan across the country, Raja said his party is serious about the concern of the people that in order to save the country and the secular, democratic fabric of our society, it has become imperative to defeat the BJP in the elections.

OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik admitted about the discussions on the issue of alliance but said talks over the terms of sharing of seats and other formalities are yet to be finalised.

Patha Utsav

Pulwama martyrs paid tributes

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 1.5-km stretch of Janpath from Master Canteen to Ram Mandir Square on the 79th Patha Utsav celebration remained soaked with the spirit of national integration and nationalism as the participants paid their homage to the martyrs of Pulwama terror strike.

The 79th Patha Utsav paid tributes to all brave sons of the nation and also the two slain Odia CRPF Jawans.

Breaking the monotony of the usual performances on stage in front of Ram Mandir, storyteller Prachitara gave a storytelling performance on the youngest martyr of India Baji Rout.

Children paid tributes to Pulwama martyrs by lighting candles at the People's Cultural Centre (PECUC) space. Later, patriotic songs including "Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon" and "Sandesh Aate Hain" were sung and performed by children. Itishree Dixit and her troupe created a beautiful Rangoli depicting national integration, patriotism and ter-



Women in Society Help (WISH) also organised activities for children with subjects mainly based on patriotism and nation-building. Poetry recital was also organised by WISH on the occasion for the martyrs. Many volunteers led by leading social service organisation Helpmate took out a rally. Signature campaigns were also held by several organisations

rorism and how the act of terror is influencing the world in every possible manner.

On the art front, the DP Artlife created a unique collage with messages from the visitors were pasted on a canvas creating a memorial of art like the "Amar Jawan Jyoti".

The Bakul's Library had a special curated section of biographies of bravehearts and stories of their heroics in war. The library on the road also had books that give insights into the operations of terror and its base in Pakistan, and the terror and attack on Mumbai, the chase of Osama Bin Laden etc, the origin of modern terror attacks in Israeli occupied Palestine.

Parents particularly took interest in reading along with the children, particularly the inspirational stories of our bravehearts including Param Vir Chakra winners. Bakul Volunteers also told stories to the children. About 200 children came and read books.

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Police assure Kashmiris' protection in the State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Amid reports of attack on Kashmiris in various parts of the country after the death of 49 CRPF troopers in a suicide attack in Pulwama by a Jaish-e-Mohammad militant, the Odisha Police has assured to provide protection to Kashmiris in the State.

Stating that no incident of violence or harassment against Kashmiris has taken place in the State, the Odisha Police has advised that in case of any trouble, people from Kashmir visiting or staying in the State can contact the local police station or dial 100 from their phones for help.

Notably, Srinagar Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu had on Saturday urged everyone to make Kashmiris "feel safe and protected" in the wake of reports of targeted violence against Kashmiris in the country.

'State Govt forcing farmers for distress sale'

As it is closing mandis 2 months before schedule: Niranjan

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government has decided to close the mandis meant for paddy procurement two months before the scheduled time. Meanwhile thousands of quintals of paddy is lying there with the farmers who are requesting the Government to purchase their produce. This would lead to distress sale of paddy and, ultimately, to farmers' suicide.

This was stated by PCC president Niranjan Patnaik in a Press release on Sunday. He said the Government had decided to procure 55 lakh tonnes of paddy of 2018-19 kharif season starting in November and ending on April 30. But this year till date, around 50 lakh tonnes has been procured as per Government sources, which is yet to be ascertained. However, the Government has decided to close the mandis by end of

February, two months prior to the schedule.

Patnaik alleged that neither the Central Government hiked the paddy MSP nor the State Government hiked bonus. Farmers are selling paddy at Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,600 per quintal. In neighbouring Chhattisgarh, the price has been fixed at Rs 2,500. Now by shutting down the mandis, the Naveen Patnaik Government is forcing farmers for distress sale and suicide, for which it would be solely responsible.

The PCC chief demanded that the Government purchase all the paddy stacked in the mandis or else the Congress would take to the streets in support of farmers.

When a Congress Government is formed in the State, farmers would smile again, he said. "As mentioned in our guarantee card to the farmers of Odisha, the Congress will increase the MSP of paddy to Rs 2,600, waive off farm loans and provide solar pumps for irrigation and financial assistance to farmers for five years," he added.

CM lays stone for cancer hosp in Barang



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid foundation stone for the "Odisha Cancer Hospital & Research Centre" at Ratagarh in Barang in the presence of Tata Trusts chairman Ratan Tata on Sunday.

"The State Government is committed towards cancer

treatment and has started chemo programme at each District Headquarters Hospital. All centres are connected to the Acharya Harihar Cancer Centre in our commitment to provide affordable cancer treatment. In the MoU with the Tata Trusts, 15 care centres will come up in the State. This is a stepping stone

in comprehensive cancer care," said Patnaik.

The State Government had in May last year signed an MoU with the Tata Trusts, Mumbai to set up a state-of-the-art hospital and research centre. The Tata Trusts would set up and manage the facility, which would be benchmarked to the Tata Memorial

Hospital, Mumbai. The State Government would facilitate and contribute in setting up the centre by providing land to the extent of 25 acres free of cost, official sources said.

Among others, Health Minister Pratap Jena, MP Bhartruhari Mahtab and Banki MLA Pravat Tripathy were present on the occasion.

Maoist camp busted in Balangir



PNS ■ BALANGIR

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Jawans busted a Maoist camp near the Gandhamardan Hill in the Patnagarh area of Balangir district on Sunday.

Acting on a tipoff, the

CRPF personnel launched a combing operation in the hill and came across the Maoist camp. During search, the security forces found several articles, transistors, switches, wires, magazine pouches and walkie-talkie sets from the spot.

Sources said all the articles were kept in a box and hidden inside a cave-like structure.

However, there was no trace of any Maoist near the place as the extremists reportedly decamped before the arrival of the Jawans.

City builder detained for duping customers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Nayapalli police on Sunday detained a city-based builder for allegedly duping investors to the tune of Rs 45 lakh on a pretext of providing them lands. The accused builder identified as Satyabrata Dhir is currently being interrogated by police in this connection.

According to the police, Satyabrata had collected a huge amount of money from the customers on the pretext of

INVESTORS LODGED COMPLAINT AGAINST ACCUSED WITH THE POLICE IN 2016

providing plots to them. Later, he neither provided the plots nor returned the money and allegedly siphoned off the money.

After repeated failed attempts to get back their money, the investors had lodged a complaint against the accused with the police in 2016.

Surababa booked again for sexual harassment

After woman lodges FIR with police

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Controversial self-styled godman Surababa alias Surendranath Mishra has once again been booked over sexual harassment charges. The complainant, a young woman of the Belaguntha area in Ganjam district, has lodged an FIR at the Balipatna police station alleging that she was sexually harassed by Surababa at his Trahi Achyuta Ashram at Jhntisan on January 24.



She has stated that her fiancé and his mother had taken her to the ashram on that day around 3 am on the pretext of performing a puja. The victim has also named the mother-son duo as accused in her FIR.

On the basis of the complaint, police have registered a case under Sections

341, 323, 354, 506 and 34 of the IPC.

Notably, Surababa was released from the Jharpada Special Jail here on December 2, 2017, two years after getting arrested under Sections 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint), 342 (punishment for wrongful confinement), 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 294 (singing, reciting or uttering any obscene song, ballad or words in or near any public place), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of IPC and Section 3(I)(x) of the ST and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Pulwama attack Traders to observe bandh today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Federation of All Odisha Traders' Association (FAOTA) on Sunday announced that it would support the nationwide protest on Monday called by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) to protest against the deadly terror attack on CRPF Jawans at Pulwama. Calling for a peaceful dawn to dusk bandh to protest the attack, FAOTA general secretary Sudhakar Panda said, "We stand with the Government

and security forces for unity and security of the nation. We want the Government to take suitable action against perpetrators of the dastardly incident. We request all traders to cooperate and voluntarily participate in the shutdown."

"We stand in solidarity with the families of the CRPF jawans who were martyred in Pulwama for the service of nation while safeguarding the borders of India," Panda added.

Karmachari Mahasangha stir on February 23

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Karmachari Mahasangha on Sunday demanded that the Government regularise all employees posted under outsourcing, contractual and DLR systems and Kendu Leaf employees before the election code of conduct comes into force or else thousands of employees would hold a demonstration here on February 23.

"Outsourcing, contractual and DLR employees have been working for the last 15 years on paltry salaries. Though the

employees have organised peaceful demonstrations many times demanding regularization of jobs, the Government is yet to listen to the demands. The Government should lift all temporary systems of appointment and regularize all employees working on such posts," demanded Mahasangha leader Prabhat Mohanty at a Press meet here. He said if the State Government further delays in fulfilling their demands, then all the employees will hold a protest meeting at the Gandhi Marg here on February 23 and a memorandum would be submitted to the Chief Minister

BJP can ensure fast development of Odisha: Rajnath

Questions why State underdeveloped despite stable Govt
Asserts Modi will become PM again

PNS ■ BHADRAK

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, addressing a meeting of booth-level BJP workers at Ranital in Bhadrak district on Sunday, lashed out at the State's BJD Government.

He questioned why Odisha is lacking in development despite a stable Government in the State. Giving examples of BJP-ruled States, he said the GDPs of those States are higher than that of Odisha. Why



such development can't take place in Odisha, he asked.

Singh criticised the non-implementation of the Centre's Ayushman Bharat scheme in Odisha and urged BJP workers

to make the people of the State aware about the benefits of the scheme.

He alleged that farmers in the State are not getting proper prices of their produces,

which are not procured at MSP. "I assure the Odisha farmers that if the BJP comes to power in the State, we will provide you 1.5 times of their input prices during procurement of crops," he said.

He advised the party workers to spread the message among people regarding the BJP's promise of ensuring fast development in Odisha and eradication of poverty and unemployment in the state if the party is voted to power in the upcoming polls.

Taking a potshot at AICC president Rahul Gandhi's attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi with "Chowkidar Chor Hai" remarks, Singh said, "Chowkidar (Modi) is honest; he will surely become Prime Minister once again and he is the solution for all issues of the

country." Speaking on the Pulwama incident, the Home Minister said the sacrifice of martyred CRPF Jawans would not go in vain as the Army has been given complete freedom for strong retaliation against the perpetrators of the massacre.

He also paid tributes to the two martyred Odia CRPF Jawans Prasanna Sahoo and Manoj Behera. Singh and other party leaders and workers present at the meeting observed a one-minute silence to pay tributes to the departed souls. Earlier in the day, Singh visited Iram in the district and paid floral tributes to the martyred freedom fighters.

Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who was present, also slammed the State Government on different issues.

Banks asked to pay loans to MSMEs by Feb-end

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government has asked the bankers to expedite sanctioning and disbursement of assistances against the eligible pending loan applications of MSME units by end of the current month February.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) ACS LN Gupta issued an instruction to the bankers at a sub-committee meeting of the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) on MSME held here on Saturday.

It was revealed that PMSGP assistance of Rs 51.88 crore has been disbursed during the FY 2018-19 till February 15, 2019 for promo-

tion of 2,079 MSME units.

The KVIC Director informed that those applicants, who have repaid the first loan under the PMEGP and are ready to provide 10 per cent contribution, can avail the second loan for expansion and upgradation of their projects up to Rs 1 crore. The maximum subsidy on the second loan would be Rs 15 lakh.

During the review, SLBC Convener PKC Dash from the UCO Bank informed that 469 branches of various commercial and Gramya Banks have been declared as specialised MSME bank branches to cater to the requirements of MSMEs in the State.

The representative of SIDBI informed that MUDRA loans of Rs 1,152 crore sanctioned to 62,077 loan beneficiaries have been covered under Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units (CGFMU).

The Industries Director said that during the current year by January-end, 67,500 MSMEs have gone into production (GIP) with an investment of Rs 4,050 crore and employment to 3,37,500 persons. The Director also informed that total 317 Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) have been conducted till January 2019 covering 9,800 participants.

'Autonomy for edu institutes can be win-win for stakeholders'

Sad that Indian institutions aren't at top globally

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Autonomy for educational institutions can prove to be a win-win for all stakeholders -- students, educational institutions and the country, Association of Indian Universities (AIU) president Prof Sandeep Sancheti said here on Sunday.

"To a student it gives flexibility of classes, ample time for developing skills required for the market as also getting involved in entrepreneurship and innovation, to an institution sufficient time to focus on ways to maximise excellence

and get within striking distance of global rankings," Prof Sancheti, Vice-Chancellor of SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, said.

Institutional excellence would also mean that larger numbers of young minds would opt to stay in the country, he said while addressing a three-day annual meet of the AIU being held at the SOA University.

A national seminar on 'Autonomy for Excellence in Higher Education' is also being held alongside the AIU annual meet.

Prof. Sancheti said the common argument in favour of autonomy for educational institutions has been that the centres of learning can function and flourish only if they have freedom to choose and act. "Freedom does not necessarily have to be absolute; but in this



realisation that this freedom will come with a review, both internal and external, including from agencies that will reflect on the relevance to societal

good and development," he observed.

"The bottom line realisation has been that autonomy means the involvement of all

stakeholders in a decentralised environment in which outside forces or government agencies do not breath down the neck of educators and senior academ-

ic functionaries for day-to-day affairs," Prof Sancheti said.

He said the government had decided in 2018 to grant autonomy to some educational institutions, including many in the private sector, setting off a debate among academics and educators in the country. It happened after Vice-Chancellors, senior administrators and educationists had made the point that 'greater degree of autonomy is pivotal to promote and institutionalize excellence in higher education.'

"I believe the recent initiatives are a breath of fresh air and would make our institutions more fertile for academic and research excellence," he said, adding, "There is also the fundamental agreement amongst educators that excellence can be achieved only if autonomy is exercised responsibly and with proper account-

ability."

In the Indian context, it is also not as if there has been no autonomy at all or that autonomy has always been abused leading to a crackdown by governmental and functional agencies, he said.

"The truth of the matter is that autonomy has been there all along but not properly assumed; and in some cases, there have been gross misuse of autonomy forcing regulators to come down hard," Prof Sancheti said.

It is a matter of concern that India, seen globally as a knowledge powerhouse and having more than 950 universities and 40,000 colleges, does not have a handful of institutions at the top 100, 200 or 300 globally; and yet small countries in the Asia Pacific like Singapore has accomplished this task, he pointed out.

In Gajapati Man dies while doing yoga

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

In an unusual incident, an elderly man died while performing at a yoga camp in Gajapati district on Sunday morning. The camp was being held at the Hi-Tech Plaza ground at Ramnagar, where more than 100 people participated. The elderly man became unconscious while performing yoga and was rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital here, where doctors declared him dead.

The identity of the deceased was yet to be established. The exact reason behind the death of the person could be ascertained after post-mortem, police said.

Route problem, improper planning

Baleswar town bus service shelved in months

Fleet of 10 buses gathers dust

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

As many as ten 42-seated city buses procured by the municipal authority here to ply in the urban areas are gathering dust. The buses worth of about Rs 7.5 crore were allotted to the municipality and launched with much publicity in Baleswar on August 15, 2017. The district has received a fleet of 10 buses under the Jawaharlar Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, (JnNurm).

While the service was to begin in Baleswar since 2014, it could only take off from August 15 last year. The buses were to ply to different prominent rural pockets, including tourists destinations, mainly Chandipur, Panchalingeswar, Khirachora Gopinath temple, Remuna and Chandaneswar, etc. Out of 10 buses, while four could operate through private parties in different routes, Purunabaleswar-Mitrapur, Station Square-Sajnagarh, Somnathpur-Balarangadi, and between Station square and Soro via

Rasalpur, the others remained idle as there were no takers and non finalisation of routes. Again, the buses which were running in four routes were withdrawn after 4-5 months of launching.

Currently, all these 10 buses are off the road and parked in front of Gandhi Smriti Bhawan and are gathering dust. Some of them have become defunct being idle for months without running on roads.

Intellectuals while slamming the massive loss to the State exchequer, attributed the it to lack of foresight and panning of the administration. They said even though the service started in Baleswar with much delay, yet they failed to execute it with proper planning.

The municipal authority however stated that the buses couldn't run in the town areas because of narrow and congested roads. The private parties who had taken the buses on lease didn't evince interest to run them.

"The service began hurriedly without proper planning. They were given to the leasees without considering the routes and economic viability aspects. As a result, initially they faced oppositions from the private operators on the routes and then bore loss-

es. More so, the route permit was not as per proper format," said a staff of the municipality office requesting anonymity. Municipality Executive Officer Kanhu Charan Malik said, "Initially the town bus service got delayed as permit for operating of buses was obtained through online system. The route chart for the buses was reworked in view of road conditions and traffic. Due to multiple problems, the service was stalled. However, one of the main reasons is the size of the buses. Since they are bigger compared to the road width, the operators faced a tough task to ply them in certain patches in almost all routes. The problem was appraised to the department and the State Government directed to return them to the Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT). These buses are returned to CRUT in papers and we would be procuring 10 buses of 23 seat capacity suiting to our roads."

Sources said a new bus stand which was to be built in the outskirts of the city in Remuna on 8-acre of land to accommodate 140 buses by the Baleswar Regional Improvement Trust (BRIT) is without any headway after eight years of beginning.

Sundargarh rape victim wants accused cop axed

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH

A rape victim here has demanded that the accused, who is a CRPF personnel and has been out of jail on bail in the case, be terminated from job.

Sources said, one Krushna Chandra Kishan, works as a CRPF jawan at Noonmati, Guwahati in 128 battalion. Krushna Chandra is a resident of Grelidungri under Dharuadih police station of Sundargarh district.

Krushna Chandra had come in contact with a girl, a resident of Talsara police limit, who was staying in Sundargarh Sports Hostel during the year 2009.

She was a minor during that period. When Krushna Chandra tried to lure her and the girl refused to his advances, he assured her to marry and their love relationship started. Krushna Chandra allegedly used to keep physical relationship with the girl and made her pregnant.

When the girl repeatedly told him to marry her, he cut off the relationship with the girl during January, 2018. The girl later delivered a baby girl and her daughter is now seven months' old.

When she could come to

'Mere jail term not enough'

know that she was ditched by Krushna Chandra, she lodged FIR against Krushna Chandra. On February 1, Krushna Chandra surrendered before ADJ Court in Sundargarh and had brought anticipatory bail from Orissa High Court.

But since a rape case had been registered against Krushna Chandra under POCSO Act, he was sent to Sundargarh jail. After spending about seven days in jail, Krushna Chandra was granted bail in ADJ Court in Sundargarh and was released from jail immediately. After granting of bail to accused Krushna Chandra, the judgment of ADJ Court surprised and shocked the victim girl, as she had earlier been running to get justice.

The victim girl now claiming that she was not provided justice demanded that Krushna Chandra be suspended from his job.

"I have not yet got justice," said the victim girl, adding, "Even if he was sent to jail, after few days he was released on bail, which has shocked and saddened me. I am yet to understand how he was granted bail."

AIR DUST-FILLED, BLACK WATER FROM TUBE WELL

No respite for Jharsuguda villagers from polluting unit

RAJ KUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA

At first glance, Jamkani, Kudopali, Chuwalibera and Kantatikra villagers are no different from scores of other villages dotting Jharsuguda district. Try pumping out water from one of tube-wells and you will see why they stand apart: The water that gushes out of the mouth is black in color!

The villagers also experience cloudy over cast sky and thick layers of black dust settled over the trees. Reasons are not far behind to seek.

There is no study to assess the impact of the pollution till date.

To benefit industry, people are made to live in hell. Anyone using the polluted water shall invite various diseases in the near future, told an environmentalist.

The villages are located in close proximity to a polluting industrial unit, Global Coal and Mining Private Limited (GCMPL) of Belpahar area which also has a coal washery of 1 million ton capacity unit.

The residents of Jamkani and Kantatikra located next to a GCMPL said a water nullah

To benefit industry, people are made to live in hell. Anyone using the polluted water shall invite various diseases in the near future, told an environmentalist. The villages are located in close proximity to a polluting industrial unit, Global Coal and Mining Private Limited (GCMPL) of Belpahar area which also has a coal washery of 1 million ton capacity unit

that is their primary source of water is useless today.

The villagers alleged the situation has only worsened over the years in absence of pollution control measures.

Spilled over coal on vast stretch of road has formed a thick coal dust layer on it. Resultantly, flying coal dust amid movement of heavy vehicles has turned to be most woeful.

Still startling is the fact that the consent of the villagers was never sought to set up the unit as cost of the project was allegedly kept below Rs 100 crore to immune the unit from mandatory statutory clearances.

Suriya Munda (65) claimed he along with four other villagers tried to meet

the promoter of the unit to air their grievances, but was turned down with a warning of dire consequence.

While coal washery operators told this paper that there was a lot of pressure on them from the pollution control board to control the slurry discharge in particular there is a reason to be cynical because in the last several years, such notices have been issued many times to the industries in the area; yet the problems seem to remain the same.

Meanwhile, OSPCCB Regional Officer Niranjan Mallick said complaints of intolerable pollution have been received and an inquiry would be made to take necessary corrective measures.

48-yr-old man hacks daughter-in-law, commits suicide

PNS ■ JAJPUR

A 48-year-old man allegedly hacked his daughter-in-law with sharp weapons and later committed suicide at Baruneiapada village under the Panikoli police limits in Jajpur district. According to reports, Damodar Behera attacked his daughter-in-law Sakuntala (27) on Saturday afternoon during the absence of his son at the house. Hearing screams of the woman, neighbours rushed to the spot and found her in a

bleeding state. They rescued her and admitted her to the District Headquarters Hospital. Sakuntala was later shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack as her condition deteriorated. Later, the body of Damodar was found hanging from a tree on the outskirts of the village. Police registered a case in connection the incidents and started investigation.

The reason of the attack on the young woman could be ascertained after recording her statement, police said.

Talk on blood sugar control in surgery held

80 doctors join Brahmapur workshop

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Silk City Surgeons Club in association with the Postgraduate Department of General Surgery, MKCG Medical College Hospital, Brahmapur, on Saturday, organised a seminar at Christian

Hospital premises on blood sugar control during surgery.

Chief surgeon, Christian Hospital, Dr Minal Nanda presided over the meet, where consultant endocrinologist, from Diabetes and Endocare



Clinic, Brahmapur Dr Sunil Kumar Kota joined as chief speaker.

Associate Professor, Department of Surgery, MKCG, Dr Siba Prasad

Pattanaik gave a brief introductory overview of the topic. Dr Kota made a detailed presentation on "Peri operative control of high blood sugars" Dr Kota explained the

audience about the methods of insulin dose calculation and frequent blood sugar monitoring followed by insulin dose adjustment.

Around 80 doctors from different hospitals of Brahmapur participated.

At the end, a question and answer session ensued followed by felicitation of Dr Kota by former Head, Surgery, MKCG, Prof Raja Rao.

Dr Ambuja Satapathy offered the vote of thanks.

Cleanliness drive at Nimapara court

PNS ■ NIMAPARA

A cleanliness drive and plantation for green world were undertaken at the Nimapara court premises on Sunday morning. Additional District Judge



Chintamani Panda, Sub-Judge Ranjita Jyotsi, JMFC Nitisha Chandok, Munsif Amit Barik, Bar Association president Pravat Behera, Public Prosecutor Brahmananda Pradhan, Santosh Mohanty, Prabodh Parida, SI of Police Prashant Das, Bijay Behera,

many lawyers and all the staffs of Nimapara JMFC and civil courts were present on the occasion.

The Balanga Road and both court premises were cleaned by the participants while hundreds of plants were planted in the court premises.

'Government schemes have failed in Gajapati'

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

Local Congress MLA LK Suriya Rao on Sunday alleged that the State Government is announcing schemes to get political benefit only while all of its earlier schemes have failed to benefit people.

"The PEETHA yojana has not achieved any of its targets. BJD workers and supporters are getting benefit out of KALIA scheme and sports items through the Biju Yuva Vahini. Cyclone Titli affected people and farmers have not got assistances," he alleged.

Stating that Cyclone Titli damages in Gajapati district has not been done properly and irregularities have occurred in distribution of assistances, the



MLA demanded that a Vigilance investigation be conducted into all irregularities.

Rao threatened that the Congress would take to the streets soon if the demands are not met soon.

Among others, Congress district president Bibuti Patro, city president Basant Kumar Panda, former ZP Chairman Akhaya Wai, Ramachandra Rao, Sangram Sahoo, Suddhiranjan Mohapatra and K Bhargab were present.

Vedanta Siksha Sambal scheme

Tutorials provided to Lanjigarh students

PNS ■ LANJIGARH

The Vedanta Limited's Lanjigarh plant, under its corporate social responsibility (CSR) flagship programme, 'Siksha Sambal, has taken the initiative of providing pre-matric

tutorial classes especially in the subjects of science, mathematics and English in seven Government schools around its plant periphery reaching out to more than 1,100 students from Class-VIII to Matric. In a programme held on Saturday, senior

employee volunteers together with CSR team members from Vedanta visited the schools to encourage the 359 students who will be appearing in the board exams this academic year.

Speaking about the project, Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh, CEO Rakesh Mohan said that the company is committed to make a real difference to the overall educational scenario of the region.



Male bear carcass seized in Nilgiri

Forest officials say death natural

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A dead male bear of about 35 years was recovered by the Forest Department on Sunday from Chalanapal village under Dhobisala panchayat of Nilgiri block. Blood was oozing out from his mouth, raising suspicion that he was beaten to death.

The department while claimed that the aged bear was ailing for quite some time due to ageing factor and died of old age sickness, some locals alleged that he was stone pelted to death.

Nilgiri forest ranger Sukumar Das said, "The male bear was ailing for quite some time and was unable to move. He had a natural death due to aging factor."



Nilgiri forest ranger Sukumar Das said, "The male bear was ailing for quite some time and was unable to move. He had a natural death due to aging factor."

the body. Postmortem of the body was carried out by a veterinary surgeon and it was ascertained that the death was due to old age sickness. It was buried near Sajanagarh," he said.

It may be noted Nilgiri while had been a bear infested region of the district, bears do stray into

locals areas adjacent to Nilgiri forest range and Kuldhia sanctuary villages, frequently in search of foods.

Some locals while lay snares to trap them to prevent damages to their agriculture fields, other miscreants lay traps to catch them to extract nails and other parts.

'OREDA has big role in energy sector'



◆ Workshop held on 35th Foundation Day
◆ Series of MoUs inked

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA) celebrated its 35th Foundation Day on Sunday here.

To commemorate the occasion a workshop-cum exhibition was organised wherein all staff of OREDA, its partner organizations, invited guests and former Chief Executives of OREDA participated. The three-day exhibition on renewable energy and its applications is open for general public.

Minister, School and Mass Education, Science and Technology-cum-Chairman, OREDA Badri Narayan Patra inaugurated the event in pres-

ence of Bhaskar Jyoti Sharma, Commissioner-Cum-Secretary to Government, Science and Technology Department, Odisha, Roopa Mishra, Chief Executive, OREDA, along with other distinguished dignitaries.

Patra said, "Due to vast environmental changes and global warming, a day will come when usual sources of conventional energy like thermal and hydro energy will be exhausted. Now the time has come for the leaders of the world to bring out certain solutions."

Sharma said, "Now-a-days, pollution has reached its maximum level. He urged the general public to use more renewable energy for making world free from global warming. He also gave some insights about the building of OREDA. Further, he gave some information on the use of renewable

energy."

Mishra said, "Since long three decades OREDA has been working as project executors in energy sector. But after the glorious 35 years, OREDA should have to take a new role in reviving energy sector of Odisha."

The OREDA signed MoUs with Indian Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar for SNA-Institution Association and long term partnership co-operation in respect of technical support. Similarly an MOU was signed with National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur for development of Biju Pattanaik Energy Park. MOUs were also signed with Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) and DMF, Keonjhar for introduction of renewable energy. Director (Administration), OREDA gave a vote of thanks.

U Sammilani 'Samachar Patrika' released

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 'Samachar Patrika' of the Utkal Sammilani was released at a programme held at Veer Surendra Sai Nagar here on Sunday.

Senior journalist Pradosh Patnaik and Gangadhar Meher Pratishtan chairman Mihir Meher gracing as guests released the magazine. Utkal Sammilani Mancheswar Industrial Estate president Dillip Dashsharma presided over the meeting.

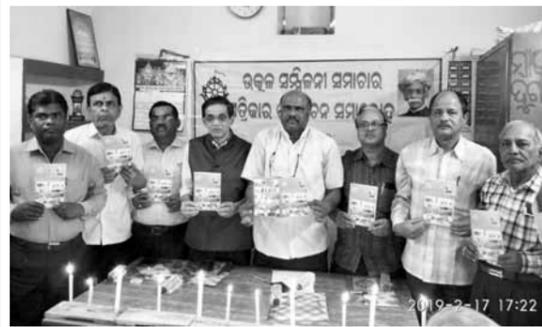
On the occasion, guests and Sammilani members paid homage to martyred CRPF Jawans, who were killed in terrorists' attack in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday afternoon. They also observed a one-minute silent for the departed souls.

While branch vice-president Shital Chandra Mohanty introduced guests, secretary Gobinda Chandra Subudhi and senior member Dr Dwarikanath Mohanty shared the

Senior journalist Pradosh Patnaik and Gangadhar Meher Pratishtan chairman Mihir Meher gracing as guests released the magazine

dais. Magazine editor Er Shiba Prasad Mishra and joint secretary Ashok Palatasingh felicitated the guests.

Among others, vice-president Pratap Swain, Prasanna Rath, Nirmal Kant Mohanty, Dr Nalini Mohanty, Dr Kumuda Mishra and Mamata Behera were present. Joint secretary Bibhuti Bhushan Swain proposed a vote of thanks.



14 more hotels to shut over violation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Cracking the whip on hotels for flouting norms, the Delhi Government has cancelled fire safety certificates of 14 more hotels in Karol Bagh area, taking the total number of such establishments to 71.

Delhi Home Minister Satyendra Jain tweeted, "Fire safety certificates of 14 more hotels/guesthouses have been suspended after violations were found during inspections. A total of 71 NoCs have been suspended so far. We will not compromise with fire safety. Human lives are precious & their safety has to be given top priority."

In past few days, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government had cancelled fire safety certificates of business establishments for various violations in Karol Bagh, where a massive fire at a hotel recently killed 17 people, and ordered their closure.

The Government had issued instructions to municipal corporations and police asking them to seal these establishments in the wake of violations of fire safety norms.

The fire department had on February 13 inspected 23 hotels, out of which 13 were found to be violating fire safety norms. On Thursday, 22 hotels were checked, out of which 17 were found to be violating laid down rules. On Friday, Jain, who heads the fire department, said that this drive would continue across the national capital.

Deadly fire in Arpit Palace was followed by a massive fire in which 250 were gutted and a factory caught fire on wee hours of Thursday which was controlled on time. All these incidents are a telling commentary on the state of affairs as criminal neglect and apathy of

civic agencies snuffed out various innocent lives for years. Instead of doing detailed security audit of all the budget hotels that have proliferated in Karol Bagh, Rajinder Nagar, Nabi Karim, Paharganj, Jama Masjid area in highly congested Central district, Corporation officials are busy in passing the buck on each other.

According to sources in Fire Department, only around 25 percent restaurants and hotels in Delhi have the mandatory NOC from Fire Department and only 1540 guest house are so far registered with DFS that possess NOC.

"We get letters to inspect from civic authorities and we issue NOC after our inspection is done. NOC is not issued for guest houses or buildings being used as a hotel which has two floors. Most of the building owners show that they are using facility as guest house and during inspection of restaurants owners' shows sitting capacity less than 50 but they increase that once inspection is done. The NOC is renewed in three years," said Atul Garg, Chief Fire Officer, Delhi Fire Services department.

Meanwhile, the North Delhi Municipal Corporation shifted the blame on Delhi government for allegedly allowing the unchecked growth of illegal construction in city on the name of implementing of the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions), Second Act, 2007.

Putting the blame on DFS, he said that there are more than 600 guest houses in the areas and most of them easily get fire safety clearances. "It is difficult to check violations as there is no mechanism to submit the construction completion certificate at the time of applying for a trade licence," he added.

Awareness to resolve family disputes held



Red Cross also holds training on disaster mngmt

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Family Consultation Centre of the Indian Red Cross Society, Odisha State Branch held a community awareness programme relating to family consultation at Jaleswar slum, Delta Square here on Friday. Many girls and women participated in the programme.

Odisha Red Cross honorary secretary Major Dr Kalapana Das inaugurating the programme spoke on various problems happening in families and their remedies. The people were advised to resolve family issues through the Red Cross Family Consultation Centre.

Red Cross' family advisor Bijay Laxmi Kar held discussion about various forms of violence against women, ways

of solution and legal processes to resolve them.

Local Anganwadi Worker Banitanjali Das and volunteer Subashi Nayak provided cooperation. Another family advisor Pritipajna Dash was present.

On Saturday, the Odisha State Red Cross along with the Odisha State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA) held a training programme on rescue operation during natural calamities. Red Cross honorary secretary Das and OSDMA GM Prashant Nayak guided the event, attended by over 30 youth Red Cross advisors from different colleges.

Among others, Satyanarayan Hota, Bholanath Mishra, Satanu Thakur attended as trainers. While Red Cross convener Sumitra Tripathy coordinated the programme, OSDMA project officer Gourishankar Mishra delivered a vote of thanks.

MCL wins four awards for excellence in PR

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

The Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) has bagged four awards for excellence in Public Relations from the Public Relations Council of India (PRCI) at the 13th Global Communication Conclave held at Jaipur on Saturday.

Office Superintendent-A1 Manas Ranjan Pattnaik and Chitta Ranjan Nahak of the Department of Public Relations, MCL, received the awards from Chief Election Commissioner Shri Arora in the presence of former MP and

veteran journalist HK Dua.

The MCL's radio advertisement to fight corruption bagged the gold prize while table calendar based on children's creativity and public service advertisement on the vision of Mahatma Gandhi won bronze titles.

A message of importance of integrity at workplace by producing a Wall Calendar received the special Appreciation Award.

There were over 200 participations from government, public and private sector organisations for the PRCI Excellence Awards.



KIIT set to promote women entrepreneurship



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Enhancing Female Entrepreneurship in India (ENPRENDIA)", a capacity building consortium project, was co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of European Union.

This consortium has eight Indian partners and five foreign partners including University of Lisbon (Portugal), Glasgow Caledonian University (Scotland), University College of Dublin (Ireland), Kinderburo University (Austria) and University of Santiago Compostela (Spain); and KIIT is the coordinating institution.

The first kick-off meeting was held at the KIIT recently

where 24 representatives of all the partner institutions participated and deliberated on the roadmap and deliverables of the project. Under the project, several trainings and workshops will be organised in both India and foreign counterparts and Entrepreneurship Resource Centres (ERCs) will be created in all Indian institutions which will help promote women entrepreneurs. Such partnership will bring cross-border learning and build new collaboration in days to come.

KIIT and KISS founder Dr Achyuta Samanta congratulated the project coordinator Dr Mrutyunjay Suar (CEO of KIIT-TBI) for bringing such projects for a cause.

President Kovind calls for farming in wider entrepreneurial context

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday called for looking at farming in a wider entrepreneurial context, and linking traditional farming to the agricultural value chain.

Kovind was speaking as chief guest on the concluding day of the 4th Agri Leadership Summit-2019 at India International Horticulture Market, Gannaur, in Sonapat district.

Appreciating the farmers in Haryana who, with help from the State Government, were adopting new methods to manage stubble and crop residue, he expressed the confidence that they would succeed in finding a solution to the problem of pollution caused by stubble-burning.

The Governor Satyadeo Narain Arya, Chief Minister Manohar Lal, Finance Minister, Capt. Abhimanyu, Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare Minister OP Dhanak among others were also present on this occasion.

Kovind exhorted all stakeholders to work jointly to create an atmosphere in the country for making agriculture a viable option and attract entrepreneurs to make investment in agriculture sector. This would inspire farmers' children to take up farming enthusiastically. It would also make the farmers prosperous and enable Haryana to play a leading role in the efforts being made all over the country in the field of agriculture, he added.

The President strongly condemned the attack on the CRPF convoy in Avantipore area of Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir three days ago in which many brave soldiers were martyred.

On the occasion, Kovind also honored nine farmers, including a woman, with 'Haryana Krishi Ratna Award' in recognition of their outstanding contribution in the cultivation of different crops. He also honoured Ch. Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural

University, Hisar, with the newly introduced Haryana Kisan Ratna Award.

Kovind also launched Digital Kisan App which would provide information about unique initiatives and innovations in the field of agriculture through various means of social media. This digital platform, first-ever initiative in this field, has been connected with IT platform and nine community radio stations.

It was informed that about eight lakh farmers could get connected with this digital platform every day.

Speaking on the occasion, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal said that the State Government has set a target to ensure that farmers earned an income of at least Rs 1 lakh per acre. For this, besides the traditional farming of rice and wheat, farmers are being encouraged to adopt such allied activities as bee-keeping, dairy farming, fisheries etc, he said.

Expressing concern over the depleting level of underground water in some parts of the state, the Chief Minister said the State Government had declared some areas as dark zone. Apart from this, farmers have been encouraged to adopt micro irrigation. It is for the first time that water has reached 293 tail-ends in the state. The remaining seven tail-ends would also be covered soon, he said.

Manohar Lal said the present State Government had taken up projects like Lakhwar Dam project, Kisau Dam project and Renuka Dam project which had been lying pending for the last 40 years. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for two projects have been signed and after the construction of Lakhwar Dam and Kisau Dam, Haryana would be able to get 47 per cent share of total water, he added.

He further said about 45,000 Soil Health Cards had been issued to the farmers to enable them to grow crop according to the health of soil and improve soil fertility.

Ticket distribution will be based on 'winability': Sheila

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the prospects of an alliance with AAP near-

ly over, several senior Delhi Congress leaders have emerged

"e" Procurement Notice
Identification No. 52 / RWSS/2018-19

Executive Engineer RWS&S Division Nayagarh invites tender for the following works on line for "e" procurement as per details given below

Name of the work	Construction of pump house, Compound wall, 2 nos 2.00 Lakh ESR with 12m staging, Laying of pipe line & its ancillary work for PWS to MADHYAKHANDA under DASPALLA block (Augmentation)
No. of works	1 (One) Nos.
Estimated cost	98 Lakhs
Period of completion	6 months.
PERIOD OF SALE OF BIDDING DOCUMENT ONLINE	FROM 21.02.2019 at 5.00 PM to 27.02.2019 up to 5.00 PM PM
DATE AND TIME OF SEEKING TENDER CLARIFICATION	FROM 21.02.2019 at 5.00 PM to 26.02.2019 up to 5.00 PM
DATE AND TIME FOR RECEIPT OF BIDS ONLINE	FROM 21.02.2019 at 5.00 PM to 27.02.2019 up to 5.00 PM
*TIME AND DATE OF OPENING TECHNICAL BIDS	28.02.2019 at 3 PM
*TIME AND DATE OF OPENING FINANCIAL BIDS	TO BE ANNOUNCED
PLACE OF OPENING OF BID	O/O of the Executive Engineer RWS&S Division, Nayagarh
OFFICER INVITING BIDS	Executive Engineer RWS&S Division, Nayagarh

Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the website "<http://tendersodisha.govt.in>".

Sd/-
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
RWS&S DIVISION, NAYAGARH

25042/11/0030/1819

as contenders for the seven seats in the national Capital for the coming Lok Sabha election. Delhi Congress president Sheila Dikshit said a number of applications from party leaders have been received but added the ticket distribution will be decided based on their "winability".

Former Delhi Congress president Ajay Maken is focusing his strength on New Delhi Lok Sabha seat by holding meetings with local leaders and workers, Congress insiders say.

Maken, a two-time MP from the seat in 2004 and 2009, was defeated by BJP's Meenakshi Lekhi in 2014 elections.

Former MP Mahabul Mishra is eyeing West Delhi constituency but the Congress may field a Jat candidate, possibly Yoganand Shastri, from the seat, they say.

"On almost all seven Lok Sabha seats, several senior leaders are staking claims as it is



almost clear that Congress will not ally with AAP for the coming election," a senior Delhi Congress leader said.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal said on Thursday that the Congress has "more or less" refused an alliance with his party for the general election. He, however, had added his party was "eager" for a tie-up with Congress in the national capital to avoid a three-cornered contest involving the BJP.

The same day when Kejriwal said this, Sharmistha Mukherjee resigned as chief spokesperson of the Congress's Delhi unit, expressing her desire to contest the Lok Sabha election.

"If given a ticket by the party I will contest the Lok Sabha election. I will apply for ticket," she said, without revealing her preferred choice of seat.

But the Congress leader said she is a probable from Chandni Chowk constituency.

Former Union minister Kapil Sibal, former deputy speaker of Delhi Assembly Shoaib Iqbal and Haroon Yusuf are other contenders from Chandni Chowk, he said.

Congress insiders say either Kirti Azad or Shatrughan Sinha, both of whom are looking for a new home after differences with top BJP leaders, may be fielded from North East Delhi constituency, currently held by Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari.



Brain behind Pulwama hiding in J&K

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The preliminary probe into the Pulwama attack by the security agencies have revealed a direct involvement of Jaish-e-Mohammad and its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-based commander Nusr Maulvi Watah Quahish.

Sources said Quahish had been instructing Abdul Rashid Ghazi, the JeM commander suspected to be hiding in Jammu & Kashmir. He trained and instructed the suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar alias Waqas Commando who rammed an SUV into a bus of the CRPF convoy on Thursday killing at least 40 paramilitary personnel.

Interestingly, the mastermind of the suicide squad hails from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the home State of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan who has a working relationship with Lashkar-e-Tayyeba chief Hafiz Sayeed and has even allowed his deputy Abdul Rahman Makki access in the universities and schools to radicalise the young minds.



A paramilitary soldier watches as Kashmiri man tries to disentangle himself from a barbed wire set up as road blockade during restrictions in Srinagar on Sunday

AP

This Jaish module used to communicate with each other through Y SMS app, a tool that connects a smart phone to a

VHF set and interception by Intelligence agencies is virtually impossible. The Y SMS app is an in-house app suspected to have been developed by the

JeM or its cohorts. "The findings with respect to Quahish, a Pakistan-based Jaish commander, along with other inputs will be used for

Interestingly, the mastermind of the suicide squad hails from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the home State of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan who has a working relationship with Lashkar-e-Tayyeba chief Hafiz Sayeed and has even allowed his deputy Abdul Rahman Makki access in the universities and schools to radicalise the young minds

preparing a dossier for isolating Pakistan internationally," an official in the security establishment said.

Abdul Rashid is an IED expert trained by Quahish and is said to have been battle-hardened by conducting attacks

against NATO forces in the tribal Pakistani province. Rashid was the handler of Waqas Commando and trained him to execute the suicide bombing on February 14. Waqas Commando had rammed an SUV into a bus of a CRPF convoy on Thursday killing at least 40 men and inflicting injuries to nine others. Quahish and Ghazi are suspected to have operational links with Taliban, another terror group essentially active in Afghanistan but controlled by Pakistan's covert agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

The latest terror tactic displayed by the Pakistan-backed JeM assumes significance in the backdrop of peace talks in Afghanistan led by the US, a move that has given a major handle to Islamabad to the peril of Indian interests in Kabul where New Delhi has made significant investments for reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Sources in the security agencies said Ghazi is on the radar of the Forces and is likely to be eliminated soon.

AHEAD OF LS POLLS IN MUMBAI

Cong enrols jobless for monthly allowance if voted to power



DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress is planning to cash in the disenchantment of the unemployed voters in a big way. In order to draw these electorates, the party is all set to roll on a unique movement in the Mumbai metropolitan area the success of which would be replicated in other States as well before the grand old party finally announces the unemployment stipend in its manifesto.

The Congress will launch its campaign titled "Chalo Ward Abhiyaan" aimed at registering unemployed young men and women to provide them a monthly allowance if the party is voted to power in the Lok Sabha polls.

"As per the strategy, Mumbai Congress has already started working on the plan and printed around six lakh forms. The Youth Congress workers will be visiting every house in all the Assembly segments in Mumbai to ensure that every youngster fills these forms," said a Congress source. People between 18 and 40 years of age will be enrolled for the unemployment allowance.

Those who fill the forms will be given allowance cards. If Congress is voted to power, the allowance card holders will be given preference in employment, or else they will be provided unemployment allowance.

The new Congress-led governments in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh had already announced unemployment allowances of ₹3,500 and ₹4,000 per month respectively and the State, according to AICC source, is working on the disbursement of the share.

"Unlike the ruling BJP, the Congress will actually walk the talk, if it is voted to power in the Lok Sabha elections," said Sanjay Nirupam, chief of Mumbai Congress.

Congress has often slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his 2014 promise of creating two crore jobs per year and alleged that unemployment in the country had reached a decade's high at 7.4 per cent.

Congress President Rahul Gandhi too recently mocked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and referred him as German dictator and Nazi Party chief Adolf Hitler. Citing a recent National Sample Survey Office's Periodic Labour Force Survey of Non unemployment, Rahul said unemployment rate in India was at a 45-year-high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18. "The Fuhrer promised us two crore jobs a year," the Gandhi scion tweeted. "Five years later, his leaked job creation report card reveals a national disaster." The Fuhrer was a political title used for German dictator and Nazi Party chief Adolf Hitler.

CSC begins enrolling unorganised sector workers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, has begun the registration process for the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PMSYM) scheme covering unorganised sector workers up to 40 years of age making them eligible for a minimum monthly pension of ₹3,000 after the age of 60 in lieu of contributions made under the scheme.

Jobless growth has made youths restless: Ex-PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday hit out at the Government for failing to uplift the economy to its potential. Singh asserted that the domestic challenges of India's economy were daunting in their complexity and devastating in their impact on the society. Singh said the "jobless growth" has slipped into "jobless growth", which, together with rural indebtedness and urban chaos, has made the growing number of aspirational youths restless. In a convocation address of a Management institute, Singh said the "grave agrarian crisis, the declining employment

opportunities, the pervasive environmental degradation, and above all the divisive forces at work" were some of the challenges facing the nation.

"Suicides of farmers and frequent farmer agitations reflect the structural imbalances in our economy which call for serious in-depth analysis and political will to address them," the senior Congress leader asserted. The attempts at creating additional job opportunities in the industrial sector have failed as industrial growth is not picking up fast enough, he alleged. In a scathing attack on the government, Singh said the small and unorganised sectors which were vibrant and contributing to generation of wealth and employment oppor-



tunities have grievously suffered in the wake of the "disastrous" demonetisation and "slipshod" introduction and

implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

"Well thought-out policy and implementation strategies are required to stimulate industrial and commercial sectors. Knee-jerk reactions and off-the-cuff announcements of grandiose schemes and unproductive projects have manifestly failed to uplift the economy to its potential," he alleged.

Singh said one of the areas of major concern in the endeavours to promote employment-oriented industry is the gap between the skills that the industry needs and the skill-sets that the graduating students possess. "We are living in a fast-changing world. On the one hand we are getting more and more inte-

grated with the world economy and exposed to the global markets, and on the other hand we face massive economic and social challenges at home," said Singh, who was the prime minister from 2004-2014.

Changing equations among global powers and fluctuations in the markets for petroleum products and other industrial commodities and the financial markets affect India's economy more than ever before, he argued. "Needless to stress, it is a testing time for our democratic spirit, our patience and tolerance, our capacity of managing contradictions, our resolve of ensuring inclusive growth — a strong, equitable and sustainable growth," he said.

Env Ministry mulls to set up robust mechanism for execution of projects

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

While every month a good number of wildlife-related projects are cleared with certain conditions that has to be followed by proponents while executing the proposal, strangely there is yet no mechanism in place to check if these are being followed in letter and spirit.

As a result, many project proponents seems to be having no qualms in blatantly ignoring the mitigation measures to minimise the adverse impact on wildlife they are supposed to follow once their projects are cleared. Now, waking up to this glaring gap, the Union Environment Ministry is mulling to set up a robust mechanism to ensure that project agencies strictly comply with the terms and conditions they are stipulated to follow during clearance of their proposals. Taking strict view in the matter, the Standing Committee of the NBWL chaired by Dr Harsh Vardhan has also decided that monitoring of the mitigative measures will be a part of the management effectiveness evaluation process conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

The issue was highlighted by Dr HS Singh, member of the standing committee of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) in its meeting in January, this year.

Dr Singh complained that during the field visits by dif-



ferent committees constituted by the Standing Committee of NBWL, it was observed that many projects were implemented without implementing the conditions including mitigation measures.

"In other words, the interests of wildlife conservation were ignored sometimes intentionally," said Dr Singh, said the minutes of the meeting.

The standing committee, which is headed by Dr Harshvardhan is entrusted with responsibility of giving green clearances to projects that pass through protected areas like tiger reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and also those falling within 10-kilometre distance of the wildlife sanctuary or national parks.

Dr Singh further men-

tioned that the conservationists were of the view that the Protected Areas (PAs) have suffered in recent times due to sanctioning of the development projects inside the PAs while the project proponents ignored the conditions specially mentioned for protection of wildlife while recommending the projects.

Stringent action needs to be taken against the project proponents who have not complied with the terms and conditions. Further, no new projects would be taken up from States where the terms and conditions are not complied, these are some of the stringent measures that are being considered to tighten the noose, as per the the minutes.

The Minister was of con-

Many project proponents seems to be having no qualms in blatantly ignoring the mitigation measures to minimise the adverse impact on wildlife they are supposed to follow

'Beti Bachao' all set to be Haryana BJP's poll plank

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The success of the Centre's 'Beti Bachao' campaign is all set to be a major campaign plank for the Haryana Government as the State unit BJP has decided to make the improved sex-ratio in the State a major poll issue in the forthcoming general elections and the Assembly elections due late this year.

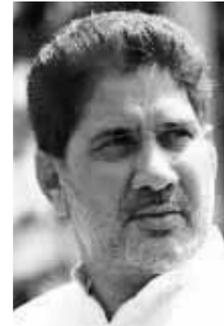
Haryana BJP chief Subash Barala said that the State has improved upon the sex ratio from 835 (girls) over 1000 (boys) in October 2014 to 922 (girls) over 1000 (boys) till date.

"Haryana's battle against its dwindling sex ratio is finally producing some encouraging results. We still have to match the national average of 943," Barala said in an exclusive interview to *The Pioneer*.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the launch of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' programme from Haryana in January 2015 as the state had always reported worst in sex ratio.

"From Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar to district unit party volunteer worked very hard to create awareness and reaching out to the Khaps to achieve this remarkable feat. I am sure in this way Haryana will set an example and a case study to the world wherever the girl sex ratio is in a deprived state," said the Haryana BJP chief.

Barala, who has just emerged as party's chief strate-



On the issue of frequent Jat quota agitation, Barala said every sensible person which also include Jats understands the intention of the Khattar Government on the reservation issue and now they will not be a misguided lot to the advantage of other political parties

gist to help the BJP register a win in the much hyped Jind bypoll against Congress stalwart Randeep Surjewala and the breakaway factions of INLD, said that the just con-

cluded elections is the reflection as how the Haryana Lok Sabha and Assembly will look like. In the last parliamentary elections in 2014, BJP won seven out of 10 seats in Haryana and this time it claims to grab all 10.

"Certainly we are in advantage as we are not into caste politics. Jats are with us. Congress is a divided lot and the INLD is a fragmented way. People of Haryana are craving for development and we are frontrunner due to Modi and Khattar's people friendly policies," said Barala when asked about the mood of the forthcoming elections.

On the issue of frequent Jat quota agitation, Barala said every sensible person which also include Jats understand the intention of the Khattar government on the reservation issue and now they will not be a misguided lot to the advantage of other political parties.

Setting aside any rift between the party and the Khattar who is a Punjabi in the Jat and Non-Jat combination, Barala praised the incumbent CM for doing some of the 'Firsts' in the country like amending Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994, fair recruitments and transfer postings, improved Sex ratio etc., Barala said that people of Haryana were fed up with the corrupt regimes of past and most importantly the decade of nepotism and now experiencing the change.

MBS's visit opportunity to strengthen ties: Saudi envoy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to India presents a "historic opportunity" to expand collaboration in all sectors, the Gulf country's envoy here said on Sunday.

Prince Salman, who is also Saudi Arabia's defence minister, will arrive in India on February 19 on his first official visit. Counter-terrorism and energy security are expected to top the agenda for discussions during the trip.

Besides holding talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he will also meet President Ram Nath Kovind and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu during his two-day visit.

Cooperation in counter-terrorism is likely to figure high on the agenda of his talks in New Delhi as the visit comes following the Pulwama terror attack carried out by Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) in which 40 CRPF men were killed.

Saudi Arabia had strongly condemned and the attack.

Prince Salman has embarked on a four-country Asian tour that besides India, also includes Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia.

"Saudi Arabia and India share age-old ties of friendship that are deepening with each passing day. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to India is highly anticipated and presents a historic opportunity to expand collaboration between our two friendly countries in all fields," Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India Saud Mohammed Al Sati said. Under Prince Salman's leadership, Saudi Arabia is at the cusp of path-breaking transformation, he said.

"In our common pursuit for development and stability, Saudi Arabia sees India as an important strategic partner and valued friend," Sati said.

Investments, defence and security, including counter-terrorism and renewable energy, are the key issues which are likely to come up for discussions during Prince Salman's visit to India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said last week.

Convoy movement by road in J&K to continue: MHA

New Delhi: Movement of paramilitary convoys by road for logistical and operational reasons will continue in Jammu and Kashmir as it is "necessary", the Home Ministry said Sunday, even though it has increased air support to carry troops to the state.

The statement came after 40 CRPF personnel were killed and five injured on Thursday when a Jaish-e-Mohammad suicide bomber rammed a vehicle carrying over 100 kg of explosives into their bus, part of a 78 vehicle convoy. PTI

Argentina Prez arrives in India on 3-day visit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Argentina's President Mauricio Macri arrived here Sunday on a three-day India visit during which he will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to enhance cooperation in key sectors such as economy, nuclear technology and space.

President Macri was received at the airport by Information and Broadcasting

Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore. "Bienvenido Señor Presidente! President of #Argentina @mauriciomacri arrived in Delhi on a 3-days State Visit, accompanied by First Lady & a high level delegation. India and Argentina are celebrating the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations." Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted. Macri will hold delegation-

level talks with Modi and have other official engagements on Monday. During his visit, President Macri will also meet Prime Minister Ram Nath Kovind. He will travel to Mumbai on February 19. He is also likely to visit Agra during his trip.

Macri's visit to India follows Modi travelling to Argentina in late 2018 for the G20 summit, during which the leaders had a "very productive" bilateral meeting.



Minister of State for I & B Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore talks with Argentine President Mauricio Macri and his wife first lady Juliana Awada on their arrival at AFS Palam in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

PM allots 33K-cr projects to Bihar

Patna to get metro rail

Barauni/Patna: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of projects worth over ₹33,000 crore in Bihar, including the long-awaited Patna Metro Rail Project.

Laying the foundation stone of the metro project through a remote at a function at Barauni in Begusarai district, Modi said, "I congratulate the people of Patna, because Pataliputra (the ancient name of Patna) is now connected to the metro rail."

Modi said the ₹13,000 crore metro project is being developed in keeping with the future needs of the people.

The metro projects will give new speed to Patna city, he said.

The Prime Minister inaugurated the first phase of River Front Development at Patna and the Patna City Gas Distribution project.

Modi laid the foundation stone for medical colleges at Chhapra and Purnea and also for the upgradation of the government medical colleges at Bhagalpur and Gaya.

He said the NDA Government was giving a lot of importance to the health sector and the day is a historic one in terms of health services in Bihar.

While Chhapra and Purnea will now have medical colleges, the ones in Bhagalpur and Gaya would have upgraded facilities.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during the inauguration and foundation stone-laying ceremony of various development projects in Begusarai on Sunday PTI

Modi also said that work is going on for establishing another All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in the state besides the existing one in Patna.

Modi laid the foundation stone for the Karmalichak Sewerage Network spanning 96.54 km. Works related to sewage treatment plants at Barh, Sultanganj and Naugachia were also kicked off by the PM.

He also laid the foundation stone for 22 Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) projects at various locations of the state.

The Prime Minister said his government was giving a lot of importance to connectivity.

At the function, he flagged off the Ranchi-Patna AC Weekly Express and inaugurated the electrification of railway lines on the Barauni-Kumedpur, Muzaffarpur-Raxaul, Fataha-Islampur and Biharsharif-Daniawan sectors.

The Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of a number of projects in the oil and gas sector and said they will significantly augment the availability of energy in Patna city and the region.

The projects will also boost fertiliser production, and sig-

nificantly enhance medical and sanitation facilities in Bihar.

Modi inaugurated the Phulpur-Patna stretch of the Jagdishpur-Varanasi Natural Gas pipeline and laid the foundation stone for extending the Paradip-Haldia-Durgapur LPG pipeline from Durgapur to Muzaffarpur and Patna.

He laid the foundation stone of the 9 million metric tonne atmospheric vacuum unit (AVU) of the Barauni Refinery Expansion Project, the Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) Hydrotreating Unit (INDJET) at Barauni Refinery and also the Ammonia-Urea Fertiliser Complex at Barauni. PTI

40 bull-tamers injured in jallikattu

Coimbatore: At least 40 bull-tamers were injured in the jallikattu held near here on Sunday.

A total of 740 bulls and 1,700 tamers from across Tamil Nadu took part in the sport.

This was the second edition of jallikattu (taming of the bull) organised here. The event was inaugurated by the state Municipal Administration Minister S P Velumani.

There were over 40,000 spectators. Of the injured, 20 were admitted to various hospitals while the rest were treated as outpatients, official sources said.

A few bulls too sustained minor injuries, they said.

Karthik of Madurai, who tamed 13 bulls, was adjudged as the best tamer and he received a car, a motorcycle and two housing plots.

Before the event began, a two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the 40 CRPF personnel who lost their lives in a terror attack in Jammu & Kashmir.

Earlier, talking to reporters, the Minister said the traditional sport of Tamil Nadu was held on 300 acres of land and nearly 2,500 police personnel were deployed for security.

He said jallikattu was organised by the district administration and Coimbatore Jallikattu Federation which arranged facilities, including an ambulance and a 15-member team of doctors to provide first aid for the injured. PTI

Modi's return to power will be 'death knell' of all constitutional institutions, says Yechury

Kasaragod (Kerala): The return of Narendra Modi to power will be the "death knell" of all the constitutional institutions in India, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said on Saturday.

He was speaking here at the inauguration of the northern region 'Kerala Samrakshana Yatra' which will be led by CPI state secretary Kanam Rajendran and will highlight the "failures" of the central government.

"Return of Narendra Modi to power will be the death knell of all the constitutional institutions in India. As of now, an attack has been launched against them. It will result in creating a wide gap between the rich and the poor in the society," Yechury said.

Speaking about the Pulwama attack, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed, he said it should not be communalised for political gains.

"The Kashmir attack should be seen as a terrorist attack. The attack should not be communalised considering the religion of the terrorist and used for political gains. The country should stand together against terrorism," the CPI(M) leader said.

Yechury also said the Sabarimala issue is not going to have an impact on the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

He said in West Bengal, both the Trinamool Congress and the BJP are political rivals

HE SAID IN WEST BENGAL, BOTH THE TRINAMOOLO CONGRESS AND THE BJP ARE POLITICAL RIVALS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

of the communist party.

"The massive rally of the CPI(M) in Bengal shows our clout there but Trinamool was not allowing people to vote there. We have not made any deals with the Congress party, but the aim is to oust the Narendra Modi Government. (We) will take decisions accordingly. The main aim is to defeat the BJP candidates," Yechury said, addressing thousands of Left Democratic Front (LDF) workers.

Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the LDF has organised two regional yatras in the state.

CPI(M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan began his march from the southern district of the State — Thiruvananthapuram — on Thursday and it was inaugurated by CPI general secretary S Sudhakar Reddy. Both the marches will conclude on March 2 in Thrissur. PTI

7 killed, 9 hurt in road accident in Bihar



Siwan (Bihar): Seven people were killed and nine others injured when a pick-up van carrying them collided head-on with a truck here, police said on Sunday.

All the seven died on the spot, the police said.

The accident took place in Sarai area of the district on Saturday night when the deceased as well as the injured were returning to their village here after attending a ceremony at a nearby place, the Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Siwan district, K K Mishra, said.

The truck fled the scene after the accident, Mishra added.

The deceased have been identified as Ajit Kumar (12), Brajesh Kumar (14), Shibu Kumar (20), Lal Babu Kumar (20), Sonu Kumar (17), Vikas Kumar (19) and Saheb Hussain (18), the ASP said.

Nine other occupants of the pick-up van were injured in the accident, the police officer said, adding, eight persons among the nine injured were admitted to Patna Medical College and Hospital. PTI

4 of family killed in road accident in Assam

Sivasagar (Assam): Four members of a family, including two women and a child, were killed and another was injured in a road accident in Sivasagar district on Sunday, police said.

The incident happened at 4.45 pm when vehicle carrying five persons of a family collided with a bus, a police officer said, adding, three members of the family died on the spot.

The accident took place under the jurisdiction of Demow police station at Bamunbari, on National Highway 37, in upper Assam, the police officer said.

The child, an eight-year-old boy, succumbed to his injuries at a private hospital, the officer said, adding, another member of the family, who was driving the vehicle, was fighting for his life at the nursing home, he added. PTI

Congress cannot nurture country's democracy: Shah

Guwahati: Launching a blistering attack on the Congress, BJP president Amit Shah said on Sunday that the Opposition party cannot "nurture" the country's democracy and for it only "family matters".

Naming Congress leaders from the Nehru-Gandhi family, Shah claimed that the oldest party of the country does not have "internal" democracy.

"Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi — I am not mentioning the future name. No question of involving workers at all. Such parties cannot nurture the country's democracy and fulfil its objectives," the BJP chief said at a party meet here.

Taking a dig at the Congress, he said the party, which does not have "internal democracy", cannot strengthen the country's democracy.

"That is why, only one family ruled the country for 55

years... Nehru-Gandhi family of the Congress ruled these 55 years. But what has the country got?" Shah said.

Laying the foundation stone of a nine-storey building that will house the new state headquarters of the BJP in Assam, Shah, in an apparent dig at the Congress, said that "brain, hard work, patriotism do not matter, only family matters".

Stating that such practices are not prevalent in the BJP, he cited his own example, explaining how he rose to the position of national president from a booth worker who put up posters in 1982.

"Our democracy is the biggest in the world. Born in a poor tea seller's house, (prime minister) Narendra Modi is the leader of the world's biggest democracy," he said.

Shah said many political parties across India are working in different ways in the

democratic system, but the BJP is different from all as it has preserved its internal democracy even today.

"In every three years, we conduct elections from booth level to that of the national president. That is why the BJP has not become any family party, but remains a party of workers only. BJP has become a national party, not a regional party. It never got split after poll results. "Father, son or daughter, son-in-law, these things never happen in the BJP. Many parties are just family parties," he said.

Shah claimed that when Modi got the mandate to form Government, 60 crore people did not have bank accounts, 18 crore had no gas cylinders, 10 crore were without houses, 2.5 crore had no electricity and 10 crore were bereft of toilets at homes.

The BJP chief said the Modi Government has worked to solve these issues. PTI



Kinnar Akhanda's Mahamandaleswar Bhawani Nath Valmiki performs daily rituals as devotees look on, during Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, on Tuesday PTI



Commuters travel during a heavy hailstorm in Tinsukia on Sunday PTI

Gujarat former BJP MLA murder: Two Maha-based shooters held from Dang

Ahmedabad: Two persons hailing from Maharashtra were arrested in connection with the January 8 killing of ex-Gujarat BJP MLA Jayanti Bhanushali, a senior police official said on Sunday.

Bhanushali, once a BJP MLA from the State's Abdasa Assembly constituency, was shot dead on board the Bhuj-Dadar Express between Bhachau and Samkhiyali stations in Kutch district.

Speaking to reporters Sunday, Director General of Police, CID (Crime) Ashish Bhatia identified the two arrested sharpshooters as Sasikant Kamble and Ashraf Sheikh,

both residents of Yerawada near Pune in Maharashtra.

"They were arrested on Saturday from a guest house in Saputara in Dang district. The two allegedly carried out Bhanushali's murder at the behest of former BJP leader and ex-MLA Chhabil Patel, Both Kamble and Sheikh are history-sheeters with several cases against their names," he said.

"They were in direct contact with Chhabil Patel who met them in Mumbai two months before the crime and offered ₹30 lakh to carry out the murder. They were paid ₹5 lakh in advance," Bhatia said. Chhabil Patel has reportedly fled to Muscat in Oman a week before the murder.

The DGP said Kamble visited Ahmedabad three times and also went to Bhuj with Chhabil Patel, who showed Bhanushali's residence.

The official informed that Kamble decided to kill Bhanushali on a train and even conducted reconnaissance for it but aborted a plan to kill him on December 31 as the duo did not have specific information regarding the latter's travel plans.

"After receiving specific information, they went ahead to commit the murder on January 8," Bhatia said. PTI

WB BJP leader among three arrested for his daughter's kidnapping

Labhpur (WB): A local BJP leader, Suprabhat Batyabyal, and two others were arrested in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Sunday in connection with the kidnapping of his daughter, a senior police officer said.

Batyabyal's daughter, who was kidnapped at gunpoint on Thursday, was "rescued" from Uttar Dinajpur district, he said.

In a joint operation with Uttar Dinajpur police, a police team from Birbhum traced the 22-year-old woman to Dalkhola railway station area on Sunday morning, the officer said.

Batyabyal and two of his associates were arrested after preliminary investigation indicated that they played a role in the kidnapping, he added.

"We have rescued the girl from Dalkhola this morning. She is fine and we are talking to her to find out what had actually happened. We have also arrested the girl's father who seems to have played an important role in the kidnapping," Birbhum Superintendent of Police Shyam Singh told PTI.

Asked about the motive behind the kidnapping, Singh said, "There are two aspects to it. There is a family problem, gaining political mileage could also be the motive. We are probing the matter. We are



grilling the three." Batyabyal, who switched to the BJP from the Trinamool Congress around five months ago, was detained on Saturday night. Police came to know about his daughter's location after questioning him, a district police source said.

Before joining the TMC, Batyabyal was a district committee member of the CPI(M). His daughter's kidnapping had sparked tensions in Labhpur, with protesters blocking the Suri-Katwa road for three days.

On Saturday, a mob attacked local TMC MLA Manirul Islam's vehicle and chased him, forcing him to take refuge in the local police station.

Police resorted to mild lathicharge to disperse the mob. The BJP's district leadership had alleged that TMC-backed goons were behind the kidnapping. PTI

Elephant, Chinna Thambi, captured twice

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Chinna Thambi, the elephant belonging to Thadagam Valley reserve forests in Coimbatore district, earned a rare distinction of being the one and only wild elephant in South India to be caught twice and that too in quick succession. He also became the first wild life citizen to taste cooked food!

The darling of the villagers adjoining Thadagam Valley reserve forests, Chinna Thambi, who was caught from the village and relocated to Anamalai Tiger Reserve on January 26 following com-



plaint from a section of the residents that the pachyderm along with his comrades were stealing their agricultural crops like sugar cane, bananas and other vegetables.

Chinna Thambi, who was re-located to ATR in a night long operation felt uneasy in the new surroundings and his

odyssey in search of his original home on the next day itself. He has been in the lime-light since then. The Forest Officials sent kumkis (elephants specially trained in handling wild and rogue elephants) to take control of Chinna Thambi. The department also decided to train

atra as there was no shortage of food and drink. The Madras High Court ordered that Chinna Thambi be caught but the move to train him as kumki was blocked by the court.

Late Friday, the team of forest officials with the help of a veterinary surgeon, a kumki and foresters managed to lure Chinna Thambi out of a dense sugar cane field with jackfruits, a weakness of the wild tusker. The team tranquilised him and transported Chinna Thambi to a kraal (an enclosure made with wood for caging elephants).

V Ganeshan, Field Director, ATR, told the media on Sunday that the elephant is

hale and hearty in spite of the fact that normally they get irritated and disturbed while caged. "He is having food and lot of water and is cordial to the forest staff," said Ganeshan. The forest official disclosed that Chinna Thambi was being fed cooked food comprising of millet and fodder. "We are for releasing him back to the ATR after training him for sometime. Our idea is to set him free in the reserve forests and make him stay there throughout life," said a senior forest official.

For the time being, Nalla Thambi is going off the media glare and would be back if he comes out of the ATR again in search of his original abode.

PULWAMA ATTACK AFTERMATH

At least 150 held, J&K remains under curfew

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

At least 150 youngsters have been arrested by the Jammu & Kashmir police in connection with different incidents of violence reported in and around Jammu in the last three days. Meanwhile, curfew remained imposed for the third consecutive day in Jammu even as situation is gradually returning to normalcy. Mobile internet services also remained suspended and several social events including marriage receptions were cancelled due to prevailing security scenario in Jammu.

As a precautionary measure the district administration has announced cancellation of examinations scheduled on Monday. School/ colleges in Jammu district shall also remain closed due to prevailing circumstances.

PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti who arrived in Jammu was prevented by the state police from holding meeting here in the party office during curfew restrictions.

As some of the party leaders started trickling in the



Protesters clash with police personnel during a curfew, imposed on the third day after the clash between two communities over the protest against the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu on Sunday

party office in Gandhi Nagar area the police authorities had to seal the party office to prevent assembly of more than 4 people in the wake of imposition of Section 144.

Inspector General of Police, Jammu range MK Singh said, "we are trying to strictly enforce the curfew restrictions in Jammu and situation on ground is improving gradually."

He said barring one odd incident in Janipura no major untoward incident was reported in Jammu.

He said, "we have arrested

around 150 youngsters involved in different incidents of violence during curfew and Jammu bandh". He said we are screening the footage available with the department to identify the miscreants involved in these incidents. He warned those indulging in rumour mongering.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made in Janipura area by the district administration to ensure security of State Government employees from Kashmir valley.

4 Kashmiri students face sedition charges for 'celebrating' Pulwama attack

Jaipur: Four female paramedical students of Kashmiri-origin have been slapped with sedition charges after being suspended from a private institute here for allegedly celebrating the Pulwama terror attack by posting "anti-national" messages on an instant messaging app, officials said on Sunday.

The second-year students of the National Institute of Medical Science (NIMS), Talveen Manzoor, Iqra, Zohra Nazir and Uzma Nazir, were suspended for posting on WhatsApp a picture in which they were purportedly seen celebrating the terrorist attack in Kashmir that claimed the lives of 40 CRPF personnel.

The picture soon went viral, prompting the university administration to take action.

In the suspension order, the NIMS registrar said, "You have posted an anti-national message on your WhatsApp for celebrating killing of Pulwama terrorist attack martyrs. The university will not tolerate and strictly condemns such activities. The act is grave and seri-

The students were booked under IPC sections 124A (sedition), 153A (promoting enmity) and relevant provisions of the Information Technology (IT) Act

ous in nature." Later, a case was registered against the four students following a complaint by the university administration, a police official said.

The students were booked under IPC sections 124A (sedition), 153A (promoting enmity) and relevant provisions of the Information Technology (IT) Act. Senior officials are investigating the matter and appropriate action will be taken thereafter, SP (Rural) Harendra Kumar said.

The Aligarh Muslim University has also suspended an undergraduate Kashmiri student for his alleged objectionable tweet in connection with the Pulwama attack. **PTI**

Pulwama terror attack will be avenged: Naqvi

Lucknow: Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Sunday the Narendra Modi Government has "broken the backbone" of terrorists as he asserted that the "cowardly" Pulwama terror attack will be avenged.

"National security is most important and there cannot be any compromise on this. Neither can there be any soft posturing. The cowardly act will be avenged," Naqvi told reporters here, referring to the recent terror attack in Pulwama in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

"In the more than four-and-half years of the Modi government, the backbone of terrorists has been broken. Since the formation of BJP government at the Centre, barring some places in Kashmir, there have been no terror attacks," the Union minister said.

Citing Sankat Mochan temple (Varanasi), Mecca Masjid (Hyderabad) and Lucknow, he claimed that earlier there were no places where terror attack had not taken place.

"But, during the tenure of the Modi government, the ter-

rorists have not been able to strike," he said.

The minister said the Pulwama terror attack that took place last Thursday is "unforgivable" and those responsible for the strike will not be spared.

"The Prime Minister has already made his intentions clear in very strong words. We are not going to compromise with those responsible for the terror attack, those who give them patronage or those who sponsor them. They will not be spared," Naqvi said.

He referred to the government actions in the aftermath of the deadly terror strike.

"The Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status accorded to Pakistan (by India) has been withdrawn. The process of reining in separatist forces, who sing praises of Pakistan, while staying in India, has also started," Naqvi said.

The security cover of six separatist leaders, including Mirwais Umar Farooq, was withdrawn Sunday.

To a question whether the Lok Sabha elections would be postponed in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack, the

Union minister said the poll process and the terror strike are separate issues.

Reacting to controversial statements made by Congress leaders Navjot Singh Sidhu and another leader Noor Bano, vis-a-vis the Pulwama terror attack, Naqvi said, "The Congress must rein in its leaders. In this party (Congress), a competition on giving (controversial) statements is going on."

On "non-fulfilment" of promises made by the BJP regarding Article 370 and Ram temple in Ayodhya, Naqvi said, "These have been our sankalp (commitment). In the more than four-and-half years of the Modi government, we have given a government of Iqbal (faith), Imaan (honesty) and Insaaf (justice)."

Naqvi said the 'Bharat ke Mann ki Baat, Modi ke Saath' programme is the "first-of-its-kind" step taken by any political party.

The BJP launched the month-long exercise on February 3 to seek suggestions from 10 crore people across the country to help the party prepare its 'sankalp patra' (manifesto). **PTI**



A senior air force official lays a wreath on the mortal remains of Major Chitresh Bisht in Rajouri on Sunday

Schoolteacher held for hailing Pakistan over terror attack

Bengaluru: A woman teacher of a private school in Karnataka has been arrested for allegedly hailing Pakistan in the backdrop of the terror attack in Jammu & Kashmir that left 40 CRPF personnel dead, police said on Sunday.

Jilekha Bi of the school at Shivapura in Belagavi was arrested on Saturday night after she posted a message on social media saying "Pakistan Ki Jay Ho", they said.

She is the second person to be arrested in the state over similar comments on the Thursday's suicide bomb attack in Pulwama. A Kashmiri student studying in a city college was arrested Saturday for hailing the Jaish terrorist in a social networking site.

The teacher, a native of Belagavi, was produced in a local court Sunday and remanded in judicial custody,

police said. Her post triggered public outrage and some youth gathered near her house, pelted it with stones and allegedly tried to set it afire, they added.

Soon, police reached the spot, arrested the woman and the protestors.

Earlier Saturday, police arrested 23-year-old Tahir Latif of Baramula district.

He had allegedly put up a screenshot of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorist Adil Ahmed Dar and the bodies of the slain soldiers as his display picture on WhatsApp and praised him.

Besides the two, police have also registered a case against another

Kashmiri youth — Abid Malik — for posting remarks on Facebook allegedly describing the terror attack as "The real surgical attack". Following the complaint, Facebook deleted his account. **PTI**

Yogi meets family of CRPF constable killed in Pulwama attack

Gorakhpur (UP): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday visited the family of slain CRPF constable Pankaj Tripathi in Maharajganj district's Harpur Belhiya village.

Tripathi was one of the 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel killed in the terror attack in Jammu & Kashmir's Pulwama district.

The Chief Minister paid tributes to the constable and assured Tripathi's family that their demands would be fulfilled.

Adityanath spoke to family members and enquired when Tripathi had last come home.

The constable's father, Om Prakash Tripathi, said, "He (the Chief Minister) didn't ask us about our demand and has not told us what we will be getting. We wrote our demands in a piece of paper and we gave it to the Chief Minister."

"He kept it and told us that

our demands will be met," he said.

When he was asked about the demands, Om Prakash Tripathi said the six demands of the family include a job in a primary school for the constable's widow and a link road to connect the main road to the village.

He said the demands also include employment for his younger son.

The Uttar Pradesh Government will give family members of the those killed in the terror attack from the State ₹25 lakh, one acre land for cultivation and a Government job, the Chief Minister said.

He also said a road will be named after those killed in the Pulwama attack. "In the cowardly attack, we lost our soldiers among whom 12 were from Uttar Pradesh. The entire country is fighting against terrorism and those who promote terrorism will get befitting reply," Adityanath said. **PTI**

Pulwama attack: Shoots halted as film bodies in Mumbai protest

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Work came to a grinding halt for at least four hours at the Film City at Goregaon in north Mumbai on Sunday, as film personalities, technicians and prominent cricketers, owing to allegiance to as many as 24 film associations, joined the protests against the Pulwama terror attack.

The shooting of Amitabh Bachchan's next film "Brahmastra" and a commercial featuring cricketers Virendra Sehwa, Harbhajan Singh, VVS Laxman and Suresh Raina were among the film engagements that came to be suspended for anywhere from two to four hours to facilitate participation of the artists, directors and technicians in the protests.

The Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) and Indian Film & Television Directors' Association (IFTDA) had taken the lead in organising the protests. Informed IFTDA sources said that Big-B could not join the protests as he was in the get up for the film.

Announcing the boycott of films featuring Pakistani artists and singers in the wake of Pulwama attack, IFTDA's President Ashoke Pandit said, "We won't let any film release which has even a song by any Pakistani singer, forget about actors. We will take strong action if we come



to know anything."

Echoing the sentiments of Pandit, BN Tiwari, president of Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), said that all the film associations had decided to "boycott totally" any Pakistani artist working in Hindi films.

Pandit also announced that that various film and television associations had decided to boycott India's former test cricketer and Punjab's Minister to boycott Navjot Singh Sidhu, who appears on "The Kapil Sharma Show", for his questionable comment whether entire Pakistan could be blamed for a handful of people who perpetrated the Pulwama attack.

Speaking on the occasion, Sehwa said, "Compared with what our soldiers do at the borders on a day-to-day basis, whatever we are doing and saying is less. We are deeply pained at Pulwama, but are hopeful for a better time for all of us in the future... At this

junction, we can only thank them and should do whatever can to help them."

"These are tough times but let's stay united so that they aren't able to break us. I'm grateful to all the soldiers who protect us around the clock. Cricketers, actors aren't heroes. The real hero of the nation is our soldier," Harbhajan said, expressing hope that the sacrifices made by the martyred soldiers in Pulgh does not go in vain.

Apart from film personalities, cinematographers, make up men, costumes, junior artists, editors, fighters and dancers participated in the protests.

It may be recalled 40 CRPF soldiers were killed and five others injured when a suicide bomber rammed a vehicle laden with explosives into their bus on Thursday last. The Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Scrap Article 370, provide package to J&K: Maha BJP MLA to PM Modi

Mumbai: Maharashtra BJP MLA Mangal Prabhat Lodha on Sunday demanded the scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution that gives Jammu & Kashmir special status and limits Parliament's power to make laws concerning the northern State.

He also sought a special package for J&K so that youth there could get trade and industrial opportunities.

The legislator from Malabar Hill in the metropolis, in a letter to Prime Minister, said peo-

ple of the restive state should not feel alienated and disconnected from the rest of the country.

"You (PM Modi) are in favour of taking many strong decisions and this has been proved by your many past decisions. Therefore, I demand removal of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir," his letter stated. "A special package should be announced for trade and industrial development in the state for people of Kashmir to remain connected with the nation," it added. **PTI**

Farmers to hold another 'Long March' from Feb 20

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what threatens to be a repeat or even a bigger version of the massive peasant congregation witnessed in the metropolis in March last year, farmers owing allegiance to the CPM's peasants' wing All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), will walk from Nashik in north Maharashtra to Mumbai between February 20 and 27 in protest against the "betrayal" of farmers by the BJP's Central and State Governments.

The Kisan Long March-2, as the organisers have termed their protests as, will begin from Nashik on February 20, the martyrdom anniversary of Comrade Govind Pansare and will end in Mumbai on February 27, the martyrdom

anniversary of Chandrashekhar Azad. "At the Long March-2, we expect double the number of farmers than the ones who had turned at the previous march held in March last year," AIKS' president Dr Ashok Dhawale said.

"In order to stop the AIKS-led second Kisan Long March in Maharashtra against the betrayal of farmers by the ruling BJP at the Centre and in the state, the Government has taken recourse to repression," Dhawale said.

The AIKS had organised a farmers' convention at Ahmednagar on February 13 to prepare for the Long March. "We submitted a memorandum to the Ahmednagar district collector. Nowhere was there any breach of peace. All neces-

sary police permissions had been taken," Dhawale said.

"But just for organising this convention, police cases have been lodged against AIKS state general secretary Dr Ajit Nawale and attempts are on to arrest him. It is crystal clear who is behind these steps," Dhawale said.

Condemning "this act" of the government as an attempt to "crush" a democratic and peaceful satyagraha struggle, the AIKS warned that such "repressive attempts" of the government would not succeed in stopping the Long March. "The government should realise that farmers' issues can be solved by accepting their just demands and by implementing them. Farmers in Maharashtra will not rest until the major issues that

are being taken up in this second Long March in two years are resolved," Dhawale said.

The AIKS' demands include: immediate relief in the grim drought situation, issues of irrigation, land rights, complete liberation from debt, MSP at one and a half times the full cost of production, a pro-farmer crop insurance scheme, increased pension, ration and food security.

The AIKS has planned the Kisan Long March-2 in view of the state government's failure to implement its various demands that the state government had "accepted" after the farmers took out a long march from Nashik in March last year.

It may be recalled that the farmers owing allegiance to AKIS had their way on March

12, 2018 after their 200-km gruelling long march from Nashik, as the BJP-led saffron alliance government "accepted" a majority of demands, including transfer of forest land rights, total implementation of farm loan waiver scheme by June and increase in quantum of pension under the Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana.

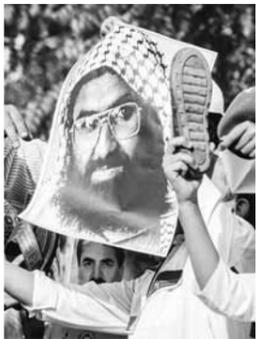
The farmers, 35,000 of whom had walked all the way from Nashik to Mumbai as part of the "Kisan Long March" organised by the ABKS, had called off their agitation in the evening, after the Maharashtra government handed to their leaders a letter of assurance, assuring them that it had accepted nearly 80 percent of their demands and would implement them in a time-bound manner.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath interacts with the family members of slain CRPF Constable Pankaj Kumar Tripathi, who was killed in Thursday's Pulwama terror attack, in Maharajganj on Sunday

Pulwama offensive

India may have launched a diplomatic blitzkrieg but without convincing China, it has a tough job at hand



Post-Pulwama, conversations are veering around India's counter-offensive, diplomatic and military. Will we get the world sanction for our right to defend ourselves against global terrorism? And will we go for shallow surgical attacks or do limited airstrikes? In fact, the Modi government, which has been seen as boldly nationalist in its reaction to the terrorist attack at Uri, is now caught in a piquant situation. There is a domestic pressure on it to walk the talk but there is really a short window to do that in an election year and do so appropriately without ruffling feathers. Besides, it cannot be seen as war-criticism that it is using Kashmir's worst

terrorist violence for its own benefit. Truth be told, the scale, nature and timing of the attack couldn't have come at a worst time and now that it has, there is no option but to act on with vigour and a dogged sense of purpose. Diplomatically speaking, our stumbling roadblock is China, which rebuffed efforts yet again to name the Jaish chief Masood Azhar as a UN-designated terrorist although the Jaish claimed that it had carried out the suicide bomb attack in Pulwama. But China believes Jaish is in the UN list of terrorist organisations and sees no point in singling out Azhar. China's position is explainable despite its own efforts to muzzle Islamic terrorists in Uighur province. When it comes to Azhar, it is taciturn simply because he roams freely in Pakistan, China's "all-weather" friend and counterweight against India. Azhar gives China an upper edge when it comes to putting pressure on India, a one-man answer to India's push on the Nuclear Supplier's Group. Besides, India has completely blocked China's expansionist and imperialist design by opposing the Belt and Road Initiative, the crucial part of which figures as the China-Pak Economic Corridor, and China will appease Pakistan. Besides, China and Pakistan back each other up on the world stage, representing each other in official groups of nations where the other is not present. For instance, Pakistan stands up for China in the Non-Aligned Movement and in return, Pakistan gets China's veto power in the UNSC. Besides, if the recent stand-off in Doklam is any indication, then it would seem that China has, in fact, upped efforts in needling India. True Chinese Premier Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi did try to simmer things down in Wuhan but all talks of commonality, economic and people-to-people cooperation just do not address the elephant in the room — China's territorial adventurism against India or its endorsement of Pakistan-exported terrorism as counter-productive to the larger cause of stability in the region. Now we need to resort to some pointed back-room diplomacy with the Chinese to at least focus on Jaish and its depredations. The US has already acknowledged our need to do so and has even warned Pakistan to stop funding its terrorist havens. But it has so far been wary of pushing any move that doesn't have Chinese approval. And though India has been working the hotlines and talking to envoys, it is too early to say how much both US and Russia can really push China into declaring Azhar a global terrorist. For let's not forget that Jaish has close links to the Taliban, which has spread its tentacles in Afghanistan and is now seeking political accommodation, and after the troop withdrawal by the US, is expected to call the shots. In fact, this is what Pakistan is leveraging *vis-à-vis* India. So diplomatically, India does have some tough rules of engagement to negotiate. But militarily, our biggest challenge will not be strikes but in cordon and search operations and keeping vigil. For the Pulwama bomber was a local, one among Kashmiris who have so far not been engaging in suicide attacks considering it to be a sin or *haram*. If radicalisation has insidiously crept in, then we must make sure that ground offensives don't push the youth farther away and leave them to a one-sided brain-wash of information.

A stray dilemma

It is not just farmers who face problems with stray cattle, the Vande Bharat Express, has had problems with it, too



Unsurprisingly, the impact of the banning of cattle slaughter and its strict enforcement is having some serious consequences. Reports have emerged that farmers across northern India are staying up at night to guard their fields against large herds of stray cattle. In some cases farmers have locked up large numbers of bovines in school classrooms in order to prevent the destruction of their crops. Of course, one could make the argument that the crackdown by the Yogi Adityanath led state government in Uttar Pradesh against rampant illegal slaughterhouses has created the situation. The fact is while the cow is revered in India, many farmers turned a blind eye to slaughter of particularly of old ones. Indeed selling such to slaughter houses was the only way for them to monetise that asset.

But once that was stopped and with hundreds of thousands of older cattle remaining with no productive economic use, owners find themselves left with no option but to release them. And despite hundreds of crores of rupees being poured into *gaushalas* across this country, they do not have the capacity to deal with the incredible numbers of strays nowadays. So, across northern India, instances of huge herds are becoming more commonplace and it is not just farmers and fields where they are impacting daily life. On highways and roads across India, stray cattle are becoming a safety hazard. The latest problem though might bring the problem into the spotlight with the Indian railways' flagship new Express train, the Vande Bharat Express, stalled after hitting stray cattle. The irony of this happening to this train was not lost on some, and news of the train defect even made the international media. But cattle hits by train are more common than most think, although most locomotives do not suffer much damage.

The fact that cows are revered in Hinduism and Indian culture should not influence our thinking to the extent that we cannot find a sensible solution to the stray and ageing livestock. And while the solutions may not be palatable to all initially, we do need to find one. Because what started out as a small problem a couple of years ago, is reaching epidemic proportions and is threatening human development now and we cannot treat the lives of cattle to be more important than human life.

opinion 08

Being deceived, everytime

The Pulwama attack proved that Indian rulers have regrettably not understood the Pakistani psyche nor its power structure. New Delhi interprets Islamabad through its eyes



PRAFULL GORADIA

February 14, 2019, will be remembered as the saddest day in independent India. The killing and wounding of so many Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans was tragic enough but that wasn't all. The casualties were of innocent men travelling to perform their duty. They would have ceased to be innocent once they donned their uniforms and slung their weapons on their shoulders. Well-led soldiers are seldom deceived. We hope we have at least woken up to the evil that the Pakistani rulers are.

Since October 1947, India and Jammu & Kashmir have suffered countless attacks — whether by soldiers, *mujahidden* or plain criminals. Thousands of lives have been sacrificed upon the altar of terrorism and several India-Pakistan wars have been fought. But Indian rulers have regrettably not understood the Pakistani psyche nor its power structure. An outstanding reason is that New Delhi interprets Islamabad through its eyes. Little wonder, we are deceived each time.

In Kargil, Pakistani soldiers entrenched themselves on hilltops during the winter; whereas we woke up to them only in spring. In 1971, the Yahya-Bhutto clique wanted to get rid of the majority eastern wing; whereas we seriously believed that Maj Gen Niazi was sent to Dacca (now Dhaka) to defend and save what became Bangladesh.

In 1972, when the then Pakistan Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to negotiate peace after the 1971 war, it was agreed that the Line of Control in Kashmir would become the permanent frontier between India and Pakistan. In exchange, 93,000 prisoners of war under Maj Gen Niazi would be returned. But how could the poor Bhutto sign? After all, his country was in agony having just lost over half of Pakistan. In 1965, Pakistani tanks attacked Kutch to test Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's will to fight — if found weak, to invade Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab. Our Army was, therefore, surprised when the subsequent assault came in Chambaurian. In 1947-48, Srinagar initially saw the arrival of the armed brigades but they turned out to be intended conquerors of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. Fortunately, Sardar Patel understood Qaid-e-Azam's designs.

The Islamabad clique is a hydra-headed regime. In front is the civilian Government, next the Army and next to that is the Inter-Services Intelligence. Whenever these three have to restrain themselves — it may be due to the inclination of Pakistan's benefactors, world opinion or human rights — the Taliban or other terrorists are made to step forward. This was the case in the Pulwama terror attack by the Jaish-e-Mohammad, which is a non-state agency and can be claimed



to be "beyond the control of the state". How can anyone trust four different agencies if one could not believe even a single person, namely Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on the Line of Control in 1972? Pakistanis are born and habitual deceivers. Indira Gandhi and her *Panji Pyare* led by PN Haksar naively believed Bhutto.

Before coming to the inner play among the hydra-headed agencies, it should be educative to note India's acts of non-commission as well. We have all heard the many cries and slogans of *azaadi*, autonomy and *Nizam-e-Mustafa*. But has New Delhi ever bluntly asked those agitators and their allies: What about the enormous subsidy that Jammu & Kashmir enjoys?

Kashmiris pay very few taxes and, therefore, live off subsidies from the Centre. Three years ago, on a visit to Srinagar, this writer happened to ask a highly respected journalist: What do you, as a Kashmiri, ideally want? He replied 'autonomy', except for four or five subjects. When asked whether he would be prepared to run the autonomous state without subsidy, he hesitated for a few moments and then replied:

"Frankly, while we have worked out our political roadmap, we have not yet drawn up our economic roadmap!"

Surely, New Delhi should have encouraged discussions and debates on this contradiction. These would help dampen nefarious elements and their intentions. At the same time, it is equally important for New Delhi to declare unequivocally three blunt truths. That India cannot, for love or money, let Kashmir secede from the country for three solid reasons. Two of the country's major rivers have their source not far from Srinagar. Two others pass through the Valley before entering Punjab. And the Indus begins in Ladakh. If Kashmir gets autonomy, why would other Muslims resident in India not expect the same privilege?

Incidentally, Justice Gopal Das Khosla, ICS, who was one of the three judges who sentenced Nathu Ram Godse, wrote in his book, *Stern Reckoning*, that an exchange of population was an integral part of Partition; this was not implemented. MA Jinnah had declared that Hindus and Muslims are so different that they could not coexist in the same country. If that be not so,

where was the need for Partition? But today, there are more Muslim residents in India than either in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Third, if the Valley is granted autonomy, any other of the 30 States in the country could ask for a similar privilege. Politicians, whether of the Huriyat or any other shade, would know these home truths but an average Kashmiri does not and is, therefore, vulnerable to being misled.

The Army in Pakistan enjoys near unquestioned charisma. There are four reasons that this writer is aware of; there may be more. One, is the series of discredited civilian Governments since the assassination of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951. Two, is the mortal fear induced by the rulers that the common folk harbour an Indian threat. The third is the Punjabi apprehension that Pakistan may fall apart if the Army is not in the *de facto* saddle. Four, civilians have not seen their country's Army being beaten soundly, except perhaps on the peripheries during the 1965 war. Kashmir was not in sight and Bangladesh (in 1971) was far away from the Pakistani mainland. The Inter-Services

Intelligence is an integral part of the Army.

This inexorable factor will prevail unless and until the people of Punjab see their soldiers being defeated on the battlefield. This is the crux of the conflict with Pakistan, Kashmir being merely the *akhada* for its Army to wrestle with Indians. Players can be the Taliban or professional terrorists or paid and trained Indian Kashmiris. This is the merry convenience Islamabad will enjoy until New Delhi gets ready to take serious action.

Without such action, it is unlikely that it would be possible to live in peace as good neighbours. In this context, the Ottoman Empire was a similar problem. It was economically sick since quite early in the 19th century as Pakistan now is. Yet, Turkey controlled large areas around itself and was capable of conducting a massive genocide five decades or more later in Armenia. The problem was solved only when the Ottomans were routed in the World War I and their empire taken down. The Sultan was soon exiled and the Caliphate was abolished.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author)

SOUNDBITE

The US supports India's right to self-defence as both sides vowed to work together to ensure that Pakistan ceases to be a safe heaven for JeM.

US NSA
—John Bolton



What has happened in Pulwama is very sad. My prayers are with the families of soldiers who have lost their dear ones. Their loss is irreparable.

Actor
—Manoj Bajpayee



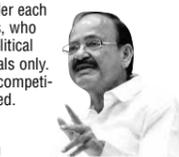
Pakistan cannot claim that it is unaware of JeM's presence and activities. They have not taken action despite international demands.

MEA spokesperson
—Raveesh Kumar



We should consider each one of our friends, who are in different political spectrum, our rivals only. It is only healthy competition that is required.

Vice President
—Venkaiah Naidu



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ace footballer

Sir — It was disheartening to read that England's 1966 World Cup-winning goal-keeper, Gordon Banks, died of kidney cancer. Bank's diving, twisting save of the century — voted number 41 in the list of 100 greatest sporting moments by the British public in 2002 — to thwart Brazil's Pelé in the 1970 World Cup is lauded as one of the greatest feats of goal-keeping. Football lovers all over the world are overjoyed when they relieve that miraculous save, but Banks had mixed feelings about it.

He said, "They won't remember me for winning the World Cup, it'll be for that save. That's how big a thing it is. People just want to talk about that save".

In fact, according to Pelé, "[Banks was] a goal-keeper with magic... I scored so many goals in my life, but many people, when they meet me, always ask me about that save. While it was indeed phenomenal, my memory of Gordon is not defined by that..." Not only did the legendary Brazilian speak of his

In defiance of rules and regulations

This refers to the editorial, "Another inferno" (February 13). The Karol Bagh fire incident is not the first one; neither will it be the last one. The grisly incident of an inferno that blazed Uphaar cinema theatre way back in 1997, leading to unending court cases, is still vivid in memory. Serious loopholes that were detected in the Uphaar tragedy should have led to exemplary measures being taken to make such buildings fire proof. However, in India, nothing leads to corrective steps being taken to save lives. As usual, theories have started doing the rounds on the possible causes of the devastating blaze. The area is too crowded day and night and many budget hotels dot the narrow roads already cramped by buildings next to one another.

Entry and exit routes in such an environment would be narrow and unkempt. One wonders whether something called 'emergency exits' really exist in hotels. The readiness of 'fire safety norms' is debatable. The originally permitted four-floor hotel gradually became a six-



floor one; a hotel without restaurant bar now has one at the rooftop and another at the basement. All of these point out to blatant disregard for rules and regulations. Police have it that "frequent raids" were conducted on the hotel to check precautionary measures in case of emergencies. So, police actions hide more than it reveals.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

sovereign nation with all the rights to defend, secure and protect its territory and people from sinister designs of terror groups, the Government should give a befitting reply to the terror group and its sponsors. But this critical moment also calls for sobriety and wisdom.

Sanjukta
Kolkata

Longing for peace

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Hit Pakistan back hard" (February 16). As far as curbing terrorism in the State of Jammu & Kashmir is concerned, neither Governor's rule nor President's rule appear to have had any significant change.

It seems, people have not lost faith that peace will ever be restored in their State. Eliminating terrorists is going to be a challenging task for our armed forces as terror elements appear to be working in isolation.

Shankar
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Understanding our environment

Colonialism rooted in fanning the embers of industrial imperialism did impact the world's ecosystems. This aspect requires more research



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Everyone knows, things are changing at a fast pace. There is a general debate on the direction of change. There are people, who are of the view that basically nothing has changed save the 'means', the 'scale' and the 'speed'. Put simply, the argument walks on two legs. One: Human nature is essentially the same as it always was. What has kept changing with constancy of basic emotions of attraction, repulsion, anger, friendliness, nobility, villainess and more is its mode of expression. History of mankind is a history of change in these mode of expressions. The primitive man first fought with bare hands, then with clubs followed by sharp weapons like sword or spear. Then came the catapult and the propulsion of stones and missiles. Fire power entered the scene and then came ammunition. Gradually, warfare moved from the sea and the land to include the sky. Methods and levels kept changing but basics were more of the same.

In this see-saw between change and no change, in the actual condition of homo sapiens, two things were very clear. Human nature kept constant but its manifestations kept evolving. Typically, the methods of war-fare changed, so did the method of cooking or living but as noted earlier, basic emotions remained constant. This change was labelled as "incoming of modernity". One can only say 'amen!' Then there was the issue of civility. Consider how a community takes care of the old and the infirm. That is to be kept in mind when deciding upon the architecture of social engineering. As indicated above, one basic concern of measurement would be safety and care to the infirm and needy. The second would be the right of dignified transition from one phase of life cycle to another. Perhaps these two principles are so simple that almost all civil Governments seem to have responded in default. Time has come to change it.

Similarly, there are other areas which require a revision of the vantage point of perception. Typically, the findings of a research study by Alexander Kotch and his colleagues are reported to indicate certain theories. Of them, one is that climate change did not begin with industrialisation. They propose an alternate theory to an understanding of climate change. To be published by March this year, the study holds that changes in environment began with disease and war, which the European migrants brought to the Americas. By their reported estimates, 90 per cent of the indigenous population were wiped out by pestilence, war-fare and after effects. With Christopher Columbus pioneering the route to the Indies in 1492, began the process which altered the character of the population in a 100 years by simple decimation. Colonisation, virulent or otherwise, altered the character of the ecosystems they ventured into. It will be useful to remind ourselves that all colonisers were essentially soldiers of fortune. They may not even have been aware of what they could be triggering. But the innocence of the culprit so far as intentions are concerned, does not change the fall out of the nature of the act.

Reported media findings hold that this ushered in new vegetation which 'preserved' heat. It trapped carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. So trapped from the layers of air, on to the land, it was that what ushered in the 'little ice age'. Clearly, such an approach raises concomitant questions on the Earth's history. Earth has an antiquity much older than the coming of age of homo-sapiens. For present purposes, it may be useful to focus on the period of history since the time homo sapiens dominated the planet. One other researches have thrown up differing theories. There is one which attributes the same phenomena of severe cold to weak solar activity and heightened volcanic activity.

Irrespective, consensus seems to be that study of the history of mankind must begin with the recognised date of presence of mankind on this planet. The time has come to look at these issues with clear lenses. Unless there is clarity on the causative factors, the creation of sustainable futures may become a gamble like of which would happen when one is 'fiddling with wires in the dark'. If there is one thing that is clear, it is that colonialism rooted in fanning the embers of industrial imperialism did impact the ecosystems which had existed in different parts of the world for various millennia. Colonisation, causing into trail ecological deprivation, is not a fly-by-night episode to be ignored. It requires more research and sustained effort to understand what the original triggers of climate are and ecosystem change. The accelerators of industrialisation will have to wait for its place in sequence in the causative factors of the Earth's depredations. The act of understanding the history of human beings on Earth has just begun to unfold. Such insights help plan for a robust future.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MARTYRED JAWANS WOULDN'T GO IN VAIN AND ITS PERPETRATORS WOULD BE PUNISHED. —PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



WHEN THE COUNTRY IS MOURNING, THE PRIME MINISTER IS CAMPAIGNING FOR HIS PARTY AND CREATING A FEVERISH NATIONALISTIC PITCH. —MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON RATNAKAR MAHAJAN

Moving forward on quota

The 10 per cent quota Bill neither intends adequate/proportionate representation nor is a procedure to eliminate poverty. The objective is to provide indemnity and insurance to unreserved populace



SANDEEP VEMPATI

Drawing unfettered powers from the *Kesavananda Bharati* (1973) ruling by the Supreme Court, the Modi Government introduced the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019, in Parliament to provide 10 per cent reservation in jobs and educational institutions to the economically backward section in the general category, which was subsequently passed by both Houses in record time of two days. It will be only with great difficulty that we can recollect the name of any Bill that witnessed the passage in both Houses with such unanimity. While the Lok Sabha passed the Constitutional Amendment Bill with 323 AYES, 3 NOES; the Rajya Sabha passed it with 165 AYES and 07 NOES. This affirmative action also received the President's assent. As the Bill deals with Fundamental Rights, it does not require the nod of State Assemblies.

Ever since the introduction of this amendment, numerous questions have been raised about its Constitutional validity, with references being made to the 1992 decision by the Supreme Court in *Indra Sawhney versus Union of India*; applicability of the economic criterion as the basis for reservation; reservation being an instrument to ameliorate poverty; and the inability of the Government to resort to alternate procedures like welfare programmes and policies for the welfare of the economically weaker sections from the unreserved strata.

There was no political immunity either to greater good intended or affirmative action. Criticisms were hurled at the Modi Government — the Bill was branded as "a step to do away with caste-based reservations" and a "populist measure to reap political gains" with the 2019 General Election in mind.

Undoubtedly, India's social engineering that predates many centuries had noble intentions in the form of delineating occupations and services across caste groups, rendering those services among themselves and, thus, driving dependence among the groups to deliver social bonhomie. In the course of time, however, the noble intention took a hit and deteriorated into caste oppression and further to untouchability — social bonhomie transformed to social evil. The tales are different for the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The incessant social inequities drove these classes — Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class — lower in the echelons of social order.

If reservations were not provided to these classes, meritocracy and efficiency would have been the order of the day with all likelihood that these classes are being under-represented. Post Independence, the Parliament recognised and eventually provided reservations — vertical in nature — through the Constitution to these socially and educationally backward classes of the Indian society; in 1950 to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; and in the early 1990s to the Other Backward Class. All of this to ensure adequate representation in educational institutions and Government posts; Scheduled Castes: 15 per cent; Scheduled Tribes: 7.5 per cent; and Other



Backward Class: 27 per cent — all of which aggregated to 49.5 per cent.

The insertion of clause 4 in Article 15 and Article 16 of the Constitution provided the basis for reservation to the backward classes. Consequently, equilibrium established by right to equality and equality of opportunities was displaced. It is, therefore, apt to get Pareto efficiency, also referred to as Pareto optimality, into context: It is an economic state where resources cannot be reallocated to make one individual better off without making at least one individual worse off. Put it other way, it implies that resources are allocated in the most efficient manner but does not imply equality or fairness. This state of reallocation of resources was very well captured in the *Indra Sawhney* 1992 judgement.

So, in an attempt to create an egalitarian society and to normalise periodic agitations against the Mandal Commission report in 1980, the then PV Narasimha Rao Government issued an impugned Office Memorandum dated September 25, 1991, which stated that 10 per cent of the vacancies in civil posts and services under the Government of India shall be reserved for other economically backward sections of the people, who are not covered by any of the existing schemes of reservation.

The Supreme Court's response to the aforementioned memorandum is captured in the 115th paragraph of the *Indra Sawhney* 1992 judgement, which is as follows: "The impugned Office Memorandum dated September 25, 1991, does not say whether this classification is made under Clause (4) or Clause (1) of Article 16. Evidently, this classification among a category outside Clause (4) of Article 16 is not and cannot be related to Clause (4) of Article 16. If at all, it is related to Clause (1)".

In the same judgement (paragraph 95), the Supreme Court emphatically declared that 50

per cent rule is applicable only to reservations made under clause 4 of Article 16 and that reservations cannot breach the 50 per cent mark — on the basis of social and educational backwardness.

While the memorandum fell apart, agitations demanding reservations therein did not die down. The last decade is replete with instances of vociferous agitations, including violent protests from communities of the unreserved strata like Kapsus from Andhra Pradesh, Marathas in Maharashtra, Jats from Haryana, Gujars from Rajasthan and Patidars of Gujarat among others. These communities have exerted pressure on previous dispensations as also on the current Union Government to provide effect to their economic vulnerability by way of inclusion in extended scope of backward classes. Likewise, in the last decade, various State Governments have either issued memorandums or passed legislations to harmonise with the aforementioned agitations and nudged the Government at the helm, including the present dispensation, to include those acts in the Ninth schedule citing judicial immunity.

Wisdom prevailed with the Modi Government and it has neither resorted to expanding the scope of the backward classes nor included the state reservation Bills in the Ninth schedule. A populist dispensation would have acted otherwise. So, the Union Government — with reference to the apex court's judgement in *Indra Sawhney* (1992) — introduced additional 10 per cent reservation for the unreserved sections based on certain economic criterion while clause 6 was inserted in the Article 15 and Article 16 to acquire constitutional validity.

Seeing this from a different dimension, it can be emphasised that the Bill promotes social brotherhood and cohesion as well as prevents caste perpetuations. The Government does not believe in reducing the cut off marks or set-

ting lower standards for clearing the interview process in order to uphold the top court's judgement pronounced in the *Indra Sawhney* case: Service posts should ensure efficiency in the administration.

As per the Mandal Commission report, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Class classes represent 74.5 per cent of the Indian population. A simple math would yield that 66 per cent population of these classes are covered under reservation. Evidently, only 40 per cent of the unreserved strata are covered under the current 10 per cent quota provision, which is vertical in nature.

So, this Bill neither intends adequate/proportionate representation nor a procedure to eliminate poverty. The objective was to graduate from doles, freebies and inefficient welfare programmes to the Constitution for providing indemnity and insurance to the unreserved populace. This affirmative action is a classic instance of Pareto improvement — change in allocation harms no one and helps at least one person, given an initial allocation of goods for a set of persons. The *sabka* quota Bill is definitely a stamp of accreditation to the secular credentials.

Whether it is incessant efforts in achieving the constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes or delayed decision to extend the creamy layer to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes reservations (Jarnail Singh, 2018 Supreme Court judgement), the Union Government has expressed unquestionable intent on the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Class. In the wake of this Bill, any muddling on BJP-led Modi Government, that it wants to do away with reservations, should be construed as a mere political hurl.

(The writer is Member, Manifesto sub-committee on Social Welfare, BJP Telangana)

Making old age more secure and safe

An ideal micro-pension programme must address administrative, governance, design and efficiency issues to succeed. For it to work, a delicate balance between economic viability, generation of adequate returns and customised features for participants is a must



MOIN QAZI

India is home to one-fifth of the world's population, which includes a third of the world's poor and one-eighth of the world's elderly. Most of them spend their entire lives as informal workers and have no retirement security other than hopes that their children will take care for them in their old age. This arrangement worked well as long as the joint family structure was the dominant characteristic of the Indian society. However, with new social norms eroding the family-based system of support, old-age care for low-income citizens has become a critical challenge. With underdeveloped annuity markets and poor financial literacy, these people face considerable challenges in planning their retirement security. Many elderly citizens are stuck with lives of never-end-

ing work — a fate that may befall millions in the coming decades. We can see a miserable preview for those who don't have pensions that previous generations enjoyed.

India is experiencing a demographic transition — lower fertility, increased life expectancy and a consequent increase in the proportion of the elderly. Families are shrinking and transforming into nuclear units. Individualistic attitudes and rising aspirations with accompanying changes in lifestyles are widening the generation gap.

Social security is defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as "the protection which society provides for its members, through a series of public measures to prevent the social and economic distress that would otherwise be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction in earnings resulting from sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age and death; the provision of medical care and the provision of subsidies for families with children" (ILO, 1942). Micro-pensions are financial

products for old age income security, targeted at people in the informal sector and other low-income groups, who have varying and unstable income and are often financially illiterate, thus having limited access to financial services. They are a powerful solution to insulate low-income earners against old-age poverty and provide them with the possibility to build a better, independent and dignified financial future.

According to NABARD's All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016-17, 18.9 per cent households reported receiving one or the other kind of pension. Of these, 32 per cent reported at least one member above the age of 60 receiving old pension. Only four per cent were covered under the widow pension, two per cent retirement pension and 1.5 per cent under disability pension.

For the poor and vulnerable, two types of pension could be provided. The first is a public or social pension, where the state raises the revenue and redistributes to the citizens when they reach a stipulated age in order to guarantee them a dignified life. The second is a micro-pension, a person-

al retirement savings plan. People save a small part of their income individually during their working life that is invested collectively to generate periodical returns. When people retire, their accumulated capital is paid out in monthly amounts. The first one has issues of viability. A possible solution could be a universal social pension with a fairly high retirement age so that expenditure is contained.

IGNOAPS also called as National Old Age Pension Scheme (renamed as Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) in 2007), which is targeted at the destitute elderly, was launched by the Union Government on August 15, 1995. From April 2011, the eligibility age for this scheme was reduced from 65 to 60 and the pension amount was raised from ₹75 to ₹200 per month for elderly persons in the age group 60-79 years and ₹500 for those above 80. The entire funding for this scheme is disbursed by the Union Government to the States and the cover is limited to 50 per cent of the BPL population above age 65 (now 60). Currently, the Union Government spends ₹6,564

crore or 0.04 per cent of the GDP on this flagship social security programme.

The Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), introduced in 2009, provides BPL widows in the age group of 40-64 (later revised as 40-59) with a monthly pension of ₹200 per beneficiary. After they attain the age of 60, they qualify for pension under IGNOAPS.

The Annapurna scheme, launched in 2000, provides food security (35kg. food grains per month free of cost) to senior citizens not covered under IGNOAPS. As per the National Food Security Act, 2013, every person belonging to priority households shall be entitled to receive five kilograms of food grains per person, per month at subsidised prices under the Targeted Public Distribution System.

As many as 14 States provide a monthly pension of ₹500 per person or less to the elderly, as per the State of Pensions in India Report 2018, which was released recently at the Press Club of India. As per the report, Mizoram and Madhya Pradesh give pensions as low as ₹250 and ₹300 a

month, per person. Of the 80 million elderly entitled to a pension of ₹200 per month, this meagre amount by the Union Government reaches just 22.3 million people... leaving out 58 million people with no pension or any other form of assistance."

Daily wage workers live on a day-to-day basis and as a result, their immediate financial needs take priority over their future needs. They are not able to plan for their long-term future and as a result, they have to work till they die. Though informal sector workers may not retire in the formal sense like employees in the organised sector, they need to prepare for the eventual reduction in earning capacity that will occur during old age, especially on account of ill health. Micro-pension, therefore, aims to provide an income stream to coincide with this decline in earning capacity.

Micro-pension has low-ticket, high-volume transactions which make it unviable. With a small corpus, high transaction costs and wafer-thin margins (or even losses), the viability of micro-pension is a big issue. Another challenge is getting the agents to sell

the scheme, as commissions are small. Premature withdrawal and closure are also a serious problem.

For micro-pensions to succeed, a delicate balance between economic viability, generation of adequate returns and customised features for the participants is required. As the income flow of low-income communities is uncertain or volatile, owing to the nature of their economy, they should be offered a degree of financial flexibility providing for low or no minimum contribution requirements in order to encourage membership. However, contributions that are set too low or which are paid very unevenly may not provide sufficient income security. Experience with micro-savings indicates that low-income groups prefer lower-value and frequent deposits rather than infrequent larger-value deposits. As there are competing demands on their resources, it is difficult for them to accumulate large amounts.

(The writer is Member, NITI Aayog's National Committee on Financial Literacy and Inclusion for Women)

FIEO suggests a series of measures to boost exports

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Exporters body FIEO Sunday suggested a series of measures including outright exemption from GST, interest subsidy for agri-sector, and more funds for MSME players to boost outbound shipments.

With increasing protectionism in several countries, domestic exporters need incentives to increase shipments, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ganesh Kumar Gupta said.

"These support measures, if provided on time has the potential to take the country's exports to USD 375 billion in 2019-20 and create lakhs of jobs. This fiscal, we will cross USD 325 billion to USD 330 billion," he said on Sunday.

On Goods and Services Tax (GST), he said, it is necessary that an outright exemption window may be provided to exporters as was in existence before the GST regime to mitigate the liquidity problem.

"Though, the government has taken several measures to provide quick GST refunds to exporters, but due to one reason or the other, substantial GST refunds remain outstanding for long time causing acute liquidity problem which adversely affect our exports growth," he said.

There is a good potential



for agricultural produce in overseas markets and, for that there is a need to extend the interest subsidy scheme to the sector, he added.

Besides, the FIEO president sought more funds for improving trade related infrastructure in states, incentives to promote shipments of value added branded products, steps to increase trade with neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bangladesh, and benefits on sales to foreign tourists.

"To reduce transaction time and cost simultaneously increasing competitiveness, there is a need to provide more facility to the MSME exporters in the forthcoming foreign trade policy particularly of non-fiscal nature," Gupta said

adding exemption from IGST under advance authorization scheme.

Under this scheme, manufacturers are allowed to import inputs at zero duty but only for the export purposes.

During the April-January period of the current fiscal, exports grew 9.52 per cent to USD 271.8 billion.

Several key sectors like gems and jewellery, rice, marine product, leather, tea, coffee and cashew has recorded negative growth for the current period.

Since 2011-12, India's exports have been hovering around USD 300 billion. During 2017-18, the shipments grew by about 10 per cent to USD 303 billion.

GOVT EASES GREEN CLEARANCE NORMS FOR CAPTIVE POWER PLANTS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has exempted industries like steel, cement and metal from mandatory prior environment clearance for setting up a new or expanding the existing captive power plant employing waste heat recovery boilers (WHRB) without using any auxiliary fuel.

The exemption to industries having potential for heat recovery has been given to promote energy conservation and reduce green house gas emissions, according to an order.

This exemption was so far given to thermal power plants using waste heat boilers without any auxiliary fuel.

Prior environment clearance will not be required for setting up of new or expansion of captive power plants employing WHRB without using any auxiliary fuel, in the existing cement plants, integrated steel plants, metallurgical industries and other industries having potential for heat recovery, the order said.

The objective was to promote energy conservation, reduce green house emissions and, in larger interest of the environment including climate change, it added.

The Union Environment Ministry has amended the norms and issued a fresh order following several representations from the industry, according to the order

Jet Airways likely to get over ₹3,000-crore funds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Loss-making Jet Airways is likely to receive fund infusion worth over Rs 3,000 crore post debt-rejig and investments by Etihad Airways as well as National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) while founder Naresh Goyal might remain the promoter with less than half of the existing majority stake of 51 per cent, according to sources.

While the final contours of debt-restructuring and consequent changes are being worked out, an analyst said that Etihad Airways should come as the main driver for Jet Airways as lenders and shareholders would not be able to bring in much value addition.

Abu Dhabi-based Etihad, which currently owns 24 per cent in the full service carrier, is a strategic partner and is expected to pump in around Rs 1,400 crore, sources said.

On February 14, Jet Airways' board approved a Bank-Led Provisional Resolution Plan (BLPRP), whereby lenders would become the largest shareholders in the airline.

After receiving approval from shareholders, during their meeting scheduled for February 21, part of debt would be converted into 11.4 crore shares at a consideration of Re 1 apiece as per RBI norms.

Later, appropriate interim credit facilities by domestic lenders would be sanctioned to the airline, as per a regulatory filing made on February 14.

The government-backed NIIF, where Abu Dhabi Investment Authority is a key stakeholder, is likely to acquire little over 19 per cent stake in the ailing airline, they added.

They said that NIIF is likely to put in Rs 1,400 crore while lenders, led by the State Bank of India (SBI), are expected to convert debt into equity worth around Rs 600 crore.

Sources also said that Etihad's proposed investments would hike its stake only marginally and that would not trigger the requirement for making an open offer for shareholders of Jet Airways under Sebi regulations.

Together, the fresh funding for the airline would amount to about Rs 3,400 crore and Goyal's stake could reduce to 20 per cent from 51 per cent at present, sources said.

Queries sent to Etihad Airways and NIIF on their proposed investments in Jet Airways remained unanswered. Query sent to Jet Airways about Goyal's stake coming down to around 20 per cent after debt-rejig did not elicit any immediate response.

In the three months ended December 2018, Jet Airways reported a consolidated net

loss of Rs 732 crore.

Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities, said Etihad should come as the main driver of the company and they have to nominate their main people to run the airline because lenders and shareholders are not going to bring in much value addition.

Noting that it is an irretrievable situation under the current promoters, Jasani told PTI that who would be the operational owner of the airline would be the most crucial part.

"Somebody who has expertise and equity stake has to come. Only then this can be revived. Otherwise we are postponing the problem by a couple of years... If you are not changing the management, then we are going to stay where we are. Same problem will come again," he said.

V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said the restructuring exercise is likely to steer Jet Airways away from the turbulence it has been going through for many years now.

"The SBI-led consortium of bankers who will be becoming the largest shareholders after the conversion of debt into equity can manage the transition of management over to Etihad plus another partner eventually," he noted.

Tata Motors to showcase 13 vehicles in e-com expo

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Automobile major Tata Motors would display a complete range of 13 fully-built ready-to-use vehicles in the e-commerce expo 2019 to be held here from February 20 to 22.

Tata Motors said in a statement that it would showcase some of the bestselling variants across small commercial vehicle, intermedial light commercial vehicle and medium and heavy commercial vehicle segments

The variants have been developed after extensively researching the requirements of the e-commerce industry, engaging with the top e-commerce companies and their vendors involving Tata's own design engineers, the statement said.

For the last mile distribution, Tata Motors would exhibit Ace delivery van-former-commerce goods, Ace Zif panel van for e-commerce packages and Super Ace Mint XPS for heavy goods transport.

"We believe the e-commerce expo 2019 will act as a platform to address the growing demands of the transporters and e-commerce players, and provide them with a diverse range of fully-built products with customised features," the statement quoted president (commercial vehicle business unit) Tata Motors as saying.

Yaantra to expand presence to 800 cities in 3 years

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Yaantra, which provides repair services and refurbished smartphones, said Sunday it plans to expand its operations to over 800 cities and towns in the country, engaging over 40,000 retailers over the next three years.

Yaantra will also set up a network of company-owned and franchisee-run repair centres in 220-250 towns and cities during the same time period, Yaantra said in a statement.

"India has seen the highest year-on-year growth at 41 per cent in the refurbished category of the smartphones. The refurbished smartphones market is set to grow by 27 per cent in the coming years, where the market size for repair is USD 2 billion and for the refurbished segment is USD 4 billion (expected to reach USD 10 billion by FY2022)," it added.

Its business has seen a year-on-year growth of over 250 per cent in five years and expects to close the ongoing fiscal at around Rs 200 crore in revenue, Yaantra said.

"The expansion is just an extension of our commitment to the 400 million people who are still on feature phones. We are geared up to fulfill their

aspirations of having a branded smartphone at an affordable price," Yaantra co-founder and CEO Jayant Jha said.

With this expansion spree, Yaantra targets a 5X projected growth and will also generate employment for 3,000-3,500 skilled professionals across the company's repair, refurbish and service segment in these three years, he added.

Jha said priority for the company will be on improving the company's tech infrastructure with greater capacity, setting-up new repair centres and strengthening the logistics division.

"Expansion in existing territories, foraying in new market regions and getting more retail and channel partners aboard is going to be our next foot forward. Yaantra has been prominently working towards the re-commerce of smartphones and recently, we got into wearables. We will continue to extend our portfolio by adding new products," he said.

Currently, Yaantra employs over 1,000 people across their offices in ten cities covering over 14,000 pin codes. It had already sold more than 7 lakh smartphones till now and receives over 1,500 fresh orders daily.

Steel Minister to inaugurate SAIL's new Bihar unit today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Steel Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh on Monday will inaugurate SAIL's steel processing unit in Champaran district of Bihar.

At present, Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) manufactures steel pipes at the unit.

"The minister will tomorrow dedicate our steel processing unit in Bettiah Champaran District of Bihar to the nation," a SAIL official said.

Plans are on the anvil to increase the product mix, the official said.

The foundation stone of the processing unit foundation was laid in November 2007 with rated capacity of 50,000 tonne. The unit has one slitting line and two tube mills.

While one tube mill became operational on January 31, 2019, the second will become operational by February 28, 2019.

Pawan Hans sale: Bidders to soon get final share purchase pact

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The final share purchase agreement will be shared soon with shortlisted bidders of Pawan Hans for selling the government and ONGC's stake in the helicopter service provider, an official said.

A meeting of the Alternative Mechanism on strategic disinvestment headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and comprising Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu would be called soon to get the clearance for the final share purchase agreement (SPA).

The government holds 51 per cent stake in Pawan Hans, which has a fleet of 46 choppers. The remaining 49 per cent is with state-run ONGC.

"The final SPA is ready, we are waiting for the meeting of the Alternative Mechanism following which it would be shared with bidders," the official told PTI.

The government is aiming to complete the strategic sale of Pawan Hans in the current fiscal ending March.

The draft SPA and Request for Proposal (RFP) was circulated to shortlisted bidders on December 21, 2018, and a four-week time was given to them seeking comments.

Voda Idea in talks to sell mobile tower stake

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea is likely to mop up about Rs 20,000 crore from its proposed stake sale in mobile tower firm Indus Tower and monetisation of optical fibre assets, sources said.

The country's largest telecom operator plans to use the funds for lowering its debt, which stood at Rs 1,23,660 crore at the end of 2018.

"Vodafone Idea has received combined valuation of around Rs 20,000 crore for mobile towers and optical fibre assets that it is planning to sell. Discussions have started around it," an industry source close to the development told PTI.

The company had earlier announced its plan to sell 11.15 per cent stake held by the Aditya Birla Group in Indus Towers as well as 1.56 lakh kilometers of optical fibre assets.

"Indus stake is worth about Rs 50 billion (Rs 5,000 crore) today. We have 156,000 kms of fibre. We have not given any guidance on monetisable value," a Vodafone Idea spokesperson said.

The company is also planning to raise Rs 25,000 crore through a rights issue to fund its capital expenditure and pare debt.

Industry association raises concern over use of barcoded stamps for liquor

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The UP's excise department has replaced holographic liquor tax stamps with plain barcoded stamps which can be easily counterfeited and can lead to ill-fated hooch tragedies, the Authentication Solution Providers' Association (ASPA) has claimed.

The association has asked the state government to review the existing excise policy and, to implement a solution that is recommended by experts and bodies of the global anti-counterfeiting industry.

The Department of Excise, Uttar Pradesh, replaced secured holographic liquor tax stamps with plain bar coded stamps devoid of any physical security features in compliance with the move to implement track and trace technology as per the state's 2018-19 excise policy, ASPA President UK Gupta said.

A printed UID not associated with one or more authentication features or not protected against copying or replication cannot provide authentication, Gupta explained.

"We request the state government and state excise to review the existing excise policy and implement a solution that is recommended by experts and bodies of the glob-

The association has asked the state government to review the existing excise policy and, to implement a solution that is recommended by experts and bodies of the global anti-counterfeiting industry

al anti-counterfeiting industry. This will help in ensuring consumer safety, easy identification of genuine products, plugging leakages in supply chain and enhancing revenue for the exchequer," he said.

The International Tax Stamp Association (ITSA) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) support the use of a combination of physical technology as well as digital technology to check counterfeiting, the association said.

Uttar Pradesh was one of the first states in India to adopt holographic tax stamps almost 17 years ago and, now such stamps are being used in most states across the country on spirits and wines.

'India Size' garments may hit the shelves soon

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

You may soon be able to walk into a shopping mall and try on clothes with the 'India Size', tailored to suit the body measurements of the country's populace.

The government will also begin collating information for "trend forecasting" for textiles this month, using commercial intelligence to determine what could be in vogue in the near future, a move bound to exert major influence on global fashion trends, a top official said. In March, the government will launch an exercise to measure a group of people to prepare a comprehensive 'India Size' chart, which can be adopted by the country's apparel industry.

"We want that we should have Indian size for two things. It can boost our retail market. South Asian size will also get fillip, plus our own diaspora which is outside, we will become influence drivers for foreign companies also. We are actually rolling out the exercise in March itself," Textiles Secretary Raghvendra

Singh told PTI.

He said the government is trying to complete the "sizeable" project as soon as possible, so that a standardised size chart can be prepared for the ready-to-wear industry, based on body measurements of the domestic population.

The project approved earlier by the government will entail measuring of 25,000 male and female Indians in six cities across six regions of the country: Kolkata (East), Mumbai (West), New Delhi (North), Hyderabad (Central India), Bengaluru (South) and Shillong (North-East). Using 3D whole body scanners and computers that will extract hundreds of measurements from scan.

Providing well fitting garments in the absence of standardised size chart is proving to be a big challenge for the domestic textile and apparel industry, which is projected to reach USD 123 billion by 2021 and holds 5th position in apparel imports.

At present, India's apparel industry uses size charts which

are tweaked versions of sizes of other countries, so returns of the garments are in the range of 20 per cent to 40 per cent and increasing with the growth of e-commerce with the main reason for returns being poor garment fit.

A large percentage of shoppers face difficulty in finding clothes that fit perfectly according to their body measurements, as there is no standard size chart at present.

Moreover, there are differences in anthropometric built of people in different geographical regions across the country. Once ready, the standardised size chart will impact various other sectors like automotive, aerospace, fitness and sport, art and computer gaming, where insights from this data can produce ergonomically designed products, which are suited for the domestic population.

Till date 14 countries have successfully completed national sizing surveys: the US, Canada, Mexico, the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Korea, China and Australia.

Reliance Group reaches standstill pact with lenders, no sale of pledged shares till Sept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group has reached a 'standstill agreement' with more than 90 per cent of its lenders under which they will not sell any of the shares pledged by promoters till September.

Under the pact, the group will pay the principal and interest amounts to the lenders as per the scheduled due dates, while it has also appointed investment bankers for part placement of the group's direct 30 per cent stake in Reliance Power to institutional investors, officials at the lenders and Reliance Group said.

The investment bankers will begin roadshows for the share placement soon, they added.

Some of the key lenders include Templeton MF, DHFL Pramerica MF, Indiabulls MF, IndusInd Bank and Yes Bank. When contacted, a Reliance Group spokesperson said, "We are grateful to our lenders for believing in the intrinsic and fundamental

value of our companies, and granting their in principle approval to standstill arrangements."

Officials said the agreement has been reached with more than 90 per cent lenders of Reliance Group at the promoter group level.

Under this in-principle standstill understanding, these lenders will not enforce security and will not sell any of the promoters' pledged shares till September 30, 2019 on account of lower collateral cover or reduced margin due to the recent unprecedented fall in share prices.

Reliance Group will pay the principal and interest to the lenders as per the scheduled due dates specified in the loan agreements.

Regarding the proposed placement of shares, the bankers said the value of the promoter stake in Reliance Power, before the unprecedented fall in share prices, was more than Rs 2,500 crore, and would clear more than 65 per cent of total promoter borrowings.

High-level panel for reverting to older system of auctioning oil blocks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two years after the government shifted to revenue sharing contracts for oil and gas block auctions, a high-level panel has suggested reverting back to older system of awarding areas in most basins based on exploration commitment.

The six-member panel, headed by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar, which was formed on directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in its report submitted on January 29 stated that "unexplored areas in Category II & III basins be bid out exclusively based on exploration work programme".

"No revenue or production sharing other than payment of statutory levies (including royalty) should be the criteria, it said.

"However, in case of windfall gain defined as revenue of more than USD 2.5 billion in a financial year from the block, then 50 per cent sharing of incremental revenue above USD 2.5 billion."

The BJP-led NDA govern-

ment had two years back moved from production sharing contracts, where acreage for exploration of oil and gas was allocated to firms offering the largest work programmes (such as carrying out seismic survey and drilling of wells), to revenue sharing contracts, where the firm offering highest revenue to the government was given the blocks.

The move to revenue sharing was contrary to most of the industry players being against the new regime.

India has 26 sedimentary basins measuring 3.14 million square kilometers. These are classified into four categories: Category-I basins where commercial production has been established like Cambay, Mumbai Offshore, Rajasthan, Krishna Godavari, Cauvery, Assam Shelf and Assam-Arakan fold belt; Category-II basins with known accumulation of hydrocarbons but no commercial production so far such as Kutch, Mahanadi-NEC (North East Coast), Andaman-Nicobar and Kerala-Konkan-Lakshadweep.

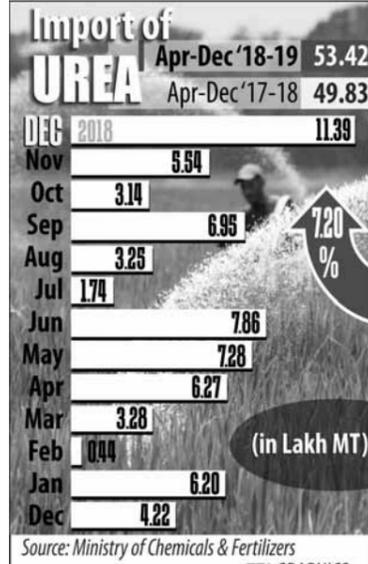
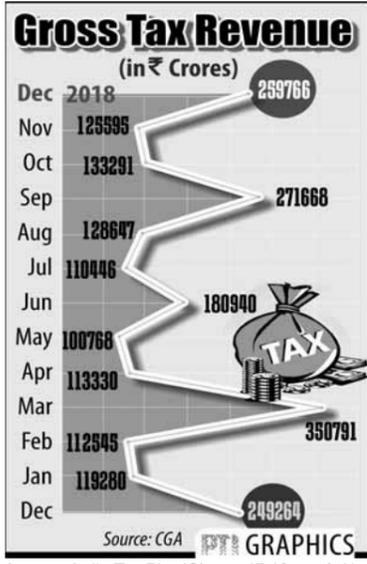
The category-III basins

have hydrocarbon reserves that are considered geologically prospective such as in Himalayan Foreland basin, Ganga Basin, Vindhyan basin, Saurashtra basin, Kerala Konkan basin, Bengal basin; and Category-IV which are the ones having uncertain potential which may be prospective by analogy with similar basins in the world. These include Karewa basin, Spiti-Zaskar basin, Satpura-South Rewa-Damodar basin, Chhattisgarh basin, Narmada basin, Deccan Syncline, Bhima-Kaladgi, Bastar basin, Pranhita Godavari basin and Cuddapah basin.

The committee included Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg, Oil Secretary M M Kuttu, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and ONGC Chairman and Managing Director Shashi Shankar.

The operators in Category II & III areas be given more concessions such as full marketing freedom to expedite production.

Scheme	NAV	1Yr%											
Tata Digital India Fund-Reg(G)	15.09	24.55	Invesco India Largecap Fund(G)	26.88	-0.99	Invesco India Feeder - Fund-Reg(G)	10.53	-5.55	Edelweiss Long Term Equity Fund (Tax Savings)-Reg(G)	42.96	-10.05	Fund(G)	
Aditya Birla SL Global Real Estate Fund(G)	19.66	20.10	Mirae Asset Great Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	32.32	-1.16	Franklin India Equity Fund(G)	551.09	-5.71	Motilal Oswal Multicap 35 Fund-Reg(G)	23.92	-10.06	UTI Focussed Equity Fund-I(G)	12.08
Reliance US Equity Opp Fund(G)	15.13	19.78	DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund-2-Reg(G)	11.68	-1.36	Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-B(G)	17.26	-5.72	SBI Healthcare Opp Fund-Reg(G)	113.08	-10.09	IDBI Nifty Junior Index Fund(G)	19.24
ICICI Pru Technology Fund(G)	60.74	18.40	UTI Mastershare-Reg(G)	113.90	-1.56	HDFC Equity Fund(G)	601.31	-5.78	Franklin India Opportunities Fund(G)	67.33	-10.20	Baroda Mid-cap Fund(G)	8.28
DHFL Pramerica Global Equity Opp Fund(G)	17.93	16.43	Aditya Birla SL Global Commodities Fund(G)	12.44	-1.97	Edelweiss Eur Dynamic Equity Off-shr Fund-Reg(G)	10.61	-5.81	DSP Equity Opportunities Fund-Reg(G)	198.86	-10.28	UTI LT Adv Fund-III(G)	12.57
ICICI Pru US Bluechip Equity Fund(G)	27.01	16.37	Mirae Asset Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	16.18	-2.01	Aditya Birla SL Focused Equity Fund(G)	53.98	-5.89	Reliance Consumption Fund(G)	60.80	-10.37	ICICI Pru Midcap Fund(G)	87.06
Franklin India Feeder - Franklin U.S. Opportunities Fund(G)	30.03	16.27	HDFC Top 100 Fund(G)	448.56	-2.14	Sundaram Fin Serv Opp Fund(G)	36.73	-5.95	SBI Tax Advantage Fund-III-Reg(G)	21.49	-10.39	L&T Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	121.80
SBI Technology Opp Fund-Reg(G)	64.05	15.47	JM Core 11 Fund(G)	8.43	-2.25	Principal Dividend Yield Fund(G)	49.79	-6.04	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-3(DP)	9.92	-10.43	SBI LT Advantage Fund-I-Reg(G)	12.15
Franklin India Technology Fund(G)	160.31	14.76	Kotak Standard Multicap Fund(G)	32.11	-2.45	Tata India Tax Savings Fund-Reg(G)	16.60	-6.06	Franklin India Prima Fund(G)	878.86	-10.45	Aditya Birla SL Mfg. Equity Fund-Reg(G)	12.14
Aditya Birla SL Intl. Equity Fund-A(G)	20.82	12.69	Baroda Large Cap Fund(G)	13.46	-2.46	ICICI Pru R.I.G.H.T Fund(G)	39.61	-6.12	Tata Mid Cap Growth Fund(G)	125.62	-10.55	ICICI Pru Dividend Yield Equity Fund(G)	15.16
Aditya Birla SL Digital India Fund(G)	52.37	12.05	Edelweiss Emerging Markets Opp Eq. Offshore Fund-Reg(G)	12.41	-2.65	Reliance Multi Cap Fund(G)	89.28	-6.24	Kotak Global Emerging Mkt Fund(G)	14.98	-10.56	IDBI Midcap Fund(G)	9.95
DSP US Flexible Equity Fund-Reg(G)	24.61	10.52	Invesco India Growth Opp Fund(G)	31.49	-2.81	JM Multicap Fund(G)	28.87	-6.33	Principal Multi Cap Growth Fund(G)	130.99	-10.67	HDFC Focused 30 Fund(G)	68.98
Kotak US Equity Fund(G)	16.47	10.39	Aditya Birla SL MNC Fund(G)	724.63	-2.88	ICICI Pru Focused Equity Fund(G)	27.47	-6.34	Reliance Value Fund(G)	66.28	-10.70	DHFL Pramerica Midcap Opp Fund-Reg(G)	16.46
ICICI Pru Global Stable Equity Fund(G)	15.04	10.34	Kotak Tax Saver Scheme(G)	40.15	-2.89	ICICI Pru Growth Fund-1(DP)	10.14	-6.39	Principal Personal Tax saver Fund	179.29	-10.71	SBI Contra Fund-Reg(G)	99.44
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	14.24	8.58	DHFL Pramerica Large Cap Fund(G)	155.36	-2.98	SBI BlueChip Fund-Reg(G)	35.54	-6.41	Tata Equity P/E Fund(G)	124.04	-10.94	Aditya Birla SL Dividend Yield Fund(G)	148.27
Sundaram World Brand Fund-Sr III-Reg(G)	14.41	8.54	IDFC Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	30.28	-3.08	DSP Top 100 Equity Fund-Reg(G)	187.11	-6.42	SBI Tax advantage Fund-II(G)	31.72	-11.36	SBI Magnum MidCap Fund-Reg(G)	67.09
Axis Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	10.77	8.02	Aditya Birla SL India GenNext Fund(G)	75.96	-3.09	Reliance Close Ended Equity Fund-II-A(G)	16.71	-6.45	Principal Tax Savings Fund	191.03	-11.39	Tata Resources & Energy Fund-Reg(G)	12.78
Axis Bluechip Fund(G)	26.84	7.79	Invesco India Tax Plan(G)	47.12	-3.11	Motilal Oswal Focused 25 Fund-Reg(G)	19.81	-6.47	SBI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	13.30	-17.93	UTI LT Adv Fund-V(G)	8.81
SBI Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	16.07	6.86	Invesco India Financial Services Fund(G)	50.52	-3.29	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	12.60	-6.48	BNP Paribas Mid Cap Fund(G)	28.83	-18.05	Edelweiss Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	24.20
DSP World Energy Fund-Reg(G)	13.25	5.86	UTI Dividend Yield Fund-Reg(G)	61.65	-3.48	Reliance Banking Fund(G)	245.70	-6.54	Fund(G)			SBI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	13.30
DSP Global Allocation Fund-Reg(G)	12.20	5.59	Sundaram Large and Mid Cap Fund(G)	31.50	-3.48	SBI Large & Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	203.87	-6.67	BNP Paribas Long Term Equity Fund(G)	35.02	-6.72	Invesco India Infrastructure Fund(G)	15.10
Tata Index Fund-Sensex Plan(G)	87.95	5.31	Reliance Large Cap Fund(G)	31.71	-3.49	Franklin Asian Equity Fund(G)	21.11	-6.75	Reliance Capital Builder Fund-II-B(G)	11.91	-6.73	Sundaram Mid Cap Fund(G)	421.69
HDFC Index Fund-Sensex(G)	316.38	5.15	UTI MNC Fund-Reg(G)	188.13	-3.51	Sundaram LT Tax Adv Fund-Sr II-Reg(G)	13.54	-6.77	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	73.56	-7.67	UTI Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	46.32
ICICI Pru FMCG Fund(G)	229.55	5.03	Kotak Bluechip Fund(G)	214.85	-3.56	Tata Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	184.95	-6.85	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	36.85	-12.02	L&T Emerging Businesses Fund-Reg(G)	22.64
Reliance Index Fund - Sensex Plan(G)	17.61	4.64	Principal Focused Multicap Fund(G)	58.97	-3.66	Sundaram Value Fund-II-Reg(G)	14.82	-6.85	ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	11.12	-12.03	Aditya Birla SL Midcap Fund(G)	258.36
Reliance Pharma Fund(G)	147.57	4.20	BNP Paribas Large Cap Fund(G)	81.17	-3.71	SBI Magnum Multicap Fund-Reg(G)	44.22	-6.86	BNP Paribas Multi Cap Fund(G)	42.35	-12.14	UTI Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	91.56
DSP World Agriculture Fund-Reg(G)	16.15	3.64	ICICI Pru LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)(G)	339.94	-3.76	Invesco India Contra Fund(G)	43.69	-6.88	UTI LT Adv Fund-IV(G)	9.55	-19.27	IDFC Sterling Value Fund-Reg(G)	45.72
UTI Equity Fund-Reg(G)	133.10	3.56	Mirae Asset Emerging Bluechip-Reg(G)	48.23	-3.79	ICICI Pru Value Fund-3(D)	9.98	-6.91	Tata Infrastructure Fund(G)	48.54	-19.69	Franklin India Smaller Cos Fund(G)	49.04
Axis Midcap Fund(G)	34.03	3.47	ICICI Pru Bluechip Fund(G)	38.71	-3.95	Invesco India Midcap Fund(G)	44.84	-7.22	UTI Infrastructure Fund(G)	48.54	-19.69	UTI LT Adv Fund-IV(G)	9.55
HDFC Index Fund-NIFTY 50 Plan(G)	97.21	2.86	L&T India Large Cap Fund-Reg(G)	24.85	-4.09	UTI LT Equity Fund (Tax Saving)-Reg(G)	80.55	-7.31	Kotak Small Cap Fund(G)	64.03	-19.86	Tata Infrastructure Fund(G)	48.54
UTI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	69.71	2.80	Tata India Consumer Fund-Reg(G)	16.62	-4.09	IDBI Equity Advantage Fund-Reg(G)	24.52	-7.37	ICICI Pru Infrastructure Fund(G)	44.10	-20.07	Invesco India PSU Equity Fund(G)	15.24
IDFC Nifty Fund-Reg(G)	22.10	2.79	Tata India Pharma & Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	8.48	-4.10	IDBI India Top 100 Equity Fund(G)	22.05	-7.47	ICICI Pru Exports & Services Fund(G)	52.76	-11.58	L&T Business Cycle Fund-Reg(G)	13.50
Tata Index Fund-Nifty Plan(G)	64.62	2.78	Reliance Quant Fund(G)	24.32	-4.12	Aditya Birla SL Equity Fund(G)	662.64	-7.56	HDFC TaxSaver(G)	474.06	-11.60	Canara Rob Infrastructure Fund-Reg(G)	40.15
Parag Parikh Long Term Equity Fund-Reg(G)	23.95	2.63	Tata Large Cap Fund(G)	201.04	-4.14	UTI Ethical Fund(G)	147.68	-7.64	DSP Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	49.42	-11.66	Reliance Vision Fund(G)	463.92
Reliance Japan Equity Fund(G)	12.49	2.50	ICICI Pru Multicap Fund(G)	266.25	-4.57	SBI Consumption Opp Fund-Reg(G)	110.05	-7.65	JM Value Fund(G)	29.03	-11.69	Kotak Infra & Eco Reform Fund(G)	17.60
SBI Nifty Index Fund-Reg(G)	91.86	2.32	Franklin India Taxshield(G)	522.51	-4.62	Franklin India Equity Advantage Fund(G)	73.56	-7.67	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series III-Reg(G)	30.61	-11.85	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	57.12
ICICI Pru Growth Fund-2(DP)	11.15	2.17	UTI Value Opp Fund-Reg(G)	56.45	-4.64	UTI Healthcare Fund-Reg(G)	81.32	-7.77	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	57.12	-12.01	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	36.85
Reliance Index Fund - Nifty Plan(G)	17.91	2.08	DHFL Pramerica LT Equity Fund-Reg(G)	13.27	-4.74	SBI Equity Opp Fund-Sr I-Reg(G)	14.59	-7.95	Franklin India Fund(G)	36.85	-12.02	ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	11.12
ICICI Pru Nifty Index Fund(G)	103.30	2.02	Kotak World Gold Fund(G)	8.35	-4.82	ICICI Pru Value Discovery Fund(G)	133.77	-7.99	BNP Paribas Multi Cap Fund(G)	42.35	-12.14	Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	366.89
Franklin India Index Fund-NSE Nifty(G)	84.82	1.85	DHFL Pramerica Euro Equity Fund(G)	13.05	-4.88	DSP Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	43.09	-8.02	Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	366.89	-12.28	ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	10.97
Aditya Birla SL Index Fund(G)	104.98	1.80	DSP World Mining Fund-Reg(G)	8.27	-4.92	HDFC Growth Opp Fund-Reg(G)	102.11	-8.25	Reliance Growth Fund(G)	1003.48	-12.57	Reliance Growth Fund(G)	1003.48
SBI Magnum Equity ESG Fund-Reg(G)	96.77	1.63	Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity Fund(G)	206.67	-4.92	ICICI Pru Value Fund-8(D)	9.78	-8.27	Baroda ELSS 96(G)	41.03	-12.68	DSP Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	49.42
Kotak India EQ Contra Fund(G)	48.96	1.57	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	29.58	-5.10	SBI Magnum Global Fund-Reg(G)	160.29	-8.45	L&T Tax Advt Fund-Reg(G)	49.22	-12.91	JM Value Fund(G)	29.03
IDBI Nifty Index Fund(G)	19.75	1.55	Aditya Birla SL Tax Relief '96(G)	29.58	-5.10	IDBI Diversified Equity Fund(G)	19.54	-8.48	Principal Emerging Bluechip Fund(G)	95.01	-12.96	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series IV-Reg(G)	12.73
Aditya Birla SL CEF-Global Agri-Reg(G)	23.03	1.43	UTI Value Opp Fund-Reg(G)	56.45	-4.64	DSP Equity Fund-Reg(G)	34.95	-8.48	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	57.12	-12.01	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	57.12
Canara Rob Equity Tax Saver Fund-Reg(G)	59.95	1.08	DHFL Pramerica LT Equity Fund-Reg(G)	13.27	-4.74	HDFC Capital Builder Value Fund(G)	271.74	-8.56	Franklin India Fund(G)	36.85	-12.02	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	36.85
Canara Rob Bluechip Equity Fund-Reg(G)	22.91	1.06	Franklin India Bluechip Fund(G)	431.91	-5.22	Templeton India Equity Income Fund(G)	43.67	-8.58	ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	11.12	-12.03	ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	11.12
ICICI Pru India Recovery Fund-4(G)	16.55	0.91	JM Tax Gain Fund(G)	15.49	-5.24	DSP Focus Fund-Reg(G)	20.79	-8.62	BNP Paribas Multi Cap Fund(G)	42.35	-12.14	Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	366.89
ICICI Pru Business Cycle Fund-2(G)	13.98	0.87	SBI Focused Equity Fund-Reg(G)	126.71	-5.28	Franklin India Focused Equity Fund(G)	36.41	-8.75	Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	366.89	-12.28	ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	10.97
Canara Rob Consumer Trends Fund-Reg(G)	36.41	0.75	Edelweiss Large & Mid Cap Fund-Reg(G)	28.88	-5.31	L&T Equity Fund-Reg(G)	75.69	-8.77	Reliance Growth Fund(G)	1003.48	-12.57	Reliance Growth Fund(G)	1003.48
DSP World Gold Fund-Reg(G)	11.68	0.72	Principal Global Opportunities Fund(G)	28.58	-5.36	Canara Rob Emerg Equities Fund-Reg(G)	86.09	-8.92	Baroda ELSS 96(G)	41.03	-12.68	DSP Midcap Fund-Reg(G)	49.42
Canara Rob Equity Diver Fund-Reg(G)	124.38	0.70	UTI India LifeStyle Fund-Reg(G)	23.92	-5.38	SBI Magnum TaxGain'93-Reg(G)	132.33	-8.94	L&T Tax Advt Fund-Reg(G)	49.22	-12.91	JM Value Fund(G)	29.03
Axis Long Term Equity Fund(G)	40.82	0.43	Edelweiss Multi-Cap Fund-Reg(G)	13.53	-5.42	UTI Banking and Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	88.13	-9.11	Principal Emerging Bluechip Fund(G)	95.01	-12.96	Sundaram Select Micro Cap-Series IV-Reg(G)	12.73
Edelweiss Large Cap Fund(G)	33.11	0.36	DHFL Pramerica Tax Plan(G)	28.74	-5.43	L&T Long Term Advantage Fund-I(G)	47.26	-9.29	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	57.12	-12.01	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	57.12
Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund(G)	12.47	0.34	Aditya Birla SL Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	25.68	-5.45	Motilal Oswal Midcap 30 Fund-Reg(G)	22.68	-9.39	Franklin India Fund(G)	36.85	-12.02	UTI Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	57.12
Sundaram Select Focus(G)	164.42	0.20	Kotak Equity Opp Fund(G)	109.21	-5.46	Edelweiss Gr China Equity Off-Shore Fund-Reg(G)	25.43	-9.58	ICICI Pru Value Fund-15(G)	9.70	-9.85	Franklin Build India Fund(G)	36.85
Sundaram Global Advt(G)	16.65	-0.13						ICICI Pru Large & Mid Cap Fund(G)	293.55	-9.89	ICICI Pru Value Fund-11(G)	11.12	
JM Large Cap Fund(G)	64.36	-0.18						Sundaram Rural and Consumption Fund(G)	38.20	-9.92	BNP Paribas Multi Cap Fund(G)	42.35	
Tata Banking & Financial Services Fund-Reg(G)	16.61	-0.56						Principal Nifty 100 Equal Weight Fund(G)	65.70	-9.95	Aditya Birla SL Equity Advantage Fund(G)	366.89	
Mirae Asset India Equity Fund-Reg(G)	47.00	-0.58						IDFC Core Equity Fund-Reg(G)	41.05	-10.00	ICICI Pru Value Fund-9(G)	10.97	
Axis Focused 25 Fund(G)	25.31	-0.67						DHFL Pramerica Diversified Equity Fund-Reg(G)	12.05	-9.60	Reliance Growth Fund(G)	1003.48	
Baroda Banking & Fin Serv Fund(G)	20.52	-0.87						IDFC Multi Cap Fund-Reg(G)	85.05	-9.80	Baroda ELSS 96(G)	41.03	



EU must take back over 800 ISIS fighters: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has demanded that the European nations take back more than 800 ISIS fighters captured in Syria and put them on trial, warning that the US otherwise will be forced to free the jihadists after it pulls out from the war-torn country.

President Trump surprised the world by announcing in December that he was withdrawing 2000 American troops from the war-torn Syria.

He also warned the Islamic State (ISIS) that America would hit them hard from nearby military bases if the terror outfit regains momentum.

US-backed fighters are set to capture ISIS's last tiny stronghold in Syria, bringing an end to its self-declared caliphate.

"The United States is asking Britain, France, Germany and other European allies to take back over 800 ISIS fighters that we captured in Syria and put them on trial. The Caliphate is ready to fall. The alternative is not a good one in that we will be forced to release them," Trump said on Saturday.

President Trump warned that ISIS fighters could "permeate Europe" and called on European nations to "step up" efforts to put the prisoners on trial in their countries.

"The US does not want to watch as these ISIS fighters permeate Europe, which is where they are expected to go.

We do so much, and spend so much - Time for others to



step up and do the job that they are so capable of doing. We are pulling back after 100% Caliphate victory!" he said in a tweet.

ISIS, which once controlled huge swathes of land in Iraq and Syria, suffered crippling defeats in 2017 when Iraq recaptured Mosul and the Syrian Democratic Forces seized its Syrian capital of Raqqa, and the Syrian government pushed it east to the Euphrates.

Trump has said he will pull US forces from Syria after ISIS' territorial defeat, raising questions over the fate of the US' Kurdish allies vulnerable to an attack from Turkey.

Ankara views the Kurdish forces as terrorists aligned with insurgents inside Turkey.

Last month, Trump threatened to "devastate" Turkey economically if the NATO-allied nation attacks US-backed Kurdish forces in Syria following a pullout of American troops from the war-torn coun-

'The United States is asking Britain, France, Germany and other European allies to take back over 800 ISIS fighters that we captured in Syria and put them on trial. The Caliphate is ready to fall. The alternative is not a good one in that we will be forced to release them'

try. He also urged the Kurds not to "provoke" Ankara.

Ground troops first arrived in Syria in autumn 2015 when then US President Barack Obama sent in a small number of special forces to train and advise YPG fighters.

A peaceful uprising against the president of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad seven years ago turned into a full-scale civil war. The conflict has left more than 350,000 people dead, devastated cities and drawn in other countries.

Nauert withdraws her nomination for US envoy to UN

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a surprise move, State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert withdrew her nomination to replace Indian-American Nikki Haley as the top US diplomat at the United Nations, amid criticism by Democrats for her lack of diplomatic experience.

Nauert, 48, a former Fox News anchor, issued a statement on Saturday citing family reasons for her decision.

"I am grateful to President (Donald) Trump and Secretary (Mike) Pompeo for the trust they placed in me for considering me for the position of US Ambassador to the United Nations," Nauert said.

"However, the past two months have been gruelling for my family and therefore it is in the best interest of my family that I withdraw my name from consideration," she said.

Nauert said her two years with the administration had been "one of the highest honours of my life and I will always be grateful to the President, the Secretary, and my colleagues at the State Department for their support".

State Department Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino said President Trump will make an announcement about a new nominee soon.

Pompeo said she had performed her duties as a senior member of his team "with unequalled excellence".

"Her personal decision



today to withdraw her name from consideration to become the nominee for United States Ambassador to the United Nations is a decision for which I have great respect," Pompeo said. President Trump nominated Nauert for the top diplomatic position at the UN in November, weeks after Haley announced her resignation.

Senators from the opposition Democratic party raised questions over her qualification as the top US diplomat to the United Nations.

In the past, the position was held by some of the top American political leaders and diplomats including former president George H W Bush.

"She has no foreign policy experience that I can deduce, and being a spokesperson is different than being the chief diplomat of the United States at a world body like the UN," Senator Bob Menendez, Ranking Member at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had said.

Many of her supporters argued she's more than qualified for the role, noting her practice in messaging the Trump administration's foreign policy for nearly two years.

Cash-strapped Pak rolls out red carpet for Saudi crown prince



A Pakistani Army soldier stands guard while police officers search a vehicle at a checkpoint near the Saudi crown prince's visit to Pakistan in Islamabad, Pakistan on Sunday. AP

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

amid heightened security, a cash-strapped Pakistan was Sunday ready to receive Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, whose maiden trip to Islamabad was delayed by a day for unknown reasons.

Unrest ran in the government circles in Islamabad that the Saudi prince might call off the trip due to security reasons after building up of tensions between Pakistan and India following a terror attack on soldiers in Kashmir on Thursday, according to officials privy to the developments.

But there was a sigh of relief when the Foreign Office announced on Friday night that the de-facto ruler of the Gulf Kingdom will arrive on Sunday.

No reason was given for the rescheduling of the planned arrival of the prince. However, the duration of two-day was not curtailed, nor the meetings and investment plans.

The crown prince was due to reach Pakistan on Saturday, but his arrival was delayed for a day.

Saudi Arabia on Friday said it stood with India's fight against terrorism and extremism and denounced as "cowardly" the attack carried out by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror

group in Jammu and Kashmir that killed at least 40 CRPF soldiers.

The crown prince, who is visiting Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Imran Khan, will be accorded a red carpet welcome and presented a guard of honour at the PM House after his arrival at Noor Khan Air Base in Rawalpindi.

According to official media, the prince will be received by Prime Minister Khan and members of his cabinet at the air base. He will be accompanied by a high-powered delegation, including members of Saudi Royal family, key ministers and leading businessmen.

US-backed Syria force says IS holding 1,000 civilians

AP ■ AL-OMAR OIL FIELD BASE (SYRIA)

Islamic State militants are preventing more than 1,000 civilians from leaving a tiny area still held by the extremist group in a village in eastern Syria, a spokesman for the U.S.-backed Syrian militia fighting the group said on Sunday.

"Regrettably, Daesh have closed all the roads," Mustafa Bali, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, told The Associated Press, referring to IS by its Arabic acronym.

SDF officials have said the extremists are hiding among civilians in a tented village and using a network of caves and tunnels. IS, which once ruled a proto-state in large parts of Syria and Iraq, is clinging to an area less than a square kilometre in the village of Baghouz, in eastern Syria.

The extremists may include high-level commanders, and could be holding hostages among those trapped inside.

Occasional coalition airstrikes and clashes continue inside the village of Baghouz. Artillery rounds were meant to clear land mines for the SDF fighters to advance. SDF commanders say the end of IS' self-declared caliphate is near.

"We will very soon bring good news to the whole world," Ciya Furat, an SDF commander, said Saturday at a news conference at the al-Omar Oil Field Base, miles away from Baghouz in the Deir el-Zour province.

The capture of the last pocket of territory held by IS in either Syria or Iraq would mark the end of a devastating four-year global campaign to end the extremist group's so-called caliphate.

At the height of their power in 2014, the extremists controlled nearly a third of both countries.

But experts and US Defense officials warn that the group still poses a major threat and could regroup within six months if pressure is not kept up.

US military planes land near Venezuela border with aid

AP ■ CUCUTA (COLOMBIA)

The US military airlifted tons of aid to a Colombian town on the Venezuelan border on Saturday as part of an effort meant to undermine socialist President Nicolas Maduro and back his rival to leadership of the South American nation.

Two of three scheduled Air Force C-17 cargo planes that took off from Homestead Air Reserve Base in Florida had landed in Cucuta.

That border city, swollen by a flood of migrants from Venezuela, is a collection point for aid that's supposed to be distributed by supporters of Juan Guaido, the congressional leader who is recognized by the US and many other nations as Venezuela's legitimate president.

"This wasn't the first, and it won't be the last," said USAID Administrator Mark Green, standing on the tarmac in Cucuta at a ceremony to receive the aid. "More is on the way."

Commercial planes had been used for earlier shipments of aid, which is aimed at dramatizing the economic crisis — including hyperinfla-

tion and shortages of food and medicine — gripping Venezuela.

Critics say last year's reelection was fraudulent, making Maduro's second term illegal.

"We are saving lives with these airplanes," said Lester Toledo, an exiled politician who is coordinating the international aid effort for Guaido.

Maduro has been using the military, which remains loyal, to help him block the aid from entering Venezuela, describing it as "crumbs" from a US government whose restrictions have stripped his administration of control over many of its most valuable assets.

"They hang us, steal our money and then say 'here, grab these crumbs' and make a global show out of it," Maduro told The Associated Press on Thursday.

"With dignity we say 'No to the global show.' Whoever wants to help Venezuela is welcome, but we have enough capacity to pay for everything that we need."

His vice president has alleged, without evidence, that

the aid packages are contaminated. Green on Saturday called the allegations "absurd."

Saturday's 180-ton shipment includes hygiene kits of soap, toothpaste and other goods for more than 25,000 people.

Guaido has called for an effort on Jan. 23 to bring the aid into Venezuela from Cucuta and two other collection points in the northern Brazilian state of Roraima and the Dutch Caribbean island of Curacao.

But it's not yet clear how they might overcome Maduro's blockade. Several thousand doctors, nurses and other people gathered at a parking lot in eastern Caracas on Saturday as part of an effort to enlist 600,000

Volunteers to distribute or provide aid on the part of the opposition. Anibez Peroza, a 40-year-old nurse, said she was ready if necessary to go to Cucuta in a caravan to bring in the aid.

"We have to do something to save so many people who are suffering and dying for lack of medicine," she said.

Royal split: Princes William and Harry prepare to go separate ways

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's Princes William and Harry, known to be very close, are preparing to go their separate ways, seeking a more independent path from each other in terms of their charity work and royal duties.

Courtiers hope that a formal separation of their staff may also help ease some recently-reported tensions between the brothers and their wives - Kate Middleton and Meghan Markle, according to The Sunday Times.

The princes, grandsons of Queen Elizabeth II, are expected to create separate "courts" before the birth of Prince Harry's first child, due in April or May.

Until now they operated via what was referred to as a joint royal household but now they will carve out more distinctive roles for themselves.

The brothers will operate through separate staff and communication teams, a move seen as a way for them to seek out a more independent path from each other in terms of their charity work and royal duties.

'William and Harry are working to make sure the Sussexes have an office that can support their family when they move to Frogmore this spring. This work has been under way since before last year's wedding (of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle)'

The division of their shared household after 10 years reflects their increasingly different responsibilities, with William set to take on additional duties as a future king after father Charles.

Harry and his pregnant wife Meghan - the Duke and Duchess of Sussex - will shortly move from Kensington Palace to Frogmore Cottage, on the Queen's Windsor estate. However, their new office and staff is expected to remain at Kensington Palace.

"William and Harry are working to make sure the Sussexes have an office that can support their family when they move to Frogmore this spring. This work has been under way since before last year's wedding (of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle)," a royal source was quoted as saying.

The main division for William, 36, and Harry, 34, will be of their communication teams.

"There is a gulf in the style and approach to the type of work that William and Kate will increasingly do as future head of state and consort, and Harry and Meghan, who have more of a blank canvas with their roles," another royal source said.

Prince Charles, who funds his sons' household and official work from his Duchy of Cornwall income, is understood to have insisted that the division be "cost neutral".

The brothers and their wives will continue to work together on their charitable royal foundation, Heads Together - which supports mental health, veterans, conservation and vulnerable young people.

Theresa May urges her MPs to unite over Brexit

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May has urged her Conservative Party MPs to shed their "personal preferences" over Brexit and united in the national interest ahead of a fresh round of talks with the European Union on the divorce deal next week. Britain is set to exit the 28-member bloc on March 29, but May is struggling to persuade parliament to back a divorce deal.

In her letter to all 317 Conservative MPs over the weekend, May urged her party to sacrifice "personal preferences" as she attempts to get an agreement on the terms of the UK's departure from the EU through Parliament.

She warned the Tories, who remain deeply divided over the contours of Brexit, that leaving the EU without a deal on the March 29 deadline "would cause disruption to our economy and to people's daily lives, damaging jobs both at home and across the EU".

"Instead, our party can do

what it has done so often in the past; Move beyond what divides us and come together behind what unites us; Sacrifice if necessary our own personal preferences in the higher service of the national interest," she added.

However, the letter was overshadowed by a series of leaked WhatsApp messages magnifying the divide that exists within the UK's ruling party over the issue.

The messages, received by "The Sunday Times" involve Steve Baker, the deputy chairman of the Conservative Party's 100-strong hard-Brexit European Research Group (ERG), telling colleagues that May's Brexit negotiations with Brussels were a "complete waste of time". "What will it take for the PM to accept that we will not accept the 'backstop' in its current form," Baker questioned, in reference to the back-up clause to prevent a hard border between EU member-country Ireland and the UK post-Brexit - which remains the biggest hurdle in the path to an amicable Withdrawal Agreement.

Top US official discussed Trump removal in 2017: former FBI chief

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

The US deputy attorney general discussed how many cabinet members would support removing US President Donald Trump from office in 2017, the FBI's former acting director said in an interview airing Sunday.

Andrew McCabe said invoking the 25th Amendment of the US Constitution was raised by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein after Trump fired FBI director James Comey on May 9, 2017.

"Rod raised the issue and discussed it with me in the context of thinking about how many other cabinet officials might support such an effort," McCabe told CBS's "60 Minutes" news show.

A clip of that part of the interview was run early Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation" show, the first time McCabe's actual comments on the explosive subject have been aired.

Rosenstein has dismissed reports that he discussed removing Trump from office - and even pondered wearing

a wire to secretly record his conversations with the president -- as a "joke," if indeed he made the comments.

In the interview, McCabe was asked whether Rosenstein seemed intent on "getting rid of the president of the United States one way or another." "I can't confirm that," he said.

"But what I can say is the deputy attorney general was definitely very concerned about the president, about his capacity and about his intent at that point in time."

The president abruptly fired Comey amid tensions over the FBI's investigation into possible links between Trump's 2016 campaign and a covert Russian effort to sway the US election in his favour.

Comey has said that Trump had been pressuring him to publicly declare that he was not a subject of the investigation. The firing set off alarm bells at the FBI, and McCabe told CBS he scrambled to ensure that the Russia probe was on "absolutely solid ground" so it could not easily be shelved.

Shanties, killing at least nine persons including two children in the port city of Chittagong Sunday.

'She recalled familiar pattern of India blaming Pakistan instantly after such incidents without investigation'

familiar pattern of India blaming Pakistan instantly after such incidents without investigation," he said.

The SCO was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan became its members in 2017.

The briefings were launched soon after the Pulwama attack to ward off criticism at the global level, as India blamed Pakistani elements for the attack.

So far briefings for ambassador from the P5 nations, non-permanent members of the UNSC, EU members and other European countries had been arranged, Pakistani officials said.

GLOBE TROTTER

SHOOTINGS KILL EIGHT IN EASTERN DR CONGO

Goma (Dr Congo): Eight people died in three shootings in Goma, eastern DR Congo, the town mayor said on Sunday, while others complained authorities were slow to react to violence in North Kivu province.

IRAN'S ZARIF SAYS ISRAEL 'LOOKING FOR WAR'

Munich: Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Sunday that Israel was "looking for war", in an apparent reference to recent strikes against Iranian targets in Syria. "Certainly some people are looking for war," Zarif said during a question and answer session at the Munich Security Conference, adding "Israel" when pressed to say who.

HUNDREDS STRANDED AS BRITISH AIRLINE COLLAPSES

London: Hundreds of passengers throughout Europe have been stranded by the abrupt collapse of the British regional airline Flybmi.

9 DIE AS FIRE TEARS THROUGH B'DESH SLUM

Dhaka: A major fire in Bangladesh gutted over 200 shanties, killing at least nine persons including two children in the port city of Chittagong Sunday.

Trend Blazer

Big B to donate to CRPF families

Actor **AMITABH BACHCHAN** will be donating ₹5 lakh each to the families of 49 CRPF troopers who died in the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district. In the worst ever terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir since militancy erupted in 1989, a Jaish-e-Mohammad suicide bomber rammed his vehicle packed with explosives into a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) bus on the Jammu-Srinagar highway in Pulwama district, killing at least 40 troopers on the spot. The toll rose to 49 on Friday as several injured succumbed.



His spokesperson confirmed the news, saying, "Yes, Mr Bachchan will be giving ₹5 lakh to each of the martyr's families and is currently finding out the correct process to do so."

'It's an honour to play the role of the mother of Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This is going to be one of the most special roles I have ever played. I hope the audience like it. I am grateful to Sandip (producer) for giving me an opportunity to be a part of such an amazing film. I had a great experience working with him earlier in Goliyon Ki Raseela Ram-Leela.'



—Zarina Wahab

Actor-comedian **JOHNNY LEVER** and his daughter **JAMIE**, also a comedian, have addressed the topic of nepotism in Bollywood in a lighter vein.



Tickling the funny bone, Jamie and actor Vrajesh Hirjee quickly acted out a skit on nepotism fight

between National Award winning actress Kangana Ranaut and filmmaker Karan Johar. Vrajesh asked Jamie if she believes about the existence of nepotism. Jamie responded, "I think everyone has their own journey and I see no reason to compare. Everyone has their own struggle."

Rachel and Tony earned pay hike

Marvelous Mrs. Maisel stars **RACHEL BROSNAHAN** and **TONY SHALHOUB** have earned sizable pay increases after renegotiating their deals, and Alex Borstein is also close to signing a new agreement.



According to sources, the creative team of the Amazon series is giving its stars a hefty raise following a big haul of awards for its first two seasons. Amazon declined to comment. Brosnahan stands to reportedly make as much as triple her previous salary, potentially earning up to \$300,000 per episode, and may also get a piece of the show's back end with her new agreement.



DROP THE MASK

Director **PRADIP BHATTACHARYA** reinterpreted Tagore's classic play, *Rakta Karabi*, along with a team of 21 prisoners. It was meant to be therapy for the actors while at the same time addressing the larger concern of the domination of technology over everything. By **CHAHAK MITTAL**

What is it with classical literature? People might shrug it off as old-fashioned and trivial, however, there's a reason that these books and works have been read over and over again despite the passage of decades. From exposing sexism and toxic masculinity in Sylvia Plath's works, a modern speech from a Shakespearean play, today's rom-coms which have a definite Jane Austen flair, to timeless moral of parenting that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* taught — the truth is that these classics continue to be relevant even today.

One such was also Rabindranath Tagore's *Rakta Karabi* or *Yaksapuri*, written in 1923 in Bengali, which people saw as a chronicle that foretold the future.

Director Pradip Bhattacharya recreated the iconic play as *Jakshapuri* at the NSD's Bharat Rang Mahotsav. The adaptation brought together 21 murder convicts who are serving life term at the Berhampore Central Correction Home in Bengal.

He believes that it was important to retell the play especially by the team from the Berhampore Repertory Theatre of Murshidabad. The director, who has been conducting theatre therapy at the correction home since the last 12 years, says that when he had first interacted with the prisoners and local administration, examining everything for 20 days, he realised that the Tagorean philosophy taught three things — who is a human being?; every human should have humanity and if one has that, only then will s/he attain salvation (*mukti*). He says, "The prisoners are always eagerly waiting to get rid of the captivity, thinking about the time when they can return to their homes and hence, they are rootless. They become labourers inside the jail as a part of its



routine. But somewhere they are always looking forward to get out." He realised that the prisoners needed to do something beyond the labour. It was an initiative to "recycle" the waste and give them a new life. They started with Tagorean classics after getting the permission from the local authorities.

He chose Tagore's plays to make them get rid of the "masks" that they were wearing. "I did *Tasher Desh*, *Tota Kahini* and then *Jakshapuri* or *Rakta Karabi*. He relates the situation of two kinds of people to explain what "masks" signify here — people from the higher class and the prisoners.

"All the people from the higher class in our society are the dominating lot. The rule of cards is the face or mask they wear. The true human energy lies somewhere inside them. Similarly, prisoners are also masked. They are devoid of life after they have committed some crimes and landed in prison. To bring out the energy that they have inside them, we need to take off that mask," he explains.

There was always a risk involved. "There is a prison law that prohibits

any interaction — verbal, sexual or physical — between a man and a woman inside its premises. *Koi aadmi aankh utha ke nahi dekh sakta kisi aurat ko* (no man could look at a woman directly). And the play direction brought them together."

He narrates that even though they are not literate and belong to native villages, they had a lot of questions, "Since *Rakta Karabi* spoke volumes about a jailer's lives, they wanted to know if Tagore ever went to prison? And when they came to know that he hadn't, they were astounded as to how he could understand their real experiences."

However, they related to the play's theme of captivity so much that they "owned the story" and portrayed it well. He says, "Acting can't be taught. But this is a part of their prison experience, hence they did it with utmost honesty."

The play's protagonist, Nandini is an individual pursued by abstraction. Bhattacharya explains that she is not a reality. He says, "For me, Nandini plays three characters. She sheds light on everyone and there is darkness when she leaves. She is an illusion."

He derives a metaphor for this from the prohibition law in the prison when in the play, neither Ranjan nor Kishore nor even the king are able to meet Nandini. It's because of the king's greed for power and money, Ranjan's bond with his mechanised world and Kishore's eagerness to live a life of abundance. This also influenced the way that he shaped her three distinct characters.

Drawing a comparison with the literary concept of Sophocles, he says that they are like Electra and Oedipus, "who never meet their desired partners as per the rules of nature."

The king is blinded by greed, and



WEBBED



SUBURRA SEASON 2

The Italian drama is focused on power clashes and corruption in Rome and the Vatican City, among organised crime, politicians and churchmen. Starring Alessandro Borghi as Aureliano Adami, an Italian Ostia-based gang member, Eduardo Valdarini stars as Gabriele 'Lele' Marchilli, a lone pusher and Francesco Acquaroli plays Samurai, the main leader of Rome's organised crime. The drama is slated to release on February 22 on Netflix.



AFTER LIFE

Starring Ricky Gervais, the series is about Tony (Ricky) who used to have a perfect life. But after his wife Lisa dies, Tony becomes suicidal, but he decides instead to live long enough to punish the world by saying and doing whatever he likes. He thinks it's like a Super Power — not caring about himself or anyone else — but it turns out to be tricky when everyone is trying to save the nice guy they used to know. The series will be released on March 8 on Netflix.



TURN UP CHARLIE

Idris Elba stars as a failed DJ trying to relaunch his career while working as a nanny for his superstar best friend's wild child — 11-year-old daughter. Also starring Piper Perabo and JJ Feild. The series of eight episodes is slated to release on March 15 on Netflix.

Bhumi's intense work

Actress **Bhumi Pednekar** embodies the fact that talent and hard work can make one a success story. She reveals some of her hectic preparations for her forthcoming film, *Sonchiriya*.

"I have been called a perfectionist but I think everyone worked equally hard. Starting with director Abhishek Chaubey, who in our very first meeting told me that the only way to survive the terrain and everything that is happening in the film is to become mentally and physically strong. And he just didn't mean emotionally but also physically because there is a lot of action, including running around. He trained us really well, starting from Bundelkhandi, the language that we are speaking," Bhumi reveals.

"The physicality of my character concerned Chaubey the most. He really went into the details of it and he literally told me that the women of Chambal are carb-eating women. They are muscular but they are lean and they are fit because of the amount of work they do throughout the day. They walk kilometers, fetch eight-10 litres of water, on their head, sometimes, while carrying a child in their arm. Every time they want to go to the washroom, they have to walk miles. Throughout the day they work at home or in the fields. They don't really rest and I planned my work-around what he told me," she adds.

Bhumi's work out regime is



the highlight of her prep for *Sonchiriya*. "So, my trainer Neelam (pilates instructor) came up with a regime where everything was around the kind of activities my character would do throughout the day. It was like a month and a half before we started shooting. So, I would walk around with five-six litres of water on my head in Aaram Nagar for kilometers without any shoes because we were trying to also get rough and tough. But then your body gets used to it. I remember I would carry 10-15 kgs of wheat sack on my back and again walk and run through the area because there is a lot of running in the film. I would grind a kg of wheat flour every day. It looks very easy but it is tough. We included a few things that helped me get the physique of a person who is native to the area," she says.

TECH TALK

A digital battle

88 smartphone brands fight for mere 0.3 per cent market share in India



While the top five smartphone brands currently enjoy a market share exceeding 75 per cent in India, whatever is left is now being shared by over 88 smartphone brands — leaving a mere 0.3 per cent market share for each player.

Players like Panasonic and Videocon are among those 88 smartphone brands sharing the revenue of nearly ₹43,560 crore — or ₹475 crore revenue per brand (on average).

On the other hand, Samsung alone posted sales of over ₹37,000 crore for its mobile phone business in India in the financial year 2018, followed by arch rival Xiaomi at nearly ₹23,000 crore.

Oppo Mobiles registered nearly ₹12,000 crore in revenue while Vivo crossed ₹11,000 crore in the FY'18.

The big question is, how many of these 88 brands will be able to survive the hyper-competitive and highly price-conscious Indian market?

"As a result of the increased consolidation among the top five smartphone brands, the available potential sphere of play for other smartphone players has significantly decreased," said Prabhakar Ram, Head-Industry Intelligence Group (IIG) at the market research firm CyberMedia Research (CMR).

Over the past two years, feature phone to smartphones upgrade has not picked up as anticipated.

"This was primarily due to the spike in refurbished phones/second hand phone market, along with the rapid uptake of 4G feature phones. Coupled with this, the lack of smartphone offerings providing optimal experience under sub-₹6,000, is also affecting the upgrades," Ram said.

Amid massive investment in retail stores, hiring more staff and increasing ad spends as users are spoilt for choices, the pinch would soon affect many of those 88 vendors sooner than later, and most will either shut shops or enter newer businesses.

However, for Chinese brands with deep pockets and a stagnating market back home, India would continue to remain a



attractive bet.

"They can afford to bleed, and any profit would be welcome. We believe they would continue to fight in the market," said Swati Kalia, an analyst at IIG, CMR.

The smartphone market in India grew 14.5 per cent in 2018 with the highest-ever shipments of 142.3 million units,

according to the International Data Corporation (IDC).

Xiaomi with 28.9 market share shipped 41.1 million units while Samsung with 22.4 per cent market share shipped 31.9 million in FY'18.

Vivo shipped 14.2 million units with 10 per cent market share while OPPO shipped 10.2 million units and captured 7.2 per cent market share.

In such a scenario, the road ahead only gets tougher for the rest of the players.

"For large consumer-durable conglomerates, including the likes of Panasonic and Videocon, it makes more sense to look at broader synergies available from new blue sky opportunities such as Internet of Things (IoT) and the connected home," noted Amit Sharma, another Analyst at IIG, CMR.

UNLOCK YOUR CREATIVITY

The design of a workplace has the potential to improve the overall productivity of the company, says SAMANTHA GIAM

The human mind is incredible. Consider for a moment that everything you see around — all the tools and services you use, every experience you enjoy is the result of someone's imagination brought to life.

From companies in the shared economy, space to manufacturing, tech and e-commerce, leaders across industries are talking about innovation for that is the only way to get ahead.

For several years companies have been able to thrive through smart financial management and efficient workflows, ways to bolster the bottom line through cutting costs and ensuring conformity. While still important, these tools are no longer adequate.

As work becomes more fluid and flexible, employees no longer find the need to go into the office unless they have to meet people and share ideas. Remote work and co-working spaces are fast overtaking the staid idea of an office with inspiration and purpose quickly becoming a priority over a stable income and job security. This change in mindset is why it's essential that brands create spaces that inspire teams in ways that continuously offer a sense of purpose, meaning, and impact.

Companies today understand that customers shift loyalties based on experiences and not just products or services. Employees are no different. Fair wages and flexible working hours are par for course. Not offering these options is a death knoll for firms looking to grow. In spite of competitive salaries and benefits, attrition rates are high across industries. The workplace you create, on the other hand, can be a powerful tool for both retention and innovation. By creating spaces that mirror your organisation's identity and the mission you need your teams to serve, you can develop an ecosystem that thrives on creativity.

Mirroring the social behaviours of your teams, primarily made up of millennials and Gen-Z, is a crucial aspect of this process. Naturally inclined to crave collaboration, frequent feedback,



and compelling experiences, these generations need more from their workspaces. The workplace should offer dedicated outdoor areas for natural social interaction in addition to traditional conference and meeting room setups. The ability to move around the office and utilise amenities based on the task at hand can reduce stress and free up headspace for creative work.

Another meaningful way that spaces can help you further creativity is through the integration of technology. The ability to book desks, view

THE WORKPLACE SHOULD OFFER OUTDOOR AREAS FOR NATURAL AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN ADDITION TO CONFERENCE ROOM SETUPS. THE ABILITY TO MOVE AROUND THE OFFICE AND UTILISE AMENITIES BASED ON THE TASK AT HAND

data on the most-used areas, use furniture linked to apps, and even block meeting rooms through touchscreens are just some ways in which you can use tech to create a workspace that feels intuitive. From a design standpoint, it makes sense to offer a wide variety of options, those that reflect the diversity of your teams and the work you expect from them. Modularity is one option where people can rearrange furnishings to create interactive settings based on their preferences and requirements. Privacy pods for some peace, technology-free

zones for work that requires zero distractions, and dedicated collaboration centres are just some of the other ways to build workspaces that fuel creative thinking.

Your workspace is the nucleus of your organisation so prioritise its design accordingly. Committing to this strategy, tracking its performance, and then making changes based on inputs will transform your workspace from an operational expense to an investment in creativity, one that unlocks the real potential of your business.



ATTENTION ON MORAL AND SOCIAL SICKNESS: NEED OF HOUR

Most of the present-day problems are due to emotional upheavels and an atmosphere full of strife, which generate a chain reaction and contribute to more disputes, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

Since ancient times, the medical profession has been considered as a noble one, for its members render a valuable service to mankind by preventing, alleviating, controlling or eliminating disease, pain and suffering. Through the knowledge of the physical body and the laws of health and hygiene, doctors provide patients relief and recovery when the former are passing through great physical or mental crisis or facing the worst of physical troubles or mental tensions or are fighting for life. So, the members of the profession truly needed to be complimented by the society.



WHEN A PERSON IS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL ILL-HEALTH, IT IS NOT JUST HIM OR HER WHO SUFFERS FROM ITS EVIL EFFECTS BUT ALSO OTHERS WHO LIVE OR WORK WITH HIM

However, it has been observed that many members of the medical profession in this era of increasing urbanisation and spread of industrial civilisation and technological culture also face the great pressures of materialism and are hard-pressed for time. With the objective of providing medicine to the largest possible number of patients within the set time-limits, they are pre-occupied with only the physical well-being of their patients, almost overlooking the changes required in the treatment depending on the outlook or personality-traits of the patients. Even though they know that most diseases are psychosomatic in nature and that the life-style, the personality-traits and the behavioural pattern of a person also play a major role in causing stress or trauma or in aggravating the disease, they do not or cannot pay adequate attention to the social and moral dimensions of health and disease.

The reason for this is because their main attention is on the symptoms and on prescribing suitable medicines. But, if we think deeper, we find that, without controlling, reducing or eliminating the psychic or the behavioural causes, there cannot be any lasting cure for diseases.

When a person is suffering from social or mental ill-health, it is not him or her who suffers from its evil effects but also others who live with him, work with him or deal with him. For example, a person of irritable nature or one who easily loses his temper or is prone to anxiety, not only suffers from avoidable worry and tension but often causes mental stress and anxiety to others around him also.

Worse still is the social strife, family turmoil or political upheaval that the moral and social ill-health of a person can create. Hitler, for example, was socially and morally ill and mentally sick. Most of our present-day problems are due to moral and social ill-health of our citizens which generate a chain-reaction and contribute to an atmosphere that is full of strife. So, while doctors talk of holistic health, hypertension, psychosomatic diseases, drug addiction or AIDS, we wish that due attention is also paid to the turmoil caused by one's moral sickness or social illness in the socio-political or socio-economic atmosphere of the society.

In the tech of health

With wearable devices and phone apps, the gym is within the palm of your hand, says KHYATI MAHAJAN



weight regularly and the number of calories you are consuming or burning. Most of these fitness gadgets come with apps which help you to count macronutrients so that you choose your food wisely and stay healthy.

WEARABLE DEVICES

Wearable technology is one of the major disruptors in the health and fitness sector. It has empowered fitness enthusiasts to have better control over their fitness goals and motivated them to keep pushing themselves to do better. These wearable devices have revolutionised the scope of health and well-being improvement by enabling wearers to know accurately how much they ran or steps climbed, how their heart beat is or how sound their sleep was.

Before their advent, did you ever think that tracking health could be as easy as simply attaching a strap to your arm or chest? The accurate details revealed by these devices help you attain your fitness goals.

Health certainly comes first and with technology offering so much, it is time we embrace it to live healthier lives and maintaining our fitness goals.

(The author is the founder of a health and fitness consultant company.)

Technology has penetrated all segments of our lives and undoubtedly revolutionised all the sectors. Tech revolution are being witnessed in achieving fitness goals. Bodybuilding and fitness dreams are no longer restricted to the gyms.

Today smartphones and various apps have become an inseparable part of our lives. These apps and gadgets make our lives easier while amusing and relaxing us. Interestingly, technology has started helping health and fitness fanatics too.

There are number of advantages offered by health and fitness app and gadgets,

here's how?

HELPS YOU PLAN YOUR SCHEDULE

Given our busy schedule, the most common excuse for not working out is that they are busy and have no time for exercise. However, with the advent of fitness apps, timing your schedule to improve your fitness has become much easier than ever before.

There is no doubt that maintaining work-life balance and demarcating time for work out seems like a challenge.

However, setting time on your app or even a watch for work out and following it for a cou-

ple of weeks will get you in the routine and it will no longer be a challenge to focus on your own health.

TRACKS YOUR HEALTH

Tracking is a major step in reaching closer to your fitness goal. The newly invented tracking devices are crafted to help you monitor the crucial components of your health like nutrition, vital statistics, sleeping hours, workout sessions, calories consumed and burnt.

These gadgets further help in various ways, like:

Monitoring heart rate: Tracking your heart rate ranges from sensors to chest straps, to

The newly invented tracking devices are crafted to help you monitor the crucial components of your health like nutrition, vital statistics, sleeping hours, workout sessions, calories consumed and burnt

wrist straps and headbands. Tracking of heart rate proves very crucial while undertaking any aerobic fitness plan or undergoing regular cardio sessions. By monitoring your heart beat, you would know how well you are performing and how close you are to your

fitness targets. Tracking weight: Weight loss is a major concern among many today, however, there are very few who are able to make time to shed it via a work-out session. With the help of gadgets, you can now track your



Man needs his difficulties because they are necessary to enjoy success. —APJ Abdul Kalam



PUSH-UPS CAN KEEP HEART DISEASE RISK AT BAY

Active, middle-aged men who can complete more than 40 push-ups at a time had a significantly lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) outcomes compared to those who did less than 10 push-ups, says a new study.



Push-up capacity was more strongly associated with lower incidence of cardiovascular disease events than was aerobic capacity as estimated by a submaximal treadmill exercise test. For the study, the researchers from Harvard University analysed health data from 1,104 active male firefighters whose mean age was 39.6.

During the 10-year study period, 37 CVD-related outcomes were reported. "Our findings provide evidence that push-up capacity could be an easy, no-cost method to help assess cardiovascular disease risk in almost any setting," said lead author Justin Yang at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in the US. The results are not generalisable to women, men of other ages or who are less active, the researchers noted.

DIABETES COULD CONTRIBUTE TO INFERTILITY

Diabetes, commonly described as a lifestyle disease, can contribute to infertility in both women and men, warn health experts.



Infertility affects up to 15 per cent of reproductive-aged couples worldwide. According to an estimate by the World Health Organization (WHO), the overall prevalence of primary infertility in India is between 3.9 per cent to 16.8 per cent. "Diabetes in men damages DNA of the sperm and leads to reduced number of sperms and reduced motility of sperms which leads to infertility," added Roopak Wadhwa, Consultant at Fortis Hospital, New Delhi.

On the other hand, diabetes in women is associated with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and other autoimmune diseases that can lead to infertility.

"Diabetes causes a lack of glucose control which, in turn, can make the implantation of the fertile egg in the uterus difficult. Therefore, the chances of miscarriage in diabetic women increase between 30-60 per cent," Wadhwa explained.

LOW CURE RATE FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER IN INDIA

Childhood cancer comprises almost three to five per cent of the total cancer cases in India, experts said, expressing concern over the low cure rate due to lack of available data.



"The disturbing reality is that the cure rate of pediatric cancer is almost 80 per cent in the developed countries. When we see the data from major cancer centres, it actually can match up to the Western standard but it is not enough," Haemato-Oncologist Vivek Agarwala said.

"Probably, the society at large are not considering it a big problem as it is just around five per cent. We are always campaigning for breast and cervical cancers. We must remember this five per cent of cancer is majority curable if given proper treatment," Agarwala said.

Leukaemia and retinoblastoma (a form of cancer where children have a white eye) are the two common forms of cancer in children. Talking about awareness and symptoms, he said "Symptoms are different for different cancers, but children who have cancer have poor growth, poor weight gain and decreased appetite."

NEW NANO-PAINKILLER LASTS LONGER

Researchers have developed a new painkiller using nanoparticles that lasts longer than morphine, paving the way for intense pain treatments without the severe side effects associated with opioids.



Chronic pain is a major global health challenge and its most common medications are morphine and synthetic opioids, which have severe side effects like addiction.

Researchers, including Jiao Feng from the Universite Paris-Saclay in France, tested the nano-painkiller in rodents as an alternative to morphine. In the study, published in the journal Science Advances, three versions of their natural nanoparticle showed anti-pain effects when administered to inflamed rat paws.

The team focused on small, naturally occurring peptides in the body like enkephalin, which bind to the body's opioid receptors. These peptides are an appealing option to treat pain because they activate d-opioid receptor ligands, which are thought to have a lower abuse potential.

WHY ENOUGH SLEEP IS IMPORTANT FOR HEART?

Getting enough sleep is key to good health, as researchers say that insufficient sleep increases the risk of serious problems, including cardiovascular disease.



The team of researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) have identified a previously unknown mechanism by which sleep protects against the buildup of arterial plaques, providing a potential treatment.

Their study described the mechanism between brain, bone marrow and blood vessels, by which insufficient sleep increases inflammatory white blood cells known to be major contributors to hardening of the arteries, reports Xinhua.

"We have discovered that sleep helps to regulate the production in the bone marrow of inflammatory cells and the health of blood vessels and that, conversely, sleep disruption breaks down control of inflammatory cell production, leading to more inflammation and more heart disease," said co-author Filip Swirski.

PUGILISTS ASSURE 5 MEDALS

Amit Panghal, Lovlina lead charge as Indian boxers continue impressive run

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asian Games Gold medallist Amit Panghal started the season on a strong note as Indian boxers packed enough power into their punches to assure themselves of five medals in the 70th Strandja Memorial Boxing in Sofia, Bulgaria, on Sunday.

Panghal assured a semifinal berth and medal after a closely contested 3-2 win over Ukraine's Nazar Kurotchyn in the 49kg category.

The Indian women pugilists too guaranteed four medals at the end of the third day at the prestigious tournament.

Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), who won the Bronze at the 2018 AIBA World Women Boxing Championships, put up a robust display to beat Brazil's Soarez Beatriz in a unanimous 5-0 victory and assure the first medal for the women boxers.

The Brazilian had no answer to Lovlina's attacking game as she secured her place in the top four.

Following suit was young boxer, Manju Rani, who served Bonati Roberta of Italy the same fate, thrashing her with a unanimous 5-0 verdict. Manju, the current National Champion in 48 kg category sealed her berth in the semis.

Former world junior champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) lived up to the expectations by outclassing Buryam Yana of Belarus 5-0.

In the day's last bout for the women boxers, Neeraj defeated Amelia Moore of USA with a similar result to confirm the fifth medal and berth in the semi-final.

2016 World Championship Silver winner, Sonia Lather, however, succumbed to a



Amit Panghal celebrates after winning Gold medal match at Asian Games. File Pic



STRANDJA MEMORIAL

The 19-year-old Tanwar, who claimed a Bronze in Gold Coast last year, got the better of Poland's Michal Soczynski 5-0 in a dominating performance.

Solanki will face Uzbekistan's Fayzov Khudoniyazov in the last-eight stage. Khudoniyazov defeated local hope Tinko Banabakov in his pre-quarterfinal bout, which was also ended in a split verdict.

Tanwar, on the other hand, will be up against Ukraine's Serhii Horskov. Horskov out-punched Serbia's Darko Stankovic in his pre-quarterfinal contest to fetch a 5-0 decision from the judges.

Earlier in the day, the men's team too enjoyed positive results.

Commonwealth Games Gold medallist Gaurav Solanki (52kg) and Bronze winner Naman Tanwar (91kg) both advanced to the quarter-finals.

Solanki, taking to the ring within 24 hours of his first-round win, defeated Kazakhstan's Anvar Muzaparov 3-2 in a hard-fought contest on Saturday night.

India's best medal haul at this European event was last year when the country snared 11 in all, two of them Gold.

Perera hailed for Test-winning heroics

AFP ■ COLOMBO

Kusal Perera became a national hero in Sri Lanka on Sunday after scoring an unbeaten 153 to guide his country to a sensational first Test victory in South Africa.

The country's cricket legends and politicians lauded Perera, who has become a linchpin for the ailing national side since fighting off doping charges in 2016.

Former skipper Kumar Sangakkara, who had staunchly defended Perera when he was suspended in December 2015, called the performance at Kingsmead in Durban on Saturday "unreal".

"What an amazing win," Sangakkara said on Twitter. "One of the best if not THE best overseas win by (Sri Lanka). Kusal Janith Perera was unreal."

Sangakkara stood by Perera when he was wrongfully accused of doping in 2015. The International Cricket Council lifted the suspension in 2016 and apologised for the botched testing.

Another former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardena said on Twitter: "What a beauty! One of the best innings under pressure." Jayawardena said Perera, who put on a last wicket partnership of 78 had shown "intelligence and mental strength".

Perera scored 67 in an unbroken last-wicket stand with Vishwa Fernando which gave his underdog team a sen-



sational victory.

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe also took to Twitter to hail the win.

"Congratulations to our cricket team on snatching a victory from the jaws of defeat," Sirisena said.

"Kusal Janith Perera makes mother Sri Lanka very proud today! Keep fighting! Great spirit by @kusaljperera and all the youngsters #SAVSL," added Wickremesinghe while thanking the national side which has been the butt of jokes due to poor recent results.

"U beauty," said Sports minister Harin Fernando on Twitter.

Sri Lanka won the World Cup in 1996 and since has been plagued by management scandals, allegations of corruption and player squabbling.

They were swept 3-0 in a home Test series against England and were then beaten in Australia and New Zealand.

Mertens shrugs off back pain to lift Qatar title

AFP ■ DOHA

Belgium's Elise Mertens claimed the biggest win of her career on Saturday, surprisingly coming from a set down to beat world number three Simona Halep and clinch the Qatar Open.

The world number 21 won 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, despite being outclassed in the first set, overcoming an eight-minute medical timeout for back pain in the second set, and losing 18 consecutive points at one stage in the match.

"It's a big moment for me, getting that victory," said a jubilant Mertens, 23, afterwards.

"I think this one would be, especially also with my tennis I played, the nicest one, nicest victory."

Her win, in a little over two hours, was her third victory over a top ten player in Doha this week, and her second over a Grand Slam champion.

Halep is the reigning French Open champion and Angelique Kerber, who she beat in the semi-finals, holds the Wimbledon title.



She could rise as high number 16 in the next rankings because of her victory in Doha.

Coincidentally her ranking of 21 coming into the tournament was exactly the same as last year's winner in Doha, Petra Kvitova.

'I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE'

A clearly fading Halep, who played in the Fed Cup last weekend when she led Romania into the semi-finals for the first time, also called for medical assistance for treatment to a blister on her right foot.

"I was really tired in the third set, I couldn't have the chance to win this match," said Halep, who won the Qatar title in 2014.

"I had to be 100% to be able to win such a big match. But she deserved to win, she was stronger, she was fresher. I'm not making a drama."

Halep added that she "needed rest", but would definitely play in Dubai next week. Despite her defeat, the Romanian will head back to number two in the rankings on the back of her performances in Doha.

Focus on Mandhana as BPXI take on Eng Eves

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Focus would be trained on in-form opener Smriti Mandhana when she leads the Board President's XI in a warm-up match against the visiting England women's team on Monday.

The match is being played at the Wankhede Stadium and Mandhana, who is being helped by team coach W V Raman to build up her patience, would be keen to put the lessons learnt into practice before plunging into the series opener next Friday.

Mandhana recently scored 196 runs in the three-match ODI series against hosts New Zealand, including a 100 and 90.

She would be keen to carry that form into the upcoming home series and a good knock in the warm-up match will only boost her confidence.

Apart from Mandhana, BPXI wicket-keeper R Kalpana is also in the ODI squad and she could also benefit from playing in the practice game.

On the other hand, England women are a force to reckon with in the 50-over format and



Smriti Mandhana plays a shot against NZ during 3rd T20

they utilise this game to get acclimatised to the pitch, weather and local conditions.

The England eves also boast of some big names in Tammy Beaumont, Heather Knight and Danny White, who had smashed the Indian bowlers during the T20 series last year.

The trio and others would be hoping to start the campaign on a positive note.

The following three-match ODI series, forming part of the ICC Championship, will be played at the same venue on the 22nd, 25th and 28th of this month.

Kohli maintains top spot; Pujara third

DUBAI: India captain Virat Kohli remained on top while teammate Cheteshwar Pujara managed to hold on to his third position in the latest ICC Test rankings, where Sri Lankan Kusal Perera made a quantum leap of 58 places.

Kohli is leading the chart with 992 rating points ahead of New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson (897 points) and Pujara (881). Besides Kohli and Pujara, no other Indian feature in the top 10 list.

The left-handed Perera has reached a career-best 40th



In the bowlers' list, Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins has overtaken Kagiso Rabada to grab the top spot.

Cummins is the first from his country since Glenn McGrath's pole position in the list, back in February, 2006.

Cummins is leading the bowlers table ahead of England's James Anderson and Rabada of South Africa.

Among the bowlers, Ravindra Jadeja is placed at the fifth spot with 794 points. PTI

Renegades lift BBL trophy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Inspired by an outstanding bowling performance in the middle overs of second innings, Aaron Finch led Melbourne Renegades beat Glenn Maxwell's Melbourne Stars by 13 runs in the eighth edition of Big Bash League final at Docklands stadium in Melbourne on Sunday to bag maiden glory.

Chasing a target of 146 to win, Stars were off to a strong start by Ben Dunk (57) and Marcus Stoinis (39), who added 93 for first wicket in 78 balls. But soon after Stoinis dismissal by Cameron Boyce on the last ball of 13th over momentum quickly turn towards Renegades end.

Stars then saw a quick collapse of its batting unit and lost 7 wickets for just 19 runs to give up the run chase as well as the golden chance to win maiden trophy in its second attempt.

Earlier batting first, Renegades ride on bril-



liant batting display by Tom Cooper (43*) and Daniel Christian (38*) to reach 145 for 5 in 20 overs.

Maxwell's decision of inviting Renegades to bat first worked in Stars favour as its bowlers never let Renegades to settle on the crease. The hosts were struggling at 65 for 5 after Harvey's wicket but then Dan and Copper played sensibly and added 80 runs to set a fighting total.

For Stars, Adam Zampa returned with figures of 2/21 while Bird also took two wickets.

East Bengal drop points against Churchill

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Churchill Brothers came from behind to hold title aspirants East Bengal to a 1-1 draw and end the home team's dream run in the I-League on Sunday.

Willis Plaza came to haunt his former side as the East Bengal crowd stunned a strong crowd of 43,768 with a perfect finish in the 68th minute at the Salt Lake Stadium.

But the two-time former champions' lead lasted just 10 minutes with Kassim Aidara flicking in a header from a stunning Lalrindika Ralte cross to bring draw level.

The draw meant East Bengal (32) could not go level with leaders Chennai City FC (34) but jumped past Real Kashmir (32) on goal difference to occupy the second place.

This was East Bengal's penultimate home game of the season and they will next face Aizawl FC on February 25, before concluding their campaign with three away

games against Real Kashmir, Minerva Punjab and Gokulam Kerala.

For Churchill, who took a fine lead against the run of play, it was a massive blow to their title hopes as they remained on fourth place with 31 points. The Goans have two matches left.

Churchill will rue the clumsy defending by Jovel Martins who brought down substitute Brandon Vanlalremdika from a heavy touch.

With Lalram Chullova missing from just outside the box few minutes back, Lalrindika took the strike and delivered a world-class left-footer that zoomed into the net taking a deflection from Aidara.

Earlier, an unchanged East Bengal who had demolished Shillong Lajong 5-0, failed to go ahead against a compact Churchill Brothers set up.

The Goans, in fact, dominated the possession and got a chance in the 14th minute but Chesterpaul Lyngdoh's shot from Plaza pass sailed



over the crossbar.

As anxiety started to grip the home camp, East Bengal finally got a chance just before the break when Tony Dovale

received a square pass from Ernique Esqueda and found himself in a one-on-one position with Vigneshwaran Baskaran.

'Yamaguchi has good chance of winning All England'

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

P V Sindhu and Saina Nehwal will be once again gunning for their elusive All England title but legendary Dane Morten Frost wants to bet on Japanese Akane Yamaguchi, walking away with the coveted silverware at the blue riband event next month.

India will look to break an 18-year-old jinx, when Saina and Sindhu take court at next month's Championship. Frost believes that although there won't be any clear favourites but he is ready to stick his neck out for the young Japanese woman.

India's last All England champion was current chief national coach Pullela Gopichand in 2001 while the legendary Prakash Padukone was the first Indian to achieve the rare feat in 1980.

"It is totally unpredictable in women's singles where anything can happen. In all honesty, you have to accept that Tai Tzu Ying

has not really performed when it matters. I'm a great fan of her game - you get tears in your eyes when she plays such a beautiful game. But she hasn't won any big title," Frost told reporters.

Frost, an All England 'legend', having played eight finals and won four of them, observed as to why he doesn't consider Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu as a contender while zeroing in on Yamaguchi.

"... And then you have a player like (Akane) Yamaguchi - she can beat them all on a good day. She can run them to the ground. When you look at the All England, it's a slow ball; you have to work really hard. It's definitely in favour of a player of the style of Yamaguchi," said the 60-year-old Dane.

"You would never say she would be the favourite to win, especially if you see her performance in last 4-5 tournaments. But to me, if she is well-prepared, she is definitely one of the favourites," he added.

Talking about men's singles, Frost named Kento Momota and Chen Long as two players who are expected to reach last four stage.

"There are some



players more favourite than others. Kento Momota is up there, he is playing very consistently, I will be surprised if he is not there in the semi-final.

"I think Chen Long will also be in semi-final. Whether (Viktor) Axelsen can raise his game is a question mark. At the moment, he is not playing so well. Shi Yuqi is very much up and down. Also Ginting can create an upset, so that's how I see it."

Frost feels India should be proud of producing players such as Saina Nehwal, P V Sindhu,

Parupalli Kashyap and Kidambi Srikanth.

"The big breakthrough in Indian men's singles was through Kashyap. He was the first one to make himself notice. Saina came as well in women's singles and became good role model and that had a great influence on what happened in last 10 years," he said.

With four titles in 2017, Srikanth emerged as the brightest face in India's men's singles and Frost said it is a phenomenal.

"If you look at the playing abilities of players from different countries, it is phenomenal. When it comes to men's singles -- Lee Chong Wei, Lin Dan and Peter Gade, Taufiq Hidayat and so on - they have been dominating for long time. So the mere fact that you have one player who is winning big international title, you should be thankful."

"I think Sameer (Verma) is coming nicely, he is 11 or 12 in the world, which is pretty awesome."

Frost was in Guwahati to spot talent at the Senior Nationals as part of a 90-day coaching assignment with Prakash

Padukone Badminton Academy and Olympic Gold Quest, singled out Assam's Ashmita Chaliha as one for the future.

"I must say I was very impressed with Ashmita," Frost said of the 19-year-old, who gave Sindhu a good fight before losing 10-21, 20-22 in the semifinals.

"I think she's got enough potential to make sure you push her to go and play international badminton. I am not talking about big tournaments, but lower-level international tournaments to get her some exposure, to give her opportunity to grow and gain experience."

"She's got a lot of beautiful shots, she plays a very nifty game. She has got beautiful technique."

Frost, however, said player "burn out" is a major issue in most countries.

"Every single country has the same issue. How to translate the juniors into seniors. We all have a million world champions when they are 12. But when they are 18-19, suddenly there is maybe only one left," he rued.

"A lot of players are burning out. It is always about maintaining the hunger to win titles. For many, it could be advantageous to peak a bit later than so early. Of course, Lee Chong Wei is odd one out but a lot of players are stopping at 27-28 because they don't find the motivation to carry on," he said.

India has struggled to do well at the All England championship but Frost has won the prestigious title four times in eight final appearances.

"I was stubborn enough, I think it's very important to be stubborn as a sports person. I learned that very early in my so-called career."



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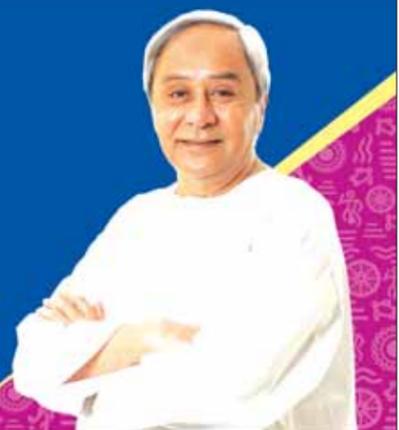
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KALINGA STADIUM
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GAME OF TWO HALVES

AFP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid threw away their lead and perhaps their hopes of catching Barcelona as Girona came from behind to pull off a shock 2-1 victory at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday. Girona had not won in 13 matches and looked on course for a seventh straight defeat when Casemiro headed a dominant Madrid ahead in the first half.

But complacency set in, and Girona took full advantage as Christian Stuani scored a penalty and Portu nodded in at the back post, leaving the European champions scrapping even for a point before Sergio Ramos was sent off in the 90th minute.

They failed even to muster that, with defeat here a major act of self-harm for what was beginning to look like a serious resurgence in La Liga's title race.

The frustration for coach Santiago Solari will be that his team had this game in the palm of their hands, in control



against a Girona side that celebrated at the end as if they had secured survival.

Their first league victory since November pushes them four points clear of the bottom three.

Solari will take some of the blame after he fielded a rotat-

ed line-up following the Champions League win over Ajax in midweek, their seventh win in eight games.

Garth Bale and Vinicius Junior both started on the bench, while Luka Modric was suspended.

Madrid barely broke sweat

in the first half, in control but playing within themselves as long spells of possession were only occasionally turned into a clear-cut chance.

The best move was marked by two scoops, the first by Toni Kroos, who lifted the ball over Pere Pons and

squared for Lucas Vazquez, who repeated the trick, dinking it between two defenders, only for his finish to be saved by Bono.

Girona threatened in flashes. Stuani drew a decent stop from Thibaut Courtois and Alex Granell's drive whistled past the post.

But Madrid never looked troubled and it was no surprise when Casemiro nodded in Kroos' cross after Bono elected to punch rather than catch the initial ball in.

COMFORTABLE TO COMPLACENT

Eusebio brought on both Aleix Garcia and Anthony Lozano at half-time, and the impact was almost instant, as Garcia blazed over the rebound after Lozano's header.

Madrid slipped from comfortable to complacent and shortly after the hour they were punished. Stuani's header spilled out to Douglas Luiz, whose finish was blocked by the hand of Ramos.

Ramos' yellow card might

have been red, the defender perhaps only spared by two white shirts behind him on the line. Stuani made no mistake with the penalty.

Girona almost scored again, Portu's shot rattling the outside of the post, and then they did. Casemiro missed a tackle in midfield and Lozano's shot was parried to Portu. Marcelo dangled a leg but failed to stop the header, which crept inside the post.

Vinicius and Bale both came on but Vinicius three times missed the target from good positions, while Bale was whistled at one point after losing possession.

Casemiro wanted a penalty when he felt Pedro Alcala's hand on his shoulder and moments later Ramos was sent off, drawing a second yellow card for attempting to volley and instead catching Alcala in the face.

Even Courtois was allowed up for a late corner and he got his head on it too but the ball flashed wide. The surprised applause quickly turned to groans at the full-time whistle.

HIT & MISS: Leo gets job done

AFP ■ MADRID

Lionel Messi scored a penalty and missed another as La Liga leaders Barcelona ground out an unconvincing 1-0 win over Real Valladolid, while Antoine Griezmann surpassed Fernando Torres with his 130th goal for Atletico Madrid.

Messi's fitness was again in the spotlight on Saturday after a niggling thigh strain in recent weeks, but he completed the full 90 minutes at the Camp Nou and hit the 30-goal mark at Barcelona for the 11th straight season.

The Argentine coolly dispatched a spot-kick just before half-time, drilling beyond the reach of Jordi Masip after Gerard Pique was bundled to the ground by Valladolid midfielder Michel.

Masip brilliantly tipped over a Messi volley soon after the interval and Luis Suarez wasted a huge opportunity to double the lead shortly after replacing

Kevin-Prince Boateng with an hour gone.

Messi found himself booked for dissent after an apparent foul on him went unpunished, and he then blew the chance to kill off Valladolid when Masip kept out his second penalty of the night — awarded following a trip on Philippe Coutinho.

The excellent Masip alertly gathered Messi's follow-up header and again denied Suarez late on as Barca pulled seven points clear of Atletico ahead of their trip to Lyon in the Champions League last 16.

"We haven't played well. The truth is it wasn't a good match today. The only good thing is the victory," Pique, who made his 300th appearance in La Liga told Movistar.

"Getting back on track with three points is important after two draws in the league. But we definitely have to improve. We have to be better on Tuesday otherwise we'll have a tough time."



City end Newport's giant-killing run

AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester City powered into the FA Cup quarter-finals as the Premier League leaders survived a battling display from Newport County to beat the fourth-tier minnows 4-1 on Saturday.

Pep Guardiola's side didn't have an easy ride in a full-blooded fifth round tie against a team 82 places below them in League Two.

Troubled by the rutted Rodney Parade pitch, City was indebted to Ederson for a superb save to keep them level during a lacklustre first-half display.

City eventually hit their stride in the second half and Leroy Sane's powerful finish put them ahead before Phil Foden doubled the lead.

Newport refused to surrender and Padraig Amond's late goal could have set up a tense finale, only for Foden to net again 79 seconds later before Riyad Mahrez wrapped up the win.

With their Champions League last 16 first leg against Schalke to come on Wednesday, followed by the League Cup final against Chelsea, Guardiola made seven changes to the side which hammered Chelsea 6-0 last weekend.

Newport had earlier knocked out Premier League side Leicester and Championship outfit Middlesbrough in the previous two rounds.

Guardiola had warned City they would "suffer" at set-pieces against Newport's "taller, stronger" players and the Spaniard's fears were nearly confirmed in the 14th minute.

Failing to deal with Mickey Demetriou's long throw, City left space for Tyreeq Bakinson and he headed goalwards from close range, only for Ederson to dive to his right to make a brilliant one-handed save.

Bothered by the unpredictable surface, left badly damaged by heavy use from two rugby unions teams as well as Newport, City were unable to get any momentum and another long throw ended with Joss Labadie lashing wide.



"It was a really tough game. We opened the scoring in the game and believed it was done. They showed us how incredible they are and a big compliment for them."

—PEP GUARDIOLA

Mahrez couldn't hit the target with a series of half-chances and Sane grazed the top of the crossbar from an acute angle as Newport gamely reached half-time on level terms.

BRAVE RESISTANCE

Newport's brave resistance was finally broken in the 51st minute, with Gabriel Jesus teeing up Sane for a fierce strike that smashed into Newport keeper Joe Day's face before looping into the net.

With 15 minutes left, Foden increased City's advantage as his low strike eluded Day's weak attempt to save.

Amond punished woeful defending from Aymeric Laporte and Nicolas Otamendi to lob home from the edge of the area in the 88th minute.

But young midfielder Foden went straight down the other end to blast City's third and Mahrez slammed in the fourth in the final seconds.

Brighton moved into the quarter-finals for the second successive season as goals from Anthony Knockaert and Jurgen Locadia clinched a 2-1 win over Frank Lampard's Derby.

SARRI STATE OF AFFAIRS: CHELSEA HOST MAN UNITED

AFP ■ LONDON

Maurizio Sarri will be fighting to save his job when crisis club Chelsea face Manchester United in the FA Cup fifth round on Monday.

Sarri is in danger of being sacked after a dismal first season at Stamford Bridge and crashing out of the FA Cup would push the Italian closer to the axe. Chelsea suffered their heaviest defeat for 28 years when they were thrashed 6-0 at Manchester City last weekend, an indignity that came just weeks after a humiliating 4-0 loss at Bournemouth.

Sarri's players are said to be unhappy with the Italian's uninspiring training methods and refusal to adapt his tactics to the players he has at his disposal.

Cesar Azpilicueta, Marcos Alonso and N'Golo Kante are all being asked to perform roles that are ill-suited to their strengths and so far Sarri's lengthy debriefs have had little difference.

While 'Sarri-ball' was a big hit with Napoli, Chelsea have looked laboured for much of this season, struggling for cohesion in midfield and lacking cutting edge up front.

Demanding Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich and influential director Marina Granovskaia are unlikely to spare Sarri unless results and performances improve soon.

That means Sarri must lift Chelsea — beaten in seven of their last 22 games — back into the Premier League's top four and keep them on course for silverware.

They are still in the Europa League, having beaten Malmö in the last 32 first leg on Thursday, and face Manchester City in the League Cup final next Sunday.

But first Sarri must focus on United's visit to the Bridge as holders Chelsea look to move closer to a third successive FA Cup final appearance.

CALL FOR UNITY

Responding to the mounting sense of gloom around Chelsea, Zola called on his squad to pull together.

"Nobody is pleased when you lose games the way we did recently. Not only the players, but the coaches and everyone," he said.

"This is a moment when we've been alternating the results, going from one good performance to a bad one. We have to be consistent. We all know this, and it's important everyone understands the situation and is working on it."

"This is important. The unity facing the challenge will make the difference."

United were beaten by Chelsea in last season's final, but much has changed at Old Trafford since May.

Jose Mourinho was sacked in December and his replacement Ole Gunnar Solskjaer had overseen a remarkable turnaround as interim boss.

Solskjaer went unbeaten in his first 11 games in all competitions, lifting United above Chelsea into the top four. But their momentum stalled in a big way on Tuesday when Paris Saint Germain won 2-0 in the Champions League last 16, first leg in Manchester.

United's attempt to get back on track has been hit by injuries to Anthony Martial and Jesse Lingard, who are both out for up to three weeks.

Solskjaer expects a strong response despite those key absences, saying: "I hate losing games and it seems like the boys hate losing games."

"There's no point dwelling on it because there are big games against good teams coming up. We need to dust ourselves down and get going again on Monday."

"You've got to bounce back at this club. You don't panic because you've lost a game, you don't change everything. It doesn't change the mindset at all."



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— Inauguration of —

Ultra-Modern Secondary Care
NALCO – LV Prasad Eye Hospital, Angul

&

Distribution of Aids and Assistive Devices to Senior Citizens
under Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana

by

Dharmendra Pradhan
Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas
and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
Government of India

Project Highlights

- Built at a cost of ₹25 Cr, the eye hospital shall offer state of art services with Modular OT and Modern Day Eye Equipments
- To benefit 60,000 outpatients in an year and perform 6000 surgeries, and provide free of cost treatment to poor patients
- 1000 senior citizens from BPL category to be given aids and assistive devices in Angul District



18th February 2019 | Time: 10.00 am
NALCO, Opposite Odyssey Motors, NH-55, Angul

— In the august presence of —

Tathagata Satpathy MP, Dhenkanal	Nagendra Kumar Pradhan MP, Sambalpur	R.K. Singh MLA, Angul	Braja Kishore Pradhan MLA, Talcher
Sushant Kumar Behera MLA, Chhendipada	Mahesh Sahoo MLA, Pallahara	Dr. Tapan Kumar Chand CMD, NALCO	

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