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AN ALTERNATE
UNIVERSE

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REJECT POLITICS OF
REVENGE: TRUMP

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INDIA IN 1ST T20

Established 1864
Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR
CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN

Late City Vol. 155 Issue 36
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



the pioneer

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ARIANA WON'T
PERFORM AT
GRAMMYS
14 VIVACITY

Vadra appears for ED queries

Priyanka makes political statement by dropping husband off at ED office

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra on Wednesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case for the alleged possession of illegal foreign assets. The Congress tried to tactically turn the focus away from him by having Priyanka drop her husband at the Enforcement Directorate office.

In what could be seen as a political message, Priyanka said, "I stand by my family. He is my husband, he is my family...I support my family."

Asked if it was a political vendetta, she said everyone knows why this is being done. Priyanka's show of support to her husband came days after an emotional message from Vadra on her appointment as AICC general secretary.

Vadra entered the ED office around 3.45 pm, and soon a team of his lawyers reached the ED office at Jamnagar House here. This is the first time Vadra turned up before a probe agency for questioning on charges of dubious financial dealings.

However, Vadra has denied the allegations and claimed the cases are an outcome of a political witch-hunt.

After dropping Vadra off outside the ED office, Priyanka,

who is an SPG protectee, went back in her white Toyota Land Cruiser with a convoy of vehicles carrying the elite commandos.

Vadra was directed by a Delhi court to cooperate with the ED investigation after he approached the court seeking anticipatory bail in the money laundering case. The court had asked him to appear before the ED on Wednesday on his return from London.

A team of three ED officials asked Vadra about transactions, purchase and possession of certain immovable assets in London. His statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), official sources said.

The case relates to the purchase allegedly by Vadra of a London-based property located at 12, Bryanston Square worth 1.9 million GBP (British pounds). The agency had told the court that it has received information about various new properties in London which belong to Vadra.

In December, the ED had raided and questioned Vadra's aide Manoj Arora, an employee of Skylight Hospitality LLP, a firm linked to Vadra.

The ED has alleged that the London-based property was bought by arms dealer Sanjay Bhandari for 1.9 million GBP and sold in 2010 for the same



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra shakes hands with supporters as she returns after taking charge as Congress general secretary at the party HQ in New Delhi on Wednesday PTI

amount despite incurring additional expenses of approximately 65,900 GBP on its renovation.

"This gives credence to the fact that Bhandari was not the actual owner of the property but it was beneficially owned by Vadra who was incurring expenditure on the renovation of this property," the ED had told the court.

Arora, a key link in the case, was aware of Vadra's overseas undeclared assets and was instrumental in arranging funds, the ED had alleged.

Vadra has also been directed by the Rajasthan High Court to appear before the ED again on February 12 in connection with another money laundering case being probed by the agency.

Priyanka takes up reins of UP east, dons gen secy cap

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday took charge as AICC general secretary at the party headquarters amid celebration and sloganeering. Priyanka was appointed as general secretary and in charge of Uttar Pradesh east on January 23 by her brother and Congress chief Rahul Gandhi.

Along with Priyanka, senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia took charge

as the AICC general secretary in charge for Uttar Pradesh west. Both Priyanka and Scindia have been appointed with Rahul's resolve to strengthen the party in the crucial State of Uttar Pradesh, which has 80 Lok Sabha seats.

AICC leaders said Priyanka is likely to begin her Uttar Pradesh tour from February 11. She may hold a road show in Lucknow and then address a meeting of UPCC office-bearers. Party workers engaged in UP election

related activities exuded confidence that Priyanka would go to Prayagraj also to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of Kumbh Mela. She, along with Rahul, may also address a rally later this month.

While she met several party workers particularly those hailing from the eastern region of UP, Priyanka had a nearly two-hour long meeting with Rahul and Scindia to chalk out the Congress' UP game plan.

Continued on Page 7

Shah has a dig at SP-BSP alliance

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/ALIGARH

Hitting out at regional parties for joining hands and forging an alliance against the BJP, party president Amit Shah said that those parties had a proven record of corruption and hence they came together because of the fear of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Corrupt and casteist parties have formed an alliance. These parties have only regional presence and have joined hands in fear of Modi. In 2019 elections, the BJP will get a thumping majority in UP with 74 seats and Modi will become the PM again," Shah told booth-level incharges during separate meetings in Bulandshahr and Aligarh on Wednesday.

"When Sonia Gandhi left the Congress presidency, you knew that Rahul Gandhi would take up that post. But can you say who will become the president of the BJP after me? This is the BJP which believes in democracy," Shah said while adding that a tea-seller's son becoming the PM is the true reflection of a democracy.

Shah added: "In 1982, I was a booth worker pasting BJP's posters in Gujarat. The BJP has made a booth worker like me as the national president of the party. A tea-seller's son became PM. This is possible only in the BJP. In contrast, there is a party which believes only in dynasty."

Talking about the Ram Temple, the BJP chief said that the BJP wanted the temple at that same spot in Ayodhya and there should be no confusion.

"Now, Ram Janambhoomi Niyas has asked for the return of 42 acres of land near the disputed site. Do Congress, SP, BSP want the temple at that site? They should make their stand clear. Whenever the Ram Temple case comes up for hearing in the Supreme Court, Congress leaders try to push it back. They tried to threaten the judges too," he alleged.

Hitting out at the Congress president, Shah said that Rahul was asking the BJP to give its report card. "I want to ask what the Congress did in its rule of over 50 years. Modi's govt gave toilets, gas connection, Mudra bank loans, houses, electricity to crores of people who did not have it and brought respect to the poor and women. But what did the Congress do in the past 70 years," he asked.

Shah said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched 129 schemes for the welfare of the people but the biggest work was to ensure security of the country. "For 10 years, it was Rahul's govt. The aunt and nephew (referring to BSP's Mayawati and SP's Akhilesh Yadav) supported them. Alia, Mallya, Jamalya and such people used to enter this country through Pakistan and explode bombs and there was nobody to stop them or eliminate them. In fact, nobody was concerned about catching them or acting against them. Pakistanis had a habit of attacking us in Mouni Baba's (referring to former PM Manmohan Singh) time. One day, Pakistani terrorists killed 12 jawans in Uri. But this time, it was not Mouni Baba's govt. It was the

Continued on Page 7

CAPSULE

MAYAWATI JOINS TWITTER TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE

Lucknow: BSP president Mayawati has for the 'first time' joined Twitter to interact with the media and masses, her party said on Wednesday, almost a fortnight after a handle in her name appeared on the microblogging site.

9 CONG MLAS SKIP HOUSE, KEEP COALITION ON EDGE

Bengaluru: Ignoring whip, nine Congress MLAs in Karnataka skipped the legislature sitting on Wednesday, keeping the ruling coalition on tenterhooks on the opening day of the Budget session.

KERALA TO SLASH ATF TAX TO 5% FOR LOCAL FLIGHT

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala Government will slash the tax on aviation fuel to 5 per cent from the current 28.75 per cent for domestic airlines, State Finance Minister T M Thomas Isaac said on Wednesday.

COMMUNICATION GSAT-31 LAUNCHED SUCCESSFULLY

Bengaluru: Communication satellite GSAT-31 was successfully put into orbit in the early hours on Wednesday.

Cabinet tightens rules to ban Ponzi schemes

Even advertising unregulated deposit schemes made unlawful; CBI armed to arrest violators

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018, and empowered the CBI to take action against violators. The amendments include ban on their advertisements.

Addressing the media, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said these comprehensive amendments would strengthen the enforcement agency and help people who are cheated by Ponzi schemes. The amendment to the Banning of Unregulated Deposits Schemes Bill 2018 is expected to be

tabled in Parliament soon.

The Bill enables creation of an online Central data base for collection and sharing of information of deposit taking activities in the country. The CBI will be nodal agency to initiate action against the violators. The Minister justified making the CBI the nodal agency and said many Ponzi schemes are operating in several States and the State police could not coordinate effectively.

The Bill also added provisions to fix the cheaters who put advertisements in newspapers to fool the people. "They will be arrested immediately if they put advertisements to fool people," said Prasad. The Bill also makes provisions to retrieve the deposits, attachment of fraudsters' property, and imprisonment.

To a volley of questions regarding the timing of the amendments and Saradha scam cases, Prasad said crim-

inal laws can't be enforced in old cases.

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi also approved the proposal for establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for conservation, protection and development of cows and their progeny. The setting up of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will lead to conservation, protection and development of cattle population in the country.

"It will result in increased growth of livestock sector which is more inclusive, benefiting women, and small and marginal farmers. The Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will work in collaboration with veterinary, animal sciences or agriculture university or departments or organisations of the Central/State Government engaged in the task of research in the field of breeding and rearing of cow, organic manure, biogas, etc," said the statement.

UP govt to table budget today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi government will table its third annual budget for 2019-20 fiscal in the Assembly on Thursday. The size of the budget is likely to be over ₹5 trillion, the largest among all states of India. The Budget session commenced on February 5 with the joint address of Governor Ram Naik to both Houses of the Legislature.

Principal Secretary (Assembly) Pradeep Kumar Dubey said in Lucknow that the budget would be tabled by Finance Minister Rajesh Agarwal in the Assembly at 11 am on February. A general debate on the budget will be held between February 11 and 14. After the debate on budgetary grants, Finance Bill is likely to be passed by the Assembly on February 22. The Business Advisory Committee of the Assembly has approved the agenda of the House till February 22.

With Lok Sabha elections less than 50 days away, the Yogi government is set to present a populist budget for 2019-20.

7 murderers who triggered 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots held guilty

PTI ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR

A local court on Wednesday held seven men guilty of killing two youths in Kawal village in an attack which is said to have triggered the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots that led to the killing of over 60 people.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Himashu Bhatnagar convicted Muzammil, Mujassim, Furkan, Nadeem, Janangir, Afzal and Iqbal for killing Gaurav and Sachin on August 27, 2013, and rioting, said district prosecution counsel Rajiv Sharma.

The court will pronounce the quantum of their sentences on Friday. According to the First Information Report, the two youths of Kawal village under Jansath police station area were battered to death by the five of the seven men.

The two other accused, Afzal and Iqbal, however, were summoned by the court later under provisions of section 319 of the Criminal Procedure Code when the evidence of



their complicity in the killings emerged during the trial.

The court convicted the seven after examining 10 prosecution witnesses and six in their defence.

As per figures given by prosecution counsel Sharma, over 6,000 cases were lodged following the 2013 riots and

1,480 accused were arrested for their alleged roles in the riots.

A special investigation team, which probed the cases, had filed chargesheets in 175 cases. Fifty-six of them involving 430 accused resulted in acquittal. The State Government has withdrawn some of the cases.

Sabarimala Board changes tack on women entry

SC reserves verdict on plea to review permission order

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Travancore Devaswom Board, which runs Sabarimala temple, on Wednesday made a U-turn to support the Supreme Court's order allowing women of all ages to enter the shrine as it joined the Kerala Government to oppose a batch of pleas seeking review of the historic verdict.

Meanwhile, a five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi reserved its decision after hearing various parties for three and half hours, including those seeking re-consideration of the

September 28, 2018 judgment, even as the Board asserted that its latest position was not due to any political pressure.

Some right-wing activists have alleged that the Board changed its stand before the court under pressure from the state's CPI(M)-led LDF Government.

The apex court, by a majority of 4:1, had on September 28, 2018 lifted the ban on women and girls between the age of 10 and 50 from entering the famous Ayyappa shrine in Kerala and had held that this centuries-old Hindu religious practice was illegal and unconstitutional.

However, as many as 65 petitions — including 56 review petitions and four fresh writ petitions and five transfer pleas — were filed in the apex court after its verdict sparked violent protests in Kerala.



The five-judge Constitution Bench, which had earlier agreed to hear the pleas in an open court, reserved its decision after hearing the parties, including Nair Service Society, Thantry of temple, temple Board (TDB) and the

State Government, in favour and against the review plea.

The Bench, also comprising justices RF Nariman, AM Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra, was in for a pleasant surprise as the temple Board, which also com-

prises the State Government nominees, took a U-turn by supporting the SC verdict and said the people should gracefully accept it.

The temple board, in earlier round of litigation, had opposed the PIL by Indian Young Lawyers Association seeking to throw open the shrine for all women.

Justice Malhotra interdicted senior lawyer Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for TDB, and said, "You had argued against women's entry."

"The Board has now decided to respect the judgment", Dwivedi replied, adding, "Article 25 (1) equally entitles all persons to practice religion."

"Women cannot be excluded from any walk of life on biological attributes... Equality is the dominant theme of the Constitution", Dwivedi said. The Kerala Government,

which had taken conflicting stands on women's entry into the hilltop shrine, supported the verdict and urged the court to trash review pleas.

Senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, appearing for the State Government, said a constitutional court should not worry about law and order problem and "social disturbances".

Exclusion of women from temples is not an essential practice of Hindu religion, he said. At the outset, the Bench told lawyers it would hear only those who are parties to review petitions and asked them to confine arguments on grounds for reconsideration of the judgment. Senior advocate K Parasaran, appearing for Nair Service Society, assailed the majority verdict, saying Article 15 of the Constitution throws open for public the secular institutions of the country but

doesn't deal with religious institutions.

Seeking a reconsideration, he said the Article 17 which deals with abolition of untouchability in society was wrongly used by the court in its judgment as exclusion of certain age groups of women was not based on caste.

Parasaran also referred to the celibate or 'Naishtika Brahmachari' character of the Sabarimala deity and said the exclusionary practise was based on nature of the deity and the apex court should have considered this aspect.

He also referred to Article 25 (fundamental right to practice religion) and said unless a religious practice is "abhorrent", a court usually does not interfere with the activities associated with religious institutions.

Senior advocate AM Singhvi, representing TDB's

ex-chairperson, argued in favour of a review of the judgment. "There is no exclusion of women. There is no exclusion of men. There is no exclusion of a class of men or women based on religion and caste. There is an exclusion inside a class (women). Hence Article 17 (removal of untouchability) will not apply," Singhvi said.

Dealing with the aspect of constitutional morality, the lawyer said in a pluralistic Hindu society this concept cannot be applied objectively by the court and it has to be subjective keeping in mind different essential religious practices.

Senior advocate V Giri, who represented the shrine thantry, said the temple allows entry of all persons inside and there is no exclusion of any class of citizen based on caste, gender and religion.

Noisy walkout by opposition over sugarcane dues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The agitated opposition comprising the SP, BSP and Congress staged a noisy walkout in the Assembly on Wednesday as the state government refused to commit any specific date for clearing cane dues and refused to clarify whether arrears will be paid with interest.

Sugarcane Development Minister Suresh Rana admitted that Rs 6054.23 crore were to be paid to cane farmers while replying to a short notice question by Congress leader Ajay Kumar Lal and others in the Assembly during Question Hour.

In his reply, Rana claimed that the government had cleared Rs 34,418 crore in 2017-18, which was a record. He also said that the state government had already given a package of Rs 3,555 crore to the sugar industry which included Rs 4,000 crore as soft loan. Of this, Rs 2605 crore had been disbursed among farmers. The minister also claimed that in the last 22 months, the state government had paid Rs 52,000 crore to cane farmers.

But, opposition members stood up and demanded a specific date for the clearance of all dues with interest. Opposition members also reminded the



Vidhan Sabha Speaker going to attend the Budget Session on Wednesday

BJP government about their promise to reopen closed sugar mills.

SP member Sanjay Garg alleged that private and cooperative mills had paid merely 48 per cent of cane dues during the current season even when the court had ordered to pay interest on the dues, if not paid

within 14 days of cane purchase. To this, Rana said that the government had opened four closed sugar mills and ensured early payment of cane dues.

Not satisfied with the answer, SP and BSP members walked out of the House raising anti-government slogans.

Later, Congress members entered the Well of the House before walking out of the House.

This was first time that the bonhomie between the SP and BSP was witnessed inside the House as members of both the parties jointly walked out of the House.

SP, BSP to use joint flags

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

After fixing the electoral arithmetic and forging an alliance, Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party are now focusing on electoral chemistry for uniting party cadres. The two allies have brought out joint flags to encourage party workers to work in coordination. "We have made a beginning by promoting solidarity between the two parties. Already, flags of both the parties are being used at meetings of either party. In times to come, you will see more such efforts by both parties," said Samajwadi Party MLC Sunil Sajan.

In the recent past, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav repeatedly asked party cadres to respect BSP chief Mayawati and encouraged party workers to work in coordination with the ally.

BSP chief Mayawati also reciprocated Akhilesh' gesture asking her party workers to pay equal respect to the SP chief.

A vendor selling flags and other poll campaign material outside the Bahujan Samaj Party office said that party leaders, who previously opted to buy separate party flags, were now opting to buy joint flags.

He said that after both parties announced their alliance on January 12, the demand for joint flags had spiked. The demand will increase once seats are announced by both parties and some clarity surfaces about probable candidates.

Yogi wants quota for Dalits, backwards in AMU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath raised the issue of the minority status of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) saying that since the institution was not a minority one, hence it should give reservation to Dalits and backwards.

The CM was addressing a meeting of BJP's booth level incharges in Aligarh on Wednesday.

"The AMU receives several crore rupees as grant from the Centre and hence it cannot be termed as a minority institution. Hence, Dalits and backwards should get reservation here," Yogi said while lambasting the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress for keeping mum on the issue.

The CM questioned that when there was reservation system in other institutions, why it was not so in the AMU. "These political parties are trying their best to divide the society on caste and community lines but when it comes to the rights of the underprivileged, they keep mum," he said.

Yogi also said that before the BJP came to power in UP, every day there was a riot somewhere in the state and the same has now stopped. "Those goondas who used to create nuisance now are busy in

other trade," he said.

The CM said: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has taken the nation to new heights and now we are on our way to becoming a superpower for

which we need to make sure that Modi comes to power again." "In PM Modi's regime, various schemes have been provided for the poor, including power connection, houses and gas connection.

BJP, SP spar over holding Cabinet meet in Kumbh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Heated arguments took place between leaders of the ruling BJP and Samajwadi Party Vidhan Parishad on Wednesday after opposition members objected to holding of a Cabinet meeting at Kumbh Mela in Allahabad. Council chairman Ramesh Yadav suspended the House for a brief period over the issue.

Raising the issue during

Zero Hour at Legislative Council, Samajwadi Party member Shatrudra Prakash stressed that clicking photographs while taking a holy dip at Sangam after the Cabinet meeting during Kumbh was a clear violation of 'United Provinces Melas Rule, 1940.

Prakash alleged the violation of Section 18 of 'Uttar Pradesh Prayagraj Mela Pradhikaran Adhiniyam-2017', stating that the collection of people for any purpose other than religious work was prohibited in Kumbh area. "The holding of a cabinet meeting in Kumbh Mela area is definitely a non-religious programme. Thus the government also violated the laid norms of Kumbh Mela," the Samajwadi MLC said.

Photographs of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his Cabinet ministers taking dip at the Sangam were widely published and aired in print and electronic media. "The entire Cabinet should have

desisted from such derogatory and non-serious behaviour," Prakash said while alleging that the entire incident was a 'mockery' of Hindu religion and culture.

In support, SP members also rushed to the Well of the House and raised slogans against the government for organising a non-religious function at Kumbh Mela area.

Countering the SP member's charge, Leader of the House and Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma said that there was no ban on holding Cabinet meeting anywhere. He also demanded that SP members should apologise for 'hurting religious sentiments'. "Pictures were clicked at 'selfie points' and the ones that were published were taken by the media and they could not be stopped from doing so," Sharma pointed out.

Without taking names of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, Sharma wondered that if it was not wrong when senior oppo-

sition leaders got clicked while taking the holy dip. The Deputy CM said that words used by Shatrudh Prakash had 'hurt the religious beliefs' and were also not befitting for use in the House. Sharma's comments were objected by the SP, leading to a war of words with Treasury benches and prompting opposition members to rush to the Well of the House.

Another minister Mahendra Pratap Singh was heard saying 'astha par chot karna band karo' (stop attacking faith).

Later, Council chairman Ramesh Yadav adjourned the House for 20 minutes. When proceedings resumed, Leader of Opposition Ahmed Hasan alleged that the BJP government was only concerned about elections and 'saffronising' all events and programmes. The chairman later deleted all objectionable words used by members of both the benches.

Minor girl kidnapped, raped; two arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Minor girls continued to remain at the receiving end across the state in the last 24 hours. While a class VIII student was kidnapped and raped by three youths in Deoria, a similar incident was averted in Muzaffarnagar, when villagers thrashed perpetrators and rescued a school girl, who was kidnapped for rape.

In Deoria, the minor girl was kidnapped from her home while she was sleeping with her siblings on Monday night and taken to a nearby field and raped by three miscreants. Based on a complaint lodged by the girl's mother, a case was registered against three youths out of which two were arrested while the third was on the lam.

Elsewhere in Muzaffarnagar, two youths were beaten up by local villagers for attempting to rape a girl on the outskirts. The victim's parents alleged that four motorcycle-borne youths kidnapped their daughter while she was returning from school and tried to rape her

in a cane field on Tuesday. The girl was rescued by locals, who caught two of the youths and beat them up before handing them over to the police. The police launched a search to nab the other two accused. Security was tightened in the area to thwart any untoward incident.

Meanwhile, three persons died after consuming spurious liquor in Kushinagar. The police, however, claimed that they were waiting for autopsy report to confirm the cause of death.

As per reports, some villagers of Jawahi Dayal hamlet of Taryasujan locality consumed liquor on Tuesday night after their condition deteriorated. The villagers rushed them to the district hospital where there of them, identified as Deva Nishan (65), Heera Lal (35) and Awadh (50), were pronounced dead upon arrival. Surprisingly, despite the apprehension of villagers that the deceased died after consuming spurious liquor, doctors did not conduct autopsy and handed over their bodies to the kin.

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Maya joins Twitter for better connect

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati finally joined the micro-blogging site Twitter, days before the Lok Sabha polls.

"This is to inform you that BSP national president, former UP Chief Minister and former MP Mayawati has for the first time decided to join Twitter for speedy interaction with media and masses, besides expressing her views on various issues of national and political importance through the site," a statement issued by the BSP on Wednesday said.

Mayawati's official Twitter handle is @SushriMayawati, which was actually created in October last year, but was put to use only this January.

Tweeting for the first time on January 22, Mayawati wrote: "Hello brothers and sisters. With due respect, let me introduce myself to the Twitter family. This is my opening and inauguration. @SushriMayawati is my official twitter handle for all my future interactions, comments and updates. With warm regards. Thank you."

However, the tweet went largely unnoticed for a long time until RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav welcomed her to the micro-blogging site on Tuesday.

Yadav wrote that he had requested the BSP chief to join Twitter during their meeting in Lucknow on January 13. "Finally glad to see you here. Happy that you acknowledged and respected my request of joining Twitter during our meeting in Lucknow on January 13. Warm Regards," Tejashwi tweeted.

Twitter verified the account within minutes of the BSP issuing the statement. Mayawati's handle has more than 6,000 followers till now and she follows only one person - Twitter Support.

Seven of the first 11 tweets were press releases from her party. "Connect me directly, get party views and updates. With regards," Mayawati tweeted on January 23.

UP plans big sapling plantation drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The state government will go for a massive afforestation drive during the next monsoon setting a target to plant 22 crore saplings. This was announced by Forest and Environment Minister Dara Singh Chauhan in the Assembly on Wednesday.

During the Question Hour, Chauhan said that the government had planted nine crore saplings last year, out of which around five per cent of the plants withered.

The minister pointed out that during 2017-18, the government planted 4.53 crore saplings whose expectancy rate was between 91 and 95 per cent. Chauhan also made it clear that not a single sapling was pur-

chased from private agencies and all were grown in state-run nurseries. "This fiscal, the government has sanctioned Rs 100 crore from the contingency fund for development of more nurseries," he said.

Besides, the government has sanctioned Rs 282.86 crore for the plantation drive in 2017-18 and in 2018-19 (till January) the sanctioned money was Rs 219.14 crore.

Meanwhile, to another question, Chauhan admitted that out of the total e-waste of 25,586 metric tonnes, the government had disposed of 23,000 tonnes so far and the rest would be done within the next 45 days.

Replying to a question put by Ujjawal Raman Singh of the SP,

the minister said that there were 39 units in the state to dispose of e-waste, of which eight units had a total capacity of 17,091 tonnes per year, while the rest two had a capacity of 10,000 tonne per year each.

COURT NOTICE

In The Court Of Sh. Sanjay Kumar-I L.D.ADJ-II, Karkardooma Court, Delhi Suit No. CS-891/17 (Order 5, Rule 20 of Code of Civil Procedure) M/s Pataka Industries Pvt.Ltd. Versus M/s Apex FMCG Sales Pvt. Ltd. M/s Apex FMCG Sales Pvt. Ltd. Through its Director/MD/ Partner/ Prop. Basem B-1/25, Sector A, Aliganj, Lucknow-226024 (U.P) Also at: M/s Apex FMCG Sales Pvt.Ltd. Through its Director /MD/ Partner / Prop. F-228/229, Transport Nagar, Lucknow-226012 (U.P) WHEREAS, you are intentionally evading service of summons. It is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on 11th day of March 2019 the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of the Court, this 1st day of February 2019. Judge Sh. Sanjay Kumar-I L.D.ADJ-II, Karkardooma, Delhi

AAP supports state staff stir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

State Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Sanjay Singh supported the ongoing strike by state government employees, demanding implementation of the old pension scheme and said that the Yogi government was ignoring the genuine demand of employees. Singh

said that the employees' demand to implement the pension policy was justified and it was the state government's responsibility to address the issue.

"The employees have been on the warpath for a long time. Pension is their right and they are not begging from the government," he said.

1,00,078 students to appear at 113 centres

UP Board High School, Inter exams begin today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The UP Board examinations for High School and Intermediate classes conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad will kick off on Thursday. District Inspector of Schools (DIOS) Mukesh Singh said that a total of 1,00,078 students were appearing for the examinations at 113 centres in the district. He said that these 113 centres include the one at the Model Jail here. The High School examinations will be over in 14 days and conclude on February 28 and the Intermediate examinations will be over in 30 days and conclude on March 2.

Giving details of the preparations, he said that Section 144 CrPC had already been imposed in the district. "There will be a total of 13 sector magistrates, 14 zonal magistrates, 54 static magistrates and supervisors who are second in command at 54 sensitive centres," he said. Singh said that they had a sufficient strength of invigilators and they were 5,000 in number. "We have seven flying squads which will also be monitoring the examinations," he said.

In order to prevent copying in the examinations, he said that they had installed double CCTVs in all the rooms where the examination would be conducted and a voice recorder too. "There is a control room which has been established and I have also linked the surveillance of the centres on my mobile phone so that I can monitor it when on the move. This app will be used by the other officials too," he pointed out. He said that the students were not supposed to take any electrical gadget within the rooms. "The students are now accustomed to the idea of giving an examination under the cameras. Special checking drives will be carried out on the days when cheating instances are expected to be high. We are confident that there will be no cases of cheating," he added.

On being asked whether they had made arrangements for handling students who get stressed while appearing for the



Teachers examining roll numbers at an exam centre in Lucknow on Wednesday

Pioneer

examination, the DIOS said that they had counsellors who were adept at handling the children. "Our teachers have been handling students since long and know how to de-stress them," he added. Giving a message to the students appearing for the examination, he said that it was important for them to be totally relaxed while doing so. "They should sleep well because this is important while appearing for the examination. They should revise the topics which they have already prepared and should not start preparing something new," he added.

A psychologist, Kumud Srivastava, while giving tips to those appearing for the examination said that more than the children the parents should take care not to project their anxiety and fears before them which could make them nervous. She said that for the students it was most important to understand that they should believe in themselves and be confident about themselves

which was the watchword for giving the examination. "They should follow the routine strongly of sleeping and eating their food. Studying continuously throughout the day was not helpful at all because it could create confusions. They should attempt all the sections and if they feel that they do not remember any section then they could close their eyes, take a deep breath and try to recall what was written on the page," she said.

She said that in the pre-exam time they should make a table of learned, semi-learned, unlearned, difficult topics and doubts. "Loud reading is the best way to develop concentration as well as strong learning and long-time memory. One should sit for a duration of two-and-a-half hours at a stretch and take a break of 15-30 minutes after every three hours' study. During breaks you can do your personal works, yoga and meditation," she said.

During the examination it was important to make a list of

all your things which you should take for writing papers and paste it near your study table. She said that it was important not to discuss the paper after the examination because one could get disheartened. "Don't evaluate your paper or compare it with your friends. If the paper goes bad then forget about it and focus on the next examination," she added.

The psychologist said that some of the activities one should involve in during the examinations included watching small TV programmes, especially English news and programmes, which will help in improving one's language and vocabulary. "Avoid use of electronic gadgets and social media. Sing and play instruments or listen to music but don't use head-phones. Dart games for difficult topics, crossword puzzles, sketching, scribbling, writing on boards and making small chits of paper of difficult topics will help in de-stressing one," she said.

Lko achieves ODF++ status in Swachh survey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow achieved the certification of ODF++ status under the 'Swachh Survekshan 2019' on Wednesday. Joint director, Lucknow Municipal Corporation, Arvind Rao said the third-party inspection carried out between January 15 and 17 released its report on Wednesday. He said LMC had completed the construction of required number of toilets, including 14,000 individual toilets and 380 community and public toilets to get the status. When told that people in the city still defecate in the open, Rao said behavioural changes would take time. "We have constructed the toilets and it is now up to people to use them," he added.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) had conducted 'Swachh Survekshan' to rate 73 cities in January 2016, followed by another survey in 2017 ranking 434 cities and the recent one this year for ranking 4,203 cities. In a bid to scale up the coverage of ranking exercise and encourage towns and cities to actively implement mission initiatives in a timely and innovative manner, MoHUA is now conducting its fourth survey to rank all cities under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U). The objective is to encourage large-scale citizen participation, ensure sustainability of initiatives taken towards garbage-free and open defecation-free cities, provide credible outcomes which will be validated by third-party certification, institutionalise existing systems through online process and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards, making towns and cities a better place to live in.

Additionally, the survey also intends to foster a spirit of healthy competition among towns and cities to improve their service delivery to citizens, towards creating cleaner cities.

2 property dealers caught with ₹5 crore; probe on

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two property dealers were arrested with nearly Rs 5 crore in cash from outside Phoenix Mall in Krishna Nagar on Wednesday evening. Senior officials rushed to the rescue of Lucknow police and called the Income Tax and intelligence unit to expedite the probe of the case. According to the spokesman of the SSP, two persons, identified as Devendra Srivastava of Rajajipuram and Namit Srivastava of Madaion, were seen sitting in the car outside the mall. "Some informer tipped of the police and a team reached the place. When they

checked the car, wads in denomination of Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 were found stacked in the car boot. The cash was estimated to be Rs 5 crore," he said.

Krishna Nagar circle officer LP Singh said both the detainees said they were given the cash by one Rakesh and they were to hand it over to another person outside the mall. IG, Lucknow Range, SK Bhagat said the cash was counted and it was Rs 4,99,75,250. "It is yet to be ascertained if it is the ill-gotten money. We have called the Income Tax and intelligence sleuths to expedite the probe. The detainees said they were carrying the cash for some

person. If it is a case related to IT fraud, the cash will be handed over to the Income Tax department," he said.

The IG said that the police were yet to verify if the cash was supposed to be used by some political party. "It will be too early to speak on this," he said. They said both the detainees had their business expanded in several districts, including Lucknow. The police said the duo worked as deliverymen for Rajesh and Awadhesh (both of Gomti Nagar). They suspected some tycoon might have sent the duo with cash. The cops said IT sleuths were interrogating the duo

Showers bring back chill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Rains lashed the city on Wednesday morning, bringing in chill back. Intermittent rains occurred throughout the day, causing a 3-degree dip in the maximum temperature. The state capital recorded 1.6 mm rainfall. According to the Met department, rains will continue on Thursday. Met director JP Gupta said that the rains occurred because of the western disturbance prevailing over Pakistan. Residents woke up to thundering clouds and rains at 6.30 am. A brief spell of clear skies was again followed by showers in the afternoon and then in the evening.

Lucknow recorded the maximum temperature at 22 degree Celsius, which was three notches below normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 12.6 degree Celsius, which was three degrees above normal. The forecast for Lucknow is generally cloudy sky with few spells of rains/thundershowers. The maximum and minimum temperature is expected to be



around 20 degree Celsius and 12 degrees Celsius, respectively. The forecast is for rains/thundershower at many places

over the state. There is warning for thunderstorm accompanied by hailstorm at isolated places over eastern UP.

Management Aptitude Test

MAT

FEBRUARY 2019

Paper Based Test (PBT) Computer Based Test (CBT)

Online Registration ends: 08 Feb '19 Online Registration ends: 12 Feb '19

Test Date: 17 Feb '19 Test Date: 23 Feb '19

Important: Previous MAT candidates can apply again

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PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the Public that Auction of pledged Gold Ornaments will be conducted by Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd. (Erstwhile Mape Finserve Pvt. Ltd.) on or after 09th February 2019 at 10 AM for Alamnagar at Kundan Clinic 551/176 Jha first floor Alamnagar Lucknow-226005 & Gomti Nagar Branch at 1st Floor, 1/8, Bhatia Complex, Vikram Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226010 Ph: 0522-4114337/4114338 for Swaroop Nagar at 204-206, 2nd floor, Nadi Corner, 113/121, Swaroop Nagar, Kanpur 208002. In case the auction process is not completed on date 09th February 2019 then for the remaining auction process shall be continued till 28th February 2019 till all auction items are sold off at the above mentioned Location.

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Loan Accounts of our various Customers who have failed to pay their dues. Our notices of auction have been duly issued to these borrowers. The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Overdue Loan Accounts of our various Customers mentioned below with branch name:

Swaroop Nagar Kanpur Loan No.: PR00604248/ GLD547846, PR00570932/ GLD514479, PR00567325/ GLD514425, PR00557290/ GLD14508, PR00604505/ GLD547848, PR00596370/ GLD531555, PR00567402/ GLD514428, PR00557293/ GLD14509, PR00567303/ GLD514423, Gomti Nagar Loan No.: PR00608920/ GLD53141, PR00607529/ GLD553120, PR00591977/ GLD53921, PR00556924/ GLD511403, PR00609339/ GLD53146, PR00607663/ GLD553123, PR00599477/ GLD543784, PR0056928/ GLD511402, PR00609391/ GLD53148, PR0058889/ GLD53149, PR00561586/ GLD543805, PR00561620/ GLD511468, PR00585679/ GLD532331, PR00589410/ GLD533893, PR00585163/ GLD532323, PR00573826/ GLD532238, Alamnagar Loan No.: PR00604798/ GLD544797, PR00601771/ GLD544757, PR00593249/ GLD535745, PR00556782/ GLD512605, PR00608551/ GLD533762, PR00601774/ GLD4758, PR00598809/ GLD531790, PR00561595/ GLD512669, PR00608738/ GLD535765, PR00601796/ GLD544759, PR00608020/ GLD544747, PR00561702/ GLD512675, PR00580943/ GLD512888, PR00589966/ GLD54492, PR00570768/ GLD511781

For more details, please contact Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd. (Erstwhile Mape Finserve Pvt. Ltd.) Contact Number(s): 1800-102-8012 (Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd. (Erstwhile Mape Finserve Pvt. Ltd.) reserves the right to alter the number of accounts to be auctioned or postpone / cancel the auction without any prior notice.)

KARVY Retail is now SBFC

Teachers, employees to continue strike for old pension scheme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

With the talks between the 'Karmachari Shikshak Adhikari Purani Pension Bahali Manch' and Chief Secretary Anoop Chandra Pandey ending inclusively on Wednesday, the protesting teachers and employees have decided to continue with their protest for revoking the old pension policy till February 12.

At the state capital, the employees from government departments and teachers from basic shiksha schools gathered at the PWD office despite the imposition of ESM. Talking to *The Pioneer*, coordinator of Pension Bahali Manch Hari Kishore Tewari said that in the one-hour talks which they held with the Chief Secretary and his team of Principal Secretary, Finance, and other officials, no results were achieved. "They have asked us to approach the Central government in this regard but being the employees of the state government, we want an assurance from the state government. Also, the Central government has given a leeway to the state govern-



State employees protesting at Lok Nirman office on Wednesday

Pioneer

ment in terms of whether to adopt the new pension policy or not," he said.

He added that the strike had evoked a successful response with over 7,500 departments being impacted and 20 lakh employees from the government departments of RTO, Education, Agriculture, PWD, Samaj Kalyan, Treasury, Horticulture, Jal Nigam, Labour etc partic-

ipating across the state.

"The strike also impacted a revenue of Rs 150 crore that is collected through sales tax, RTO, treasury and other departments" he added. Tewari said that they have been insisting on the revoking of the old pension policy because they want a secure pension. "We do not want that our pension should be used in the stock market" he added.

स्वास्थ्य मंत्र

सभी जाने-सभी मानें

हम कटिबद्ध हैं, हर आयु-वर्ग के लोगों को उत्तम स्वास्थ्य सेवार्थ प्रदान कर जीवन में खुशहाली लाने के लिये

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बैंक ऑफ इण्डिया **BOI** Sarvodaya Nagar Branch Chief Development Office, Sarvodaya Nagar, Lucknow. Ph: 0522-2311015

POSSESSION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 [No. 54 of 2002] and under 13(2) & 13(12) read with Rule 8 & 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, calling them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is given to the under noted borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of the power conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 on 05.02.2019. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India, for an amount and interest thereon mentioned against each account herein below. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

S. No	Name & Address of the Borrowers/ Guarantors	Description of Property Mortgaged / Owner of the Property	O/S as mentioned in the notice U/S 13(2) Date of Demand/ Possession Notice
1.	Borrowers: M/s. Om Computer IT, Add: Shop No.-9, LGF, Shree Chamber, 34 Lalbagh, Lucknow - 226001. Prop.- Mr. Sudhir Sharma S/o.- Mr. Buddhi Vinod Sharma, R/o.- L-I-80, Sector-G, LDA Colony, Kanpur Road, Lucknow - 226012.	Commercial Property situated at Shop No.-7, LGF, Aila Complex, Plot No.- 34/4D, N.K. Halwasia Road (Naza Market), Lalbagh Lucknow - 01. Area- 111.99 Sq.Ft., Owner: Mr. Sudhir Sharma. Bounded By:- East: Market Passage thereafter Shop; West: Wall of Market thereafter property of Abdul Mannan; North: Shop No.- 8; South: Shop No.- 6.	₹ 16,58,230.00 + Intt. & Other Charges 17.04.2017 05.02.2019

Date:- 07.02.2019, Place:- Lucknow Authorised Officer, Bank of India

विद्युत नगरीय वितरण मंडल-तृतीय केंद्रको, कानपुर "अल्पकालीन"

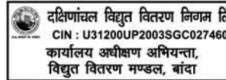
ई-निविदा सूचना अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा अधोवर्गित ई-निविदा पृथक-पृथक दो भागों में अनुमोदी एवं कुशल ठेकेदारों से नीचे दिये गये कार्यों हेतु यू0पी0 एन0आई0सी0/केरको की ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट etender.up.nic.in/www.kesco.co.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है।

सम्बन्धित ई-निविदाओं के प्रप्रत निविदादाताओं द्वारा अधोलिखित दिनांक के 14:00 बजे से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है एवं निविदा प्रपत्र पूर्ण कर निविदा के प्रथम भाग के खुलने की तिथि के अपराह्न 14:00 बजे तक अपलोड किये जा सकते हैं। उक्त ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग को उसी दिन 16:00 बजे से वेबसाइट पर सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। उक्त तिथि को अकाश घोषित होने पर निविदा अगले कार्यदिवस में नियत समय पर खोली जायेगी। ई-निविदा के सम्मुख वर्णित निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य का भुगतान आन लाइन (RTGS/नेट बैंकिंग) स्वीकार किया जायेगा जो किसी भी दशा में वापस नहीं होगा। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में निर्धारित धरोहर धनराशि जो केरको के बैंक खाता सं- 628805018266 IFSC-ICIC0006288- में आन लाइन (RTGS/NEFT) के माध्यम से अथवा आन लाइन FDR/CDR/TDR/ बैंक गारण्टी के रूप में अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, EUDC-III, केरको, कानपुर के नाम से कार्यालय में निविदा खुलने की तिथि को अपराह्न 15:00 बजे तक मूल प्रति जमा की जा सकती है। उपरोक्त जमा धनराशि का साथै यथा प्रयोज्य UTR No. पे-इन-रिलिफ की मूलप्रति के साथ-साथ निविदादाता का विवरण यथा PAN, ITR, GST रजिस्ट्रेशन, अनुभव प्रमाणपत्र इत्यादि विषयक प्रपत्र आन लाइन अपलोड किये जायेंगे तथा निविदा के द्वितीय भाग जिसमें मात्र दरें होंगी, को मात्र ऑनलाइन स्वीकार किया जायेगा। बिना धरोहर धनराशि के व सशर्त निविदा खोली/स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी। इस प्रकार अधोलिखित ई-निविदाओं की सम्पूर्ण प्रक्रिया ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट [https://etender.up.nic.in](http://etender.up.nic.in) के माध्यम से ही की जायेगी। ई-निविदाओं की प्री-क्वालीफाइंग शर्तें पूरा न करने वाले निविदादाताओं की निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। कार्य की मात्रा घट-बढ़ सकती है। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के पास बिना कोई कारण बताये निविदाओं को स्वीकार/अस्वीकार करने का पूर्ण अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा तथा यदि किसी भी निविदा की खुलने की तिथि को किन्हीं अपरिहार्य कारणों से विस्तारित करना पड़े तो इसकी सूचना केवल पोर्टल पर ही अपलोड की जायेगी एवं शेष नियम व शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।

Several miscreants on police radar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Police suspect the role of some of the miscreants belonging to Unnao and Sitapur in the daring loot case involving Sarojini Nagar Jeweller. Gold and silver ornaments worth lakhs were looted from jeweler Shiv Mohan



दक्षिणप्रदेश विद्युत वितरण निगम लि. CIN : U31200UP2003SGC027460 कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, बांदा

अति-बलकालीन ई-निविदा विधिटीकरण सूचना
अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा निम्नलिखित विवरणानुसार दो भागों में दिनांक-15.02.2019 तक प्रतिदिन एवं योग्य ठेकेदारों/फर्मों से निम्न कार्यों हेतु ई-निविदाओं आमंत्रित की जाती है। विस्तृत जानकारी ई-जेकोरिजिट पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> एवं <https://dvvn.org> पर उपलब्ध रहेगी।

1. ई-निविदा संख्या-98/SE/EDCB/2018-19:
अर्थ: विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, किरकट के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण खण्डों हेतु विद्युत उपमोक्तियों से राजस्व वसूली एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्यों हेतु मोबाइल वैन मय ईंधन/बालक के उपलब्ध कराने का कार्य। धरोहर राशि: ₹ 38,000/-, प्रपत्र मूल्य: ₹ 2,242/-

2. ई-निविदा संख्या-97/SE/EDCB/2018-19:
अर्थ: विद्युत नगरीय खण्ड, बांदा के अर्धीन 33/11 के. वी. विद्युत उपस्थान, मुराद एवं पीली कोठी, बांदा से पोषित 50 प्रती से अधिक ए.टी.एल.डी. हानियां वाले क्रमशः 11 के.वी. मुराद, जल संस्थान (बांदा) एवं टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज कीडों से संयोजित उपमोक्तियों का 'क्लैमिंग-आ' अभियान के अन्तर्गत सैनित्वाङ्ग्रेषण का कार्य। धरोहर राशि: ₹ 4,000/-, प्रपत्र मूल्य: ₹ 236/-

3. ई-निविदा संख्या-98/SE/EDCB/2018-19:
अर्थ: विद्युत नगरीय खण्ड, बांदा के अर्धीन 132/33/11 के. वी. विद्युत उपस्थान, विला रोड, बांदा से पोषित 50 प्रती से अधिक ए.टी.एल.डी. हानियां वाले क्रमशः 11 के.वी. कनारा, रामवेर एवं च्यालवाय कीडों से संयोजित उपमोक्तियों का 'क्लैमिंग-आ' अभियान के अन्तर्गत सैनित्वाङ्ग्रेषण का कार्य। धरोहर राशि: ₹ 4,000/-, प्रपत्र मूल्य: ₹ 236/-

पत्रांक: 1600/विदि.मं.ल./पी-1(प्रकाशन)/निविदा/2018-19/98-96 दिनांक: 06.02.2019 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, बांदा

JEWELLER LOOTED AT GUN-POINT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Verma and his son Rinku on Tuesday morning when they were going to the shop. Sources disclosed that criminals belonging to some of the listed gangs of robbers in Unnao and Sitapur were on police radar. "The modus operandi of miscreants, who executed the loot at the gun-point, matched that of some of the gangs notorious for daring loot incidents in the past. It also surfaced in the investigation that some of these criminals were underground and their mobile phones switched off. This has further deepened the suspicion on their complicity in the Sarojini Nagar loot case," the sources said. They said the police were looking for the one who played a role of informer to the perpetrators of crime. "The crime was executed with utter precision. The miscreants chose the time to strike when the presence of police and commuters is very thin on the road. This cannot be possible without the help of the

one with adequate information about the victim's routine. The facilitator may be a close acquaintance of the victim or some local resident," the sources opined. The police said they were scanning footages of the CCTV cameras installed in the area and at toll tax plaza between Lucknow and Unnao. "Initial reports had revealed that the miscreants fled towards Unnao after executing the crime. Also, a team was sent to Kanpur to collect CCTV footages from toll tax plazas there. We have detained some suspects and they are being interrogated," the police said. On Tuesday morning, three unidentified bike-borne miscreants had looted gold and silver ornaments worth lakhs from the jeweller and his son in Sarojini Nagar. The miscreants had opened fire in the air to intimidate the commuters who started converging the scene after the victim raised an alarm.

Books on mythology witnessing brisk sales

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Devdutt Pattanaik's books on mythology are witnessing good sales at the Lucknow Book Fair, currently underway at Sangeet Natak Akademi. Abhinav Chhabra from the stall showcasing books by Vani Prakashan and Rajkamal Prakashan, said Pattanaik was being picked up by youths and elders of alike. He pointed out that 20 titles of Pattanaik translated into Hindi were attracting the attention of readers. "Being a hyped author and also very visible on the visual medium, Pattanaik is a well-known name and hence this craze among readers," he opined. Chhabra said other Hindi translations such as Shashi Tharoor's 'Why I am a Hindu' and William Dalrymple's 'Last Moghul' are also being picked by bibliophiles. Besides, actor Piyush Mishra's books titled 'Kuch Ishq Kiya Kuch Kaam Kiya', 'Jab Shahar Hamara Sota Hai' and 'Sargam' were also being preferred, he added. Since the event has been organised at Sangeet Natak



School students at a craft exhibition under book fair on Wednesday

Pioneer

Akademi, several theatre artists also visit the book fair and are preferring scripts such as Girish Karnad's 'Tughlaq' & 'Bali', and Abhay Shukla's 'Taj Mahal Ka Tender'. Sanjay Arora from the same stall said pointed out that a book on Kumbh Mela written by Brij Bhushan

Dubey was also flying off the shelf. "The book has information about Allahabad, Kumbh Akharas and many photographs on the biggest religious fair," he said. He said most of the time, people were interested in old authors instead of new ones. "Bhagwadi Charan

Verma, Shivani, and Manu Bhandari are among the favourite authors," he added. Meanwhile, rains played spoilsport in terms of sales at the book fair on Wednesday. Key organiser Manoj Chandel said they were expecting the footfalls to increase in the coming days.

Construction of road to connect Shaheed Path with airport begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Bridge Corporation (UPBC) has begun the construction work of the elevated road which will connect the Shaheed Path with the Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport. Managing director of Bridge Corporation Uttam Kumar Gehlath, while talking to *The Pioneer*, said that the elevated road was being constructed at a cost of Rs 134.70 crore and its length would be 1.12 kilometres. He said that the road would be constructed from the Bangla Bazaar underpass at the Shaheed Path and would connect it with the Airport. "Now we have started the construction of the retaining wall. The existing road is under NHAI Shaheed Path and in the centre of this we are making the

elevated road. In order to give a carriageway for the existing road we are extending it by two lanes on each side so that the coming and going traffic can continue." Incidentally this will go a long way in providing relief for the 1.5 km-long stretch on the Shaheed Path where traffic snarls occur when the flights arrive. "The road will help in decongesting the portion of the Shaheed Path at the Kanpur Road and ease the traffic here for it to go directly to the airport," he said. Secondly he pointed out that the time taken by the traffic from Hazratganj to the Airport would drastically reduce because if there was a congestion people would be in trouble and they would have to start an hour or half an hour earlier so that they

did not miss the flight. This would help greatly reduce the time if we provide a route from the Shaheed Path," he said. On the issue of land being acquired from the PWD for the construction of the road, he said that these issues were currently being discussed and they would continue till the completion of the project. "However, we have started the construction at all those points wherever there is no land problem," he added. He said that the road would not have any free points for entry. "Just as the Shaheed Path was built as an elevated road with specific points where vehicles can enter this road will also not have any free entry," he added. The project was sanctioned in the first week of August 2018.

Two persons booked for fraud

LUCKNOW (PNS): A case of fraud was on Wednesday registered against two miscreants, who impersonated a private telecom company employees and duped a realtor of Rs 36,000 after promising him SMS service package for his employees, was registered at Ghazipur police station on Tuesday. As per reports, the realtor identified as Rajeev Jagwani of Nirala Nagar has his office in Ismailganj under Ghazipur police station. On November 10 last year, two persons Sandeep and Anshika met Rajeev in his office and asked him to avail of an SMS service scheme on rebate. They also offered Rajeev

to provide them details of the customers registered with the mobile company. As Rajeev was convinced, he made the payment. After a week when he did not get the services, he contacted the duo but the numbers of both were switched off. He then contacted the company's head office. "I was told there were no employees by those names," he the police. Meanwhile, two miscreants duped several persons of cash to the tune of lakhs in Gudamba by promising to double their money on investment. The investors nabbed the miscreants on Wednesday evening after they spotted

them at a shop and handed them over to police. As per reports, one of the complainants, identified as Omveer Singh of Jankipuram (sector H) told the police that two persons Anil and Vijay had promised to double his money in five months. "I invested Rs 10,000 and also encouraged several of my acquaintances to invest in the scheme. However, Anil and Vijay disappeared after collecting the cash. After we spotted them on Wednesday, we nabbed them and handed them over to police," Omveer said. The police said investigations into the case were underway.

CRIMELINE

NEWSPAPER HAWKER KILLED IN MISHAP

In a tragic incident, a newspaper hawker was killed when a speeding loader knocked his cycle at Polytechnic crossing on Wednesday morning. The victim, identified as Vijay Shanker Mishra (81) of Indranagar, left his house to collect newspapers from Polytechnic crossing. When he was at the crossing around 6:30 am, a speeding loader knocked the cycle from behind. Mishra was rushed to Ram Manohar Lohiya Hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. Police have registered a case in this connection. The loader

driver fled the scene as no cops and hardly any commuter present at the crossing.

ARRESTED

Four thieves were arrested and stolen goods worth several lakhs was recovered from them in Mohanlalganj on Wednesday. Those arrested were identified as Ranjeet Rawat of Ashiyana, Himanshu a n d R a k e s h Rawat (both of PGI locality) and Sunil of Mohanlalganj. The police recovered gold and silver ornaments worth

lakhs of rupees. Police claimed that Ranjeet had five cases registered against him, Himanshu had four while Rakesh and Sunil three cases each at Mohanlalganj and Purva police stations of Unnao.

FOUND HANGING

A youth, identified as Shiv Kumar (22) of Gosainganj, was found hanging from a tree in a mango grove on Tuesday night. Police said some villagers spotted the body hanging from the tree. "A team was sent to the place and the body was taken off the noose. The elder brother of the victim, identified the body that was sent for autopsy," the police said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Music composer and singer Amaal Mallik said the Bollywood music industry scenario had become more of a business with the music directors facing a lot of pressure. Mallik is in the city for the promotion of reality show 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Little Champs'. In a chat with *The Pioneer*, he said he always took a stand on the kind of work which he chose for himself and mooted for original sounds instead of remixes. "The music industry has become more of a business. Today the music director has little say and most of the decisions are that of the producer. People blame us for doing only remixes but nobody understands that the music composer is made to do these remixes for the sake of the success of the trailers. And



if the music director refuses then there are several other music directors who are standing in a row doing these remixes and I have nothing against them for the kind of problems they themselves are facing," he said. About himself, he said that he had taken a break after making some good songs. "I did not want to exhaust myself doing the same songs. I have seen some music directors who have done nothing in their life except for

making songs. However, I would like to spend time with my friends and not fall in this kind of trap. Also, I was clear that I wanted to do quality work and not just remixes. I am the grandson of famous singer Sardaar Malik, and I have to carry the big name of my ancestor on my shoulder. My coming work will see me bring some original stuff through the films," he said. On being asked if a career in play back singing has disappeared, he said that it still exists but the fact remains that gone is the erstwhile era when the singers were put on a pedestal. "But then if these youngsters do not work they will also not reach anywhere. If you are talented then things will work for you. I have got this judge's chair because I had made some good songs," he added.

कानपुर विद्युत आपूर्ति कम्पनी लि0, 14/71, सिविल लाइन्स, केसा हाउस, केरको, कानपुर।

ई-निविदा विस्तारण सूचना अपरिहार्य कारणों से ई-निविदा सं-06/आई0टी0सेल/18-19 दिनांक 13.02.2019 तक विस्तारित की जाती है, जो केरको की वेबसाइट <http://kesco.co.in> पर (E-tender आइकन) उपलब्ध है। (आर.के.सिंह) अधिशासी अभियन्ता आई.टी.सेल। पत्रांक-65, दिनांक 06.02.2019 "राष्ट्रहित में विजली बचाएं"

Bhule Bhatke: Reuniting Kumbh Mela's lost people since 1946

PTI ■ ALLAHABAD

Hundreds of people mill around the 'Bhule Bhatke Camp', lost in the teeming crowds of the Kumbh Mela and hoping desperately to be 'found' - a familiar trope of many a Hindi film but also an everyday reality in the largest gathering on earth underway here. The humble tin settlement that is the headquarters of the camp has already 'found' 20,000 people since the Kumbh Mela started on January 15, said Umesh Tiwari whose father started the 'lost and found' movement. Many writers of the 1960s and 1970s shot to fame by penning stories themed on separation in the Kumbh Mela and unification several celluloid hours later. But it was Raja Ram Tiwari, famously known as Bhule Bhatke Tiwari, who gave real life to their stories. He dedicated 70 years of his life to help reunite "12,50,000 adults" and over "20,000 children" lost in Kumbh with their families, said his proud son. Tiwari Senior's success rate was close to "100 per cent", he added. And unlike the movies, a child did not have to wait for 20 years to meet

his or her parents or siblings. "Sometimes it could take days and sometime it was just matter of some hours. My father, in most cases, did manage to reunite lost people with their families. When he couldn't help the lost person, he would take the help of police," Umesh told PTI. The formula for success, devised way back in 1946, continues in this digital age with loudspeakers blaring out the names of those queuing up outside - and inside - the camp. For Raja Ram, it all started when he attended the Magh Mela, an annual fair on the banks of the Sangam

at Allahabad, in 1946 with his friends, recounted the son who carries on his father's work. "In that mela he saw an old woman crying. He asked why and learnt that she was lost. After three hours, he found her home. That incident made my father very happy. "The next day, he came again and started announcing the names of lost people following him. That year alone, he helped reunite 800 people," Umesh said. There has been no looking back since.



People wait for lost family members at 'Bhule Bhatke Camp' during Kumbh Mela in Allahabad

CITYBRIEFS



Students taking part in an event under Amiphoria

AMIPHORIA

Three-day 'Amiphoria' kicked off at Amity University in Lucknow on Wednesday. The event was inaugurated on Malhaur campus. The chief guest on the occasion was IG (Traffic) Deepak Ratan while the guest of honor was joint secretary, UP, Amit Bharadwaj. The first day saw 'Youth Icon and Amity Idol' in which the participants were judged in several rounds. The next two days will witness a series of events like designer awards, fashion show, soap carving, jan manthan etc.

"The traders had pointed out that nobody would recognise the station by that name and it should be renamed after Bhoothnath Market," he said. The official said that the signalling and integrated trails of North-South corridor would conclude on February 9.

AWARDED

Devendra Pratap Singh Yadav, a Physics teacher of City Montessori School, RDSO campus, has been honoured with the 'Best Teacher Award' by IMS Engineering College and Hindi daily. Yadav was honoured for his efforts in encouraging students to participate in Physics-related activities, out of the classroom, and for developing students' knowledge.

CANTONMENT BOARD KANPUR
B.No. 64, Subhash Chandra Bose Marg, Kanpur Cantt Uttar Pradesh-208004

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Dated : 6, Feb. 2019

Online tender through two bid system are invited from the supplier through the Government e-procurement portal http://eprocure.gov.in/epro_cure/app by the Cantonment Board Kanpur.

Sl.No.	NIT NO.	Name of work	Estimated cost of tender
1	CBK/Stninc/K-2617/1	Supply of books 2019-20	Rs. 6109570/-

S.No.	Activity	Date	Time of IST
1	Date of publication of e-tender / Rate Contract	07-02-2019	1200 hrs.
2	Last date of online submission of bids (Technical as well financial on e-Tender/Rate Contract portal)	28-02-2019	1500 hrs.
3	Opening of technical bid (cover 1)	01-03-2019	1600 hrs .
4	Opening of Financial bid.*	*03-03-2019	1200 hrs.

The CEO/Board reserves the right to increase/decrease the estimated cost of supply and to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning reasons thereof.

Further details may be obtained from www.eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app. For any clarification contact Cantonment Board Kanpur office on any working day during office hours. Tenders will be accepted via online mode only.

(Harendra Singh)
Chief Executive Officer,
Cantonment Board, Kanpur

Was Rahul behind coup story: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday questioned whether Congress chief Rahul Gandhi was behind planting the Army coup story in 2012 even as it sought the Standing Committee on Defence to take note of "fresh reports" on the alleged episode.

Taking a serious note of what he described "new revelations" on the alleged coup attempt in 2012, BJP spokesperson GVL Narsimha Rao said he has raised the issue with the Standing committee chairman Kalraj Mishra who is also a Union Minister and a senior BJP leader.

"I am a member of Parliamentary Committee on Defence and (this fresh report) is a matter of great concern and I have raised the issue with our chairman and requested him that we should find answers to these questions," Rao told newsmen here.

The BJP's Rajya Sabha member claimed that four of Narsimha Rao Government's Cabinet Ministers were in the know of things and one of them had leaked the report to

'I am a member of Parliamentary Committee on Defence and (this fresh report) is a matter of great concern and I have raised the issue with our chairman and requested him that we should find answers to these questions'

a section of the press. He sought the name of the Minister who had leaked the information to the media.

The report in a national English daily on April 12, 2012, had claimed that the "alarm" was raised in January 16, 2013. The lead story of the daily suggested an attempt of coup by the Army. The report then alluded that an entire unit of infantry based in Hissar (Haryana) had started moving towards Delhi while a section from Agra also moved towards Palam.

The BJP leader was reacting after "fresh report" in an English Weekly 'Sunday Guardian', this month, alleged that the UPA dispensation under Manmohan Singh had asked Intelligence Bureau to establish that the then army Chief Gen. V K Singh (now a

Minister in the Modi-Government) was attempting a coup against the Government.

"The top leadership of the UPA 2 government, in the last few months of 2011 and early 2012, had informally indicated to the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to try and establish that the Army, under its chief, General VK Singh, was attempting a coup to topple the Government. This was at a time when the UPA 2 Government was reeling under charges of immense corruption and the Anna Hazare movement was going on. A few months later, despite the IB categorically reporting that there was absolutely no chance that Gen Singh would carry out any coup, this fiction was "leaked" to the media... the report of the Weekly alleged.

Rao asked if Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was the 'brain' behind these conspiracies, and wondered why UPA ministers spread these 'lies' despite the Intelligence Bureau calling any news about these attempts 'false'.

"This Congress party had not only indulged in loot, but they have also played havoc with

national security of this country and played with security," the BJP spokesperson said.

"This is not just a political conspiracy but also an attempt to defame the Indian army. In January 2012, there were media reports that claimed that the Indian Army was staging a coup against the then-Manmohan Singh Government. The stories were planted by senior leaders of the Congress party, including certain Cabinet Ministers. This was a manufactured coup. Based on the information that was given to him, the then-Prime Minister asked the IB to present facts on the rumour. Even after the IB had cleared the rumours, the UPA still planted the story in media that attempted to malign the Indian Army," he said.

Reacting to the charges, ex-Defence Minister and senior Congress leader A K Antony said in a brief reply, "As Defence Minister at that time, there were lot of questions in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. I had given detailed answers. Please go through Parliament website, you'll get the answer I had given."

Massive drive to fill over 76K posts in CAPF: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has launched a massive recruitment drive to fill 76,578 vacancies, including 7,646 posts for women, in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

In a statement on Wednesday, the Home Ministry said out of these vacancies, 54,953 posts are for the constable cadre and they will be hired through the Staff Selection Commission (SSC).

Out of the 54,953 posts of constables, the CRPF, the world's largest paramilitary force, has the maximum 21,566 vacancies, followed by the BSF (16,984 posts), the SSB (8,546 posts), the ITBP (4,126 posts) and the Assam Rifles (3,076 posts) with the remaining being in the CISF and other CAPFs.

For the entire exercise, the SSC will start a computer-based written examination from this month itself, the statement said.

The CRPF, which has a strength of 325 operational battalions (3,25,000 personnel) will get nearly 22 more battalions (22,000 personnel approximately). The CRPF is a designated anti-Naxal, counter-terror and anti-insurgency Central Force.

The paramilitary is heavily deployed in Jammu and Kashmir, Naxal areas and the Northeast.

The addition of the 22 battalions will give a boost to the Force that has for long been deprived of the reserve component, leading to fatigue amongst personnel due to continuous deployment in hard areas.

After the completion of the recruitment, the personnel will be able to get soft postings like training and the areas not hit by insurgency or terror.

There are 1,073 vacancies in various CAPFs at the level of Sub-Inspector, out of which 38 posts are reserved for women. The BSF has the maximum 508 vacancies of SI, followed by the

CRPF (274), the SSB (206) and the ITBP (85). Direct Recruitment for these posts also will be made by the SSC through a written examination between February-March.

At the level of the Assistant Commandant, there exist 466 vacancies for which direct recruitment is being made through the UPSC. The result of the written examination to fill these posts has been declared on January 1.

The shortlisted candidates will appear for physical and medical examination to be conducted by the Sashtra Seema Bal (SSB), the nodal force, from February 25 onwards.

In addition, 20,086 vacancies pertain to promotional posts and in other cadres such as tradesman, ministerial, medical, paramedical, communication and engineering and these are also being filled by the CAPFs.

Thus, in all 76,578 vacancies are getting filled up, the statement added.

INSHORT

SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI SHRINE BOARD REFORMED

New Delhi: Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik who is also the chairman of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has reconstituted the Board for three years. Former IPS officer Ashok Bhan, Justice Permod Kohli, Major General SK Sharma, spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, chairman-cum-managing director of AILM Pharmaceuticals K K Sharma, educationist Vijay Dhar and chairman of emeritus of Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group K B Kachru have been nominated as board members, said a statement here.

NEED TO BUST RACKETS THAT FLEECE VISITORS: MIN

New Delhi: Union Tourism Minister KJ Alphons on Wednesday said that rackets that fleece tourists have to be busted, two months after a Belgian tourist was forced to leave India within a day after being allegedly harassed in Delhi. Maintaining that India is a safe tourist place and such isolated incidents happens once in a while, he said that he has already written to the police commissioner and an arrest has been made in the case.

Govt to file petition in SC after SLP on faculty quota in varsities rejected

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At the backdrop of protests from various sections, including Parliamentarians, the Centre on Wednesday said the Government will file a review petition in the Supreme Court after its Special Leave Petition (SLP) on faculty reservation mechanism for universities was rejected by the apex court.

"We will file review petition soon and we will put our point strongly. We are confident there will be justice and reservation will continue as per the earlier system. The government will ensure that reservation for SC/ST/OBC is not hampered," HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said.

The announcement comes in the wake of protests by teachers and students bodies after the SLP seeking restoration of earlier mechanism of

faculty reservation, which is calculating total posts institution-wise rather than department-wise, was dismissed by the Supreme court last month.

The roster system provides that number of vacancies are considered department or wing wise in a college or university and not total number of posts available for recruitment in any institution. This results in limited seats available for recruitment by each department or wing under reserved categories.

"Earlier universities were treated as a unit for reservation which was the right thing and the SC/ST/OBC were treated in a just manner.

Initially the Allahabad High Court and then the Supreme Court decided that department wise reservation will happen which meant reduction in reservation for SC/ST/OBC. The Modi

Government filed an SLP against it and it was argued well but the Supreme Court did not accept the SLP," Javadekar said briefing the media outside the Parliament.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) had issued a communication to all universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) to "postpone the recruitment process" till the Supreme Court issued its verdict on the SLP and that decision has not been withdrawn yet, the Minister said.

The UGC had announced in March last year that an individual department should be considered as the base unit to calculate the number of teaching posts to be reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidates following an order by the Allahabad High Court in April in 2017.

Centre seeks applications for chief, members of Lokpal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has sought applications for chairman and members of anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal, nearly five years after the Lokpal Act came into force, officials said Wednesday.

An advertisement seeking applications from desired and eligible candidates has been issued by the Personnel Ministry.

For the appointment as the chairman, a person who is or has been Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge is eligible to apply.

Besides, individuals with "impeccable integrity and outstanding ability" having special knowledge and expertise of not less than 25 years in matters related to anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance including insurance and banking, and law and management are eligible to apply.

Those with less than 45 years of age are not eligible to apply.

According to rules, there is a provision for a chairperson and a maximum of eight members in the Lokpal. Of these, four need to be judicial members.

"Not less than 50 per cent of the members of the Lokpal shall be from amongst the persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities and women," the advertisement seeking the applications reads.

Upon selection, the chairperson and members shall hold office for a term of five years or till they attain 70 years of age.

The salary and allowances of the chairman of the Lokpal will be same as that of the Chief Justice of India. The members will be paid salary and allowances same as that of a judge of the Supreme Court.

SC issues notice to Prashant on contempt plea by AG, Centre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought a response from activist and lawyer Prashant Bhushan on contempt pleas by Attorney General K K Venugopal and the Centre for his tweets allegedly criticising the court over the appointment of M Nageswara Rao as interim CBI director.

Bhushan was given three weeks to reply.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Naveen Sinha said it would deal with the larger question of whether it is open for lawyers or any other person to criticise the court in a sub judice matter which would lead to influencing public opinion. Criticising the court may also lead to interference in the course of justice, the bench added.

"This issue required to be heard in length, notice issued,"



Prashant Bhushan

it said, listing the matter for further hearing on March 7.

Bhushan, in his tweets, alleged that the Centre, represented by Venugopal, misled the apex court on the issue of Rao's appointment.

On Tuesday, the Centre moved the apex court seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against Bhushan for his tweets and said they amounted to making false statement in a pending case. This was days after Venugopal's contempt petition against Bhushan.

Venugopal, in his contempt plea, referred to the extracts of the minutes of the

meeting of the high powered selection committee comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Justice A K Sikri and leader of the largest opposition party Mallikarjun Kharge.

The Centre's plea also referred to the contents of Venugopal's petition and submitted that they be also read as part of its plea.

Venugopal's petition referred to Bhushan's February 1 tweets in which he alleged that the government appeared to have misled the apex court and perhaps submitted fabricated minutes of the meeting of the high-powered selection committee.

Through his tweets, Venugopal said, Bhushan appeared to have deliberately intended to cast aspersions on the "integrity and honesty" of the attorney general who had placed the minutes of the meeting before the apex court during the February 1 hearing.

Metro projects in UP, Bihar, Guj OK'd

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls this year, the Ministry of Finance's Public Investment Board (PIB) on Wednesday approved metro rail projects of Agra, Kanpur, Ahmedabad phase II and Patna besides the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Rapid Rail Transit corridor.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Government once again made it clear that its share of ₹1138 crore towards the project cost has to be borne by the Centre as it did not have adequate funds. The question thus remains as to who will pay the share of Delhi Government, sources said.

Sources in the Government said that financial implications of the aforementioned metro rail projects have been approved. The proposals would be sent to the Union Cabinet for approval.

On the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor of RRTS, Delhi government

has written to Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs that proposed change in alignment of the project as well as change of station at Sarai Kale Khan from underground to elevated would affect the construction plan of ISBT Sarai Kale Khan and the proposed hotel under the PPP mode to fund the redevelopment of the ISBT. This will lead to delay in the entire project. According to sources, the after refusing the share the project cost by the Delhi Government, the question arise whether the Centre will pay the share of Delhi Government.

The metro rail project of Patna will cost ₹13,400 crore. As per the DPR, the 14.5km east-west corridor will cover Saguna Mor, Bailey Road, Patna Junction and Mithapur bus stand. The 16.5km north-south corridor, on the other hand, will connect Patna Junction with the proposed bus stand at Barriya via Ashok Rajpath, Gandhi Maidan and Rajendra Nagar terminal. While the



Train at station platform

east-west corridor will mostly be underground, the north-south corridor will be elevated.

For Kanpur and Agra metro, the Uttar Pradesh government had reduced the cost of the projects after the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs's objection. For the Kanpur project, a proposal of ₹18,143 crore was sent earlier. Now

it has been made ₹10,908 crores.

A total of 32.385 km of metro rail will be built in Kanpur. As per the revised DPR, two corridors will be built under the Kanpur Metro project. The proposed metro rail of Kanpur city will cover IIT, Rawatpur, Bada Chauraha, Mottimahal, Kanpur Central, ISBT Jharkarkatti and Naubasta. The Agra metro project cost was estimated to ₹13,781 crores. Now it has been made ₹8,262 crores. A 30 km metro rail network is to be built in Agra which will consist two corridors.

The Ahmedabad metro phase II projects will cost ₹7500 crore. As per the revised DPR for phase-II, the route length has been shortened to 28.26 km. It will have two corridors - the first one having a length of 22.84 km will link Motera with Mahatma Mandir and the second one about 5.42 km-long branch from GNLU (Gujarat National Law University) and linking PDPU and GIFT City.

Sitharaman to discuss defence with Germany, Sweden

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will discuss the entire range of bilateral strategic and defence issues with Germany and Sweden respectively during her four-day two-nation tour starting February 11.

Incidentally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had paid an official visit to the two countries in April last year to hold high level discussions especially focussing on strategic and defence relations.

During her visit to Sweden, the defence minister will explore possibilities of industries from there participating in the "Make In India" programme especially in the



Nirmala Sitharaman

field of defence manufacturing. Sweden's fighter jet Gripen is in the race for the 110-fighter jet proposed deal for the IAF costing more than ten billion dollars for which the global tender was floated last year, sources said

here on Wednesday. Sitharaman will hold wide ranging discussions with her Swedish counterparts and is also likely to visit some state of the art defence industries there, they added.

In her talks with German leaders, the Defence Minister will discuss issues like terrorism, possibility of exchanges between officers at the military level and strategic matters.

Though India and Germany do not have much defence trade, the two sides may hold discussion about possible tie-up for manufacturing submarines as Germany three decades ago had helped India in manufacturing HDW submarines here.

Linkage of PAN with Aadhaar is mandatory for filing IT return: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said that linkage of PAN with Aadhaar is mandatory for filing of Income Tax returns.

A bench comprising Justices A K Sikri and S Abdul Nazeer said the top court has already decided the matter and upheld the section 139AA of the Income Tax Act. The court's direction came on an appeal filed by the Centre against a Delhi High Court order allowing two persons, Shreya Sen and Jayshree Satpute, to file Income Tax returns for 2018-19 without linking their Aadhaar and PAN numbers.

"The aforesaid order was passed by the High Court having regard to the fact that the matter was pending consideration in this Court. Thereafter, this Court has decided the matter and upheld the vires of section 139AA of the

"We therefore make it clear that for the assessment year 2019-20, the income tax return shall be filed in terms of the judgment passed by this court. The special leave petition is disposed of in the above terms."

Income Tax Act. In view thereof, linkage of PAN with Aadhaar is mandatory," the bench said.

The top court noted that with regard to Assessment Year 2018-19, it has been informed that the two petitioners had filed the Income Tax returns in terms of the orders of the High Court and the assessment has also been completed. "We therefore make it clear that for the assessment year 2019-20, the income tax return shall be filed in terms of the judgment passed by this court. The special leave petition is disposed of in the above terms," the bench said in an order on Monday.

Houses busy without business

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Both the Houses of Parliament were adjourned on Wednesday without transacting any business. While the proceedings of Lok Sabha were adjourned for the day after paying obituary to sitting BJD member from Odisha Ladu Kishore Swain, Rajya Sabha too were washed out completely for the third day in a row over various issues including the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and roster system for reservation in educational institutions.

As soon as the Lok Sabha met for the day, Speaker Sumitra Mahajan informed members about the demise of the Biju Janata Dal member in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday morning.

The debate on Motion of Thanks to the President's Address to the joint sitting of Parliament is likely to continue on Thursday where Prime Minister is expected to reply to the debate.



Interior of the Indian Parliament

The MP from Aska was 71. Swain was a member of the parliamentary committee on Rural Development and OBCs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi were among members present when the obituary reference was made.

The Rajya Sabha proceedings were within seconds in the morning for post lunch. Thereafter as soon as the upper house resumed its proceedings at 2 PM, RJD, SP, BSP and

not relent and kept on raising slogans like "Anti-poor government cannot function". They were also holding placards to protest against the roster system.

He then requested SP leader Ramgopal Yadav to end the protest as he will be given a chance to speak on the issue during the Zero Hour. Yadav said the government has deviated from its promise made in the House on this issue.

In the meantime, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Goel tried to pacify Yadav. However, the protest continued.

HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said Government is working on the issue and preparing a special leave petition and review petition for filing in the Supreme Court.

When the members continued raising slogans and showing placards, Harivansh said, "In this situation, I have no other option but to adjourn the House till February 7."

Outdated jets for warriors, 'corrupt cheese & wine' for babus: Brother of pilot killed in crash pens poem

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The bereaved family of late Squadron Leader Samir Abrol, one of the two test pilots who died in a Mirage-2000 crash in Bengaluru last week, has said while the bureaucracy enjoys its "corrupt cheese and wine", the air warriors are given "outdated machines" to fight.

An emotional poem penned by Abrol's brother Sushant, posted on Facebook, states it is an "unforgiving" job to be a test pilot given the risks it poses.

"While the bureaucracy enjoyed its corrupt cheese and wine. We give our warriors outdated machines to fight, They still deliver it with all their prowess and might," Sushant said in the post that was widely shared. Abrol and Squadron

Leader Siddhartha Negi, both from Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment, died after their fighter jet crashed.

They were conducting an acceptance sortie of the Mirage-2000 trainer, which had been newly-upgraded by state-run aerospace company Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, when it crashed on Friday.

Though the two pilots made a bid to eject, they were caught in the flames as the plane crashed with a huge explosion.

In another post, Sushant said, "It's high time we care not just for lost votes, but also for our lost pilots to the negligence of this corrupt system!!"

The post was also shared by Abrol's wife Garima on Instagram.

Latest communication satellite GSAT-31 launched successfully

ATM networks, DTH services to get boost

Bengaluru: India's latest communication satellite GSAT-31 was successfully put into orbit in the early hours of Wednesday by an European rocket from French Guiana, in a mission that is expected to enhance connectivity for ATMs and provide for uninterrupted DTH services.

Blasting off from Ariane Launch Complex at Kourou, a French territory located in northeastern coast of South America at 2.31 am (IST), the Ariane-5 vehicle of the European launch services provider ArianeSpace injected the "high power" satellite into the orbit in a flawless flight that lasted about 42 minutes.

With a mission life of 15 years and weighing about 2,536 kg, GSAT-31 is the country's 40th communication satellite to be built by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites.

"It gives me great pleasure on the successful launch of GSAT-31 spacecraft on board

Ariane-5," ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) Director S Pandian said at Kourou soon after the launch. "Congratulations to ArianeSpace on the successful launch and precise injection of satellite into the orbit," he added.

The GSAT-31 is a "high power" communication satellite with Ku-band, and it is going to serve and replace some of the satellites that are going to expire soon, he said.

ArianeSpace CEO Stéphane Israël tweeted: "2019 is off to a roaring start for #ArianeSpace! Flight #VA247, carrying Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4 and GSAT-31, is a confirmed success that underscores our leadership position in the geostationary launch market. @KACST #HellasSat @ISRO @LockheedMartin."

The Ariane-5 vehicle (Flight VA247) also carried Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4 along with GSAT-31.

The Indian satellite, which will provide communication services to Indian mainland and islands, will also augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit, ISRO said. **PTI**

Sabarimala royal custodian raps board for U-turn

Thiruvananthapuram: The Pandaram royal family, the custodian of the Sabarimala temple's jewellery, on Wednesday slammed the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) for changing its opinion and now supporting the entry of all women to the hilltop shrine.

After the TDB announced its stand in the Supreme Court as it heard numerous review petitions against its September 28 verdict lifting the ban on entry of women of all ages to the Lord Ayyappa temple, the royal family's spokesperson PS Verma said the "true colours" of the TDB had been revealed.

"They have toed the line of the Kerala Government. When they earlier said they are with

the wishes and aspirations of the Sabarimala devotee, it was all a bluff.

"Today their true colours have surfaced and this means both the government and the TDB are out to destroy the customs and traditions of the Sabarimala temple," he said.

Noting the court had now decided to give another seven days for written submissions, Verma alleged that this means that the temple premises were going to witness another show-down when it opens for the monthly pujas on February 12.

"So as far as we are concerned, we have not lost hope as we feel that if there is going to be another setback, there is an option to file a curative peti-



tion. We will go to any extent to protect the traditions and customs of the temple," he added. TDB president A. Padmakumar denied the board

had changed its stand. "We did not file a review petition. Instead we filed a 'delay petition' (requesting the court to defer the judgment).

What I have been told is that today we were asked about our stand in relation to the September 28 verdict.

"It was to this that our counsel said that they will abide by the court verdict. The court has also given time till February 13 to give in writing if there are any more things that should be brought before the court.

"We will meet to discuss on what needs to be given in writing," said Padmakumar, a former CPI-M legislator.

"The TDB will abide by whatever the verdict is," he said. Asked if there was a shift in the stand, the TDB reminded the media that the Bharatiya Janata Party's organ had soon after the September 28 verdict ran a

headline hailing it as "historic". Former Chief Minister and Congress leader Oommen Chandy said the TDB's somersault showed that it was hand in glove with the Pinarayi Vijayan Government.

"Just what Vijayan wanted, the TDB has done," he said. State BJP president PS Sreedharan Pillai said Vijayan has taken everyone for a ride.

"The people have been cheated and very soon the people will give a fitting reply for what has happened," he said. Former TDB president Prayar Gopalakrishnan, who also filed a review petition, said he was confident the temple customs and traditions will be protected. **IANS**

Assam Budget proposes 1 tola gold to brides, rice at ₹1!

Guwahati: Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday presented a ₹1,193 crore deficit budget for 2019-20 with no fresh taxes and introducing new schemes like providing rice to poor at ₹1 kg and gold for brides.

The budget also proposed to provide financial assistance to students, including girls from the minority community. With an opening balance of minus ₹1,799.84 crore, the budget proposed to have transactions of ₹606.80 crore during 2019-20, Sarma told the House on Wednesday.

Sarma said for special category States like Assam, com-

panies with turnover of ₹10 lakh are required to register for Goods and Services Tax (GST). However, to give succour to small businesses and considering the small base, the government has raised the GST threshold limit to ₹20 lakh following approval of the GST Council effective February 1, 2019.

Sarma further proposed to raise the threshold limit for registration under GST for suppliers of goods to ₹40 lakh. However, the limit stays at ₹20 lakh for suppliers of services. He said under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the Centre provides rice at ₹3 per kg to 57 lakh



households in Assam covering a total population of 2.46 crore.

"To further strengthen food security for our people, we will provide rice at a further subsidized rate of ₹1 per kg, instead of the present Rs 3 per kg, and the move will benefit 53 Lakh households," Sarma said.

The Government has also proposed to give 1 tola of gold (11.66 grams) to brides' parents belonging to the economically weaker sections of the society. "We shall give one tola gold, costing around ₹38,000 as of today, to brides belonging to all such communities of our state where it is customary to provide gold at the time of wedding under the Arundhati scheme," he said.

The scheme can be availed by formal registration of the marriages under the Special Marriage (Assam) Rules, 1954 and will reach the beneficiaries at the time of marriage, he said.

Sarma added that the benefit is commensurate with the state's population policy and would be made available for the first two children of a family and only in cases where the bride and groom have both attained the legal age of 18 years and 21 years, respectively.

The Assam Government will verify birth certificates and conduct medical examination, if required, to ensure claims are true, he said. **PTI**



India's 40th communication satellite GSAT-31, built by ISRO, was successfully launched by the Ariane 5 VA-247 heavy duty rocket from Kourou in French Guiana on Feb 6, 2019. It will replace INSAT-4CR, which is nearing the end of its mission life.

Applications

- GSAT-31 will be used for supporting VSAT networks, Television uplinks, Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG), DTH-television services, cellular backhaul connectivity and many such applications.
- It will also provide a wide beam coverage to facilitate communication over large oceanic region comprising large parts of Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean using a wide band transponder.
- Two Ku-band beacon downlink signals for ground tracking purpose.

Salient Features

- Mission: Communication
- Lift-off Mass: 2,535 kg
- Payload: Ku-band transponders
- Coverage Area: Indian mainland and islands
- Mission Life: About 15 years
- Orbit: Geostationary

Launch site: Kourou, French Guiana

KBK Infographics

Guv hits back at Mehbooba, says we are standing with our forces

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Setting the record straight Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik on Wednesday said that nobody should take former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's statements seriously as her PDP was breaking up and she was trying to save the party by commenting against the security forces.

"It is election time. Her party is breaking up and is already in a bad shape. She is very worried and facing serious problems. Show some sympathy towards her by not taking her statements seriously," Governor told reporters at Jammu University.

"She had come to power by supporting such elements, he added. Governor's jibe at her invited sharp reactions from both Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah, instantly.

Governor was apparently reacting to Mehbooba's Tuesday statement in the SMHS hospital in Srinagar where she had demanded action against an Army officer,



who allegedly beat a man from Pulwama and threatened to kill him in an encounter.

Mehbooba Mufti took to Twitter to vent her ire. She wrote, "Instead of taking cognizance of the brutality that the young boy has been subjected to, and ordering action against the culprits, it is sad that the honourable governor is talking politics instead. Saddened to see the constitutional authorities taking sides so brazenly."

"Kashmir is a political issue and can't be resolved through military power. Army men hailed as heroes for their bravery also need to be held accountable if they commit human rights violations," Mehbooba tweeted. "So please lets call a spade

a spade instead of accusing us of demonising the army. I have also spoken to the Core Commander to take note of this incident," she added.

Earlier, when Governor was asked whether her irresponsible statements would lower the morale of the security forces, Govenor Malik hit back and said her statements will not affect the morale of the security forces. We are standing with our forces and have issued directions to them to deal with such situations. He said if any specific complaint is received we order an inquiry to ascertain the truth of the matter.

Before Mehbooba Mufti, former Chief Minister and National Conference Vice President, Omar Abdullah had also reacted strongly to the Governor's utterances. "Governor SB this is an unacceptable statement & an unnecessary interference in politics. At this rate, it won't be long before people stop taking Raj Bhavan seriously so please consider the office you occupy before you give statements."

J&K witnesses fresh rain, snow



PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Fresh rain and snowfall disrupted normal life in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir Valley on Wednesday amid forecast for inclement for two more days.

The bad weather forced the authorities to close the strategic 270-km Srinagar-Jammu national highway for vehicular one way traffic. Besides, the air traffic was also disrupted with cancellation of several flights to and from Srinagar airport.

The Met department said that plains of the Jammu division will receive rain while higher reaches both in Jammu and valley region will receive moderate to heavy snowfall.

Met Director Sonam Lotus said that there will be gradual increase in rain and snowfall across the State followed by improvement from

Friday forenoon. The fresh snowfall in the Banihal area caused slippery road condition at Zig Post up to Jawahar Tunnel amid bad weather condition.

The Officials said fresh snowfall occurred in the Kashmir mountains including on the Pir Panjal range.

Srinagar recorded 1 degree Celsius while Pahalgam minus 0.6 and Gulmarg recorded minus 4.6. In the Ladakh area, Leh recorded minus 4.3, Kargil minus 16 and Drass minus 6.3 degrees Celsius.

The Indian Metrological Centre in Srinagar has already issued weather forecast that western disturbance will likely to affect the J&K.

The forecast said the main activity of the system could be from heavy to very heavy rain or snow most likely to occur for two more days. The weather warning

A Kashmiri auto rickshaw driver holds a Kangri to warm himself as it snows in Srinagar on Wednesday **AP**

said that the system is likely to cause widespread rain or snow mainly in South Kashmir, Pirpanjal Range (Doda, Batote, Baderwah, Ramban, Banihal and Baramulla) including Jawahar Tunnel area.

Traffic Department had scheduled one-way traffic from Srinagar to Jammu. They said nightlong rains triggered shooting stones in some portions of the highway in Ramsoo-Ramban sector. They said a fresh major landslide hit the highway at battery Chashma area in the sector.

The divisional administration Kashmir has put in place robust contingency plan and precautionary measures have been taken at all levels to meet any weather related eventuality.

Rivals claims ADMK poised for BJP ties



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Though the AIADMK leadership is yet to disclose the party's strategy for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and who would be its prospective alliance partners in Tamil Nadu, many fringe groups have come out with details of the ruling party's would-be allies.

"The AIADMK is certain to form a winning alliance for the Lok Sabha elections. We are in discussions with parties which stand for the welfare of Tamil Nadu. The AIADMK would be the leader of the alliance which we are forming," said O Panneerselvam, deputy chief minister and convener of the AIADMK leadership while speaking to reporters at Madurai on Wednesday. No amount of cajoling by the reporters could make the Deputy CM to reveal the parties with whom the AIADMK is in dialogue.

He said the elected representatives (MLAs, PMs included) and the district secretaries of the

AIADMK would meet at Chennai on Friday and a picture would emerge by the next day. But the CPI, former allies of the AIADMK declared on Wednesday that the BJP and AIADMK are going to forge an alliance. "It does not require any intelligence to understand that the AIADMK and the BJP have already forged an alliance for the elections. We all know that the Edappadi Palaniswamy Government in Tamil Nadu is the minion of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah," said Mutharasan, State secretary, CPI.

While Mutharasan churned out details of the alliance to be formed in Tamil Nadu by the AIADMK and the BJP, he was silent about the combination of parties to be led by the DMK.

According to Mutharasan, the PMK led by Dr S Ramadoss and the DMDK of Vijayakanth too will figure in AIADMK front. But leaders of the PMK and the DMDK remained tight lipped about it. Vijayakanth is undergoing treatment in a US hospital and his close relations includ-

ing wife Premalatha are attending to him.

Narayanan Thirupathi, spokesman of the BJP said that he was in the dark about the BJP-AIADMK alliance except what Mutharasan was telling. Later in the day, Thol Thirumavalavan, founder of the VCK, a fringe outfit also declared that the AIADMK had formed a coalition with the BJP for the Lok Sabha election. But he was silent about the number of seats to be allocated by the DMK to the VCK.

Though the DMK has almost firmed up a rainbow alliance in Tamil Nadu which include the Congress, the Lefts, the VCK and the Islamist parties, party chief Stalin has not disclosed the number of seats to be contested by his party itself. Sam Rajappa, veteran columnist who enjoys good rapport with the DMK leadership is of the view that the party may contest in at least 25 seats out of the total 39 seats which are in stake from the State. "Stalin wants to play a major role in New Delhi in the post-election scenario and he should have at least 25 seats to make his words heard in the national capital," said Sam Rajappa. He said a clear picture of the BJP-AIADMK alliance would emerge after the Prime Minister's visit to Tamil Nadu scheduled for next week.

Army 'detains' 3 soldiers to probe Shaurya Chakra Aurangzeb's killing links

KHURSHED WANI ■ SRINAGAR

The Indian Army has detained three soldiers of Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry (JAKLI) to probe their involvement in a conspiracy to reveal whereabouts of their colleague Lance Naik Aurangzeb who was killed by terrorists in south Kashmir on June 14.

Affiliated with 44 Rashtriya Rifles unit, Aurangzeb, who was posthumously awarded Shaurya Chakra on Independence Day last year, was travelling in his native place in a private vehicle on eve of Eid when terrorists waylaid the vehicle and kidnapped him.

Sources said the trio is being quizzed to know if they somehow leaked information about Aurangzeb's movement out of his battalion headquarters in a private vehicle. Aurangzeb was known for his counterinsurgency offensive in the area and his proximity with an Army officer who has commanded several successful operations against militants including killing of Sameer Tiger, a top-ranking commander of Hizbul Mujahideen.

Aurangzeb's vehicle was waylaid by terrorists at Qalampora village and in a short duration his body was found by a team of police and Army officials at Gussu village. A video of his kidnapping was also released by his abductors.

Media reports earlier claimed that Aurangzeb's whereabouts were leaked by a local woman who had allegedly developed a relationship



with him. The three soldiers Abid Hussain Wani, Tajamul Ahmed and Adil Wani were his colleagues. They are all local residents.

The Army has not reacted to the reports about the detention and questioning of the soldiers. The detention came to fore after a youngster Abid Tauseef Wani was allegedly tortured by an Army officer in Shadimarg camp. Former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti went to see Wani at Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SMHS) and accused an Army officer for torturing the youngster.

A relative of Wani said they have lost touch with Abid since June and the Army is not telling them anything about his whereabouts. "We are worried now. They (Army) also called Tawseef and tortured him inside the camp. They were asking about his involvement in the killing of Aurangzeb," he said.

Aurangzeb was posthumously awarded Shaurya Chakra while as Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman trekked a long distance to travel to his native village in mountainous Poonch district to pay homage.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF RAILWAY RESEARCH DESIGNS & STANDARDS ORGANISATION
Manak Nagar, Lucknow-11

NOTICE FOR INVITING E-TENDER

For and on behalf of president of Union of India, The Town Engineer RDSO, Lucknow invites open E-tender (online) for the following work :-

Sl. No.	Open tender No. & Name of work	Approx. cost (Rs.)	Cost of tender document (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Completion period	Date of closing / opening
1	Tender Notice No. WKS-1326-TEN 06.02.2019 Comprehensive operation & maintenance of the 1.6 MLD STP plant	10971119.16	5000.00	204900.00	36 (Thirty six) months	28.02.2019
2	Tender Notice No. WKS-1323B-TEN 06.02.2019 Civil work in connection with :- (i) Repairing of roofs, existing cycle stand, Chemistry lab etc of KVS and provision of shed in prayer ground (ii) Extension of Skyway from existing FOB to Annex-I (iii) Provision of Airconditioning in book section of Central Library in Annex-I Building at RDSO (iv) Replacement of roofing sheet of Shed No.2 (Berthing complex of testing Directorate) including other civil work.	7541928.94	5000.00	150840.00	10 (Ten) months	28.02.2019
3	Tender published on dated 06.02.2019 for the work (i) Construction of New Technical Meeting hall in RDSO Manaknagar Lucknow (ii) Development of Surrounding area, face lifting, provision of stair case in officers club, the tender no. & tender cost should read as WKS-1293-TEN and Rs. 10000/- respectively instead of WKS-1280B & Rs. 5000/- published previously.					

Details of above e-tender are available on web site, (www.ireps.gov.in). Tenders can submit their bids on 28.02.2019 upto 15.00 hrs. The above E-tender will be open on same day at 15.00 hrs. in the office of the Town Engineer, RDSO, Manak Nagar, Lucknow.

Town Engineer, RDSO, Lucknow.
For and on behalf of the President of union of India

After Chinna Thambi, TN gets new trespasser, a leopard!

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI



Even as senior officials of the forest department were in serious discussion about the next course of action in the a Chinna Thambi incident, the hero of the story is continuing his odyssey in search of Thadagam Forests, his home turf. At the same time, a new guest in the form of a leopard has started giving 'headache' to the forest officials.

As on Wednesday evening, Chinna Thambi, who has endeared himself to the local population through his charm-

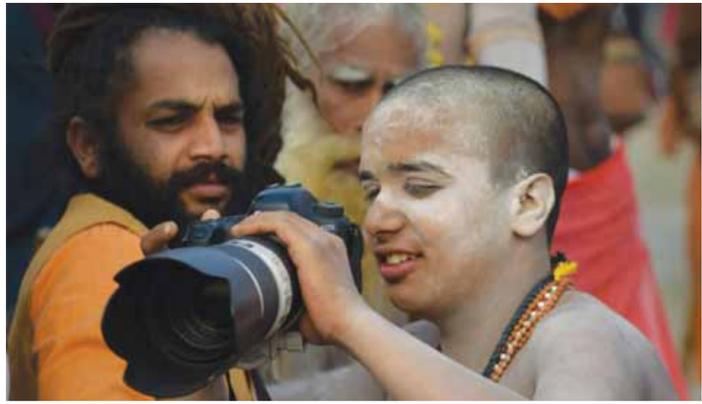
ing style, was roaming around Udumalpet area, according to a senior Tamil Nadu Forest Department official. "He had sugarcane for breakfast and lunch and is taking rest in a mango orchard," said the official.

He said the department has decided not to train him as *kumky* (specialist elephant who trains other elephants) as Chinna

Thambi has crossed the maximum age limit prescribed for such training. "We are monitoring his movements through the radio collar which we tied to his neck when he was tranquilised for re-locating. One of the options before us is to take him back to Thadagam, his favorite location," said the official.

night a four-year old leopard from the nearby reserve forest "trespassed" into an unoccupied house in Gudalur in search of some eatables.

By Wednesday morning, the 'guest' was trapped and has been moved to the forest inspection bungalow. "The animal has suffered some minor bruises when it was caged and the forest veterinary surgeon is attending to him. Once the animal is found to be in good health, we would release it into the reserve forest at Anamalai Tiger Reserve," G Ramakrishnan, Range Officer, told *The Pioneer*.



Sadhus shoot on a DSLR camera on a bank of Ganga river during the ongoing Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Wednesday PTI

Mirage-2000 black box sent to France

Bengaluru: The black box of the Mirage-2000 trainer aircraft, which crashed in Bengaluru last week killing two pilots, has been sent to France's Dassault Aviation, the Original Equipment Manufacturer, for decoding of its data, a senior HAL official said on Wednesday.

A black box collects in-flight information and decrypting it gives insights about the aircraft's activities. PTI

9 Cong MLAs skip House, keep coalition on edge

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Ignoring whip, nine Congress MLAs in Karnataka skipped the legislature sitting on Wednesday, keeping the ruling coalition on tenterhooks on the opening day of the Budget Session. The nine Congress MLAs, including Ramesh Jarkiholi, Umesh G Jadhav, B Nagendra, Mahesh Kumathalli, who had skipped the January 18 Congress legislature party (CLP) meet, official and party sources said.

MLA JN Ganesh, who is declared absconding after an alleged brawl with a colleague lawmaker at a resort recently, was among the absentees.

The whip asking all ruling coalition legislators to be present on all days of the Budget Session of the Assembly was issued on Tuesday amid allegations of renewed bid by BJP to destabilise the Kumaraswamy Ministry. The joint Session of the legislature began on a stormy note with the Opposition BJP questioning



Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy talks with Minister DK Shivakumar during the first day of the Budget Session in Bengaluru on Wednesday PTI

the legitimacy of the JDS-Congress Government.

Unruly BJP members created a ruckus disrupting the address of Governor Vajubhai Vala, forcing him to cut short his speech and read the last para. "We don't want a bundle of lies to be read. Down down... the Government that has lost majority and trust," BJP members said shouting down Vala.

Stung by the MLAs' absence, Congress Legislature Party leader

and former CM Siddaramaiah issued another whip to party MLAs asking them to "compulsorily" attend the session between Feb 6 and 15.

Speculation are rife that the four MLAs are still in touch with the BJP and may jump ship, as they have not yet responded to the second notice issued by Siddaramaiah asking them to appear before him and explain their absence from the CLP meeting.

The MLAs had, however, replied pledging their complete loyalty to the party, in response to the first notice.

MLAs being absent from the House on Wednesday despite the whip and warning of strict action has caused serious concern to the edgy ruling Congress-JD(S) coalition in the State.

Four BJP lawmakers were also absent but the party sources said they had obtained prior permission.

A JDS MLA also did not show up. Frontline Karnataka Minister DK Shivakumar hit out at the BJP for showing disrespect to the Governor "out of frustration", on not being successful to come to power.

"We are aware what three to four BJP MLAs are doing sitting in Mumbai, our party will take a call on it," he said. According to BJP sources, the party would continue its agitation against the government in the assembly and during budget presentation on Friday.

LeT terrorist killed in Pulwama encounter

KHURSHED WANI ■ SRINAGAR

A Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorist was killed in a shootout with security forces at Chakoora village of south Kashmir's Pulwama district while one Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel was injured in a grenade attack in Kulgam district, officials said.

They said a cordon and search operation was launched by a joint team of Army, police and CRPF after unknown terrorists fired upon an army vehicle passing

through Chakoora village in jurisdiction of Awantipora police district.

They said in the retaliatory action one terrorist was killed. He was identified as Irfan Ahmad Sheikh, a local resident who was active as LeT commander in the area for several years. The encounter took place amid heavy downpour in the area. Sheikh's body drenched in blood and mud went viral after the encounter.

They said search operation was launched by security forces after the attack in the

area. They said some terrorists were believed to be hiding in the area. The search operation continued till late in the evening.

Massive clashes erupted in the village after local youths took to streets and clashed with forces conducting the operation. The protesters pelted stones and bricks on security personnel who in turn retaliated with tear gas shells to disperse the protesters.

In another incident, suspected militants hurled a grenade on CRPF camp of 18 Battalion at Laroo area of

Kulgam district resulting in injuries to one paramilitary CRPF trooper. The injured was taken to nearby hospital for treatment they said.

Meanwhile, a 13-year-old boy Junaid Iqbal succumbed to his injuries at a premier hospital after battling for life for five days. He and his teenage friend had received injuries after an explosive device they were fiddling with exploded in a south Kashmir village. The explosive was left over after a firefight in the area last week that resulted into killing of two terrorists.

Eating habits expose tribals to anthrax

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Driven by hunger and cultural practices, tribals in many pockets of Odisha are taking to butchering and deskinning of dead animals and consuming them, exposing themselves to anthrax, a deadly infectious zoonotic disease.

Ringling alarm bells, scientists from the Indian Medical Council of Research (IMCR)-Regional Medical Research Centre, Bhubaneswar, have called for a mass awareness campaign and livestock vaccination in villages and monetary incentive to the tribals for disposal of dead livestock to combat the unhealthy practice of consumption of dead animals. During the household survey conducted in four anthrax-hit districts—Koraput, Rayagada, Sundargarh and Malkangiri—in April-December, 2017, scientists found that of the 88 anthrax cases reported, at least 36 per cent affected persons were engaged in butchering and deskinning and consuming of dead animals, both as

part of their cultural practices as also to combat hunger.

About 23 per cent of the total 555 respondents admitted to follow practices that proscribed burial of dead animals for disposal while about 18 per cent admitted to consuming them. No surprise that during the last 15 years, out of 30 districts in Odisha, 14 with high density of tribal population, have witnessed outbreak of anthrax affecting at least 1,208 people and killing 436.

Koraput was worst affected with total 354 human anthrax cases and 9 deaths reported in last seven years.

During the survey, the scientists observed that tribals also dig out the buried animal at night and consume the meat. "Meat is dried in sun or in fire and kept hidden for later use. Even the dead animal is consumed at a village get-together," said scientists Debudutta Bhattacharya, Deepika Barla, Sanghamitra Pati from ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, (Department of Health Research, Union Health

Ministry. Unawareness among the tribals was blatant. "The tribals are at high risk of contracting human anthrax... and they are unaware about the diseases and its preventive measures," said the survey which noted that about 20 per cent of the respondents had never heard of the deadly disease.

"Vaccination of cattle is often refused. Often the dead people handling infected dead animals and come in contact with infected body fluids while slaughtering, butchering, skinning and consuming the infected meat are at risk," said scientists. Also, around 48 per cent of respondents were unaware about the mode of anthrax transmission as a result they often hide skin lesions, thus delaying diagnosis and leading to further spread. Mainly a disease of cattle, anthrax can be passed off to humans where it manifests in three forms—cutaneous (skin), pulmonary (respiratory) and intestinal. If untreated, risk of death from cutaneous anthrax can go as high as 25

per cent and for the other varieties the risk of death might be up to 75 per cent, even with treatment.

The State Government seems to be least bothered about this rising health hazard. The scientists pointed out that there was a lack of inter-departmental co-ordination, vacant posts at grass-root level in veterinary department, and absence of regular anthrax vaccination programmes.

"It is found that mainly health department along with veterinary department work together during the outbreak but other departments like forest, block administration only attend the meeting during the outbreaks and never part of the control measures for anthrax. Outbreaks gain attention only when it spreads to human," said the survey.

As per National Animal Diseases Referral Expert System (NADRES) data, anthrax is one of the top 10 diseases reported in India and one of the major causes of deaths in livestock with high case fatality rate.

Swine flu claims 1st victim in Delhi this year, advisory issued

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Around 124 fresh cases, including 104 adults and 20 children, of seasonal influenza H1N1, including a death, were recorded in the national Capital on Tuesday, taking the total number of cases in Delhi to 1,019, said a report.

According to the national data released by National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), around 1,011 cases were recorded till Monday without any death. A senior official from Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) informed the media that out of 1,011 cases, only 895 cases belonged to Delhi, which included 712 adults and 183 children, and the rest were from other States. Interestingly, till Monday, the Delhi Government had not reported any death due to swine flu this year, but on Tuesday, the report said one death was recorded.

On the contrary, two major hospitals in Delhi, namely Safdarjung Hospital and Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, recorded 13 deaths collectively last year. A senior doctor at Safdarjung Hospital confirming the data said, "From January 1 to January 31, around three deaths have been reported at our hospital."

In January, around 23 cases of H1N1 influenza were reported by the hospital, he said. During the same time period, around 10 fatalities were reported from RML Hospital.

A senior official of DGHS said the deaths which are being reported by the hospitals occur due to other factors and not just because of swine flu alone. "It is not confirmed weather the deaths are happening due to swine flu or due to some other factors. The patients who have died might have some other diseases already and the influenza worsened the condition," she said. The virus itself is not capable of killing someone, she added. Patients with co-morbid condition like low immunity, on immune suppressant, blood cancer, renal transplant, diabetes, heart disease are at high risk of getting infected with swine flu. With this, Delhi has become second largest city to record seasonal influenza H1N1 this year. Last year, only 205 cases of the disease were reported in the Capital. Showing concerns, the Delhi Government's Health Department issued a health advisory on Wednesday. The symptoms may include body aches, headache, fatigue, chills, diarrhoea and vomiting and Blood Stained Sputum (a mixture of mucus and saliva), it said further.

Islamist activists murder PMK cadre for questioning conversion bid

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

In a gruesome incident, extremists believed to be from the Islamic outfit Popular Front of India (PFI), murdered Ramalingam, a 45-year-old Pattali Makkal Katchi activist at Thirupuvanam town in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu late on Tuesday night.

The incident occurred within hours of a video featuring the stand-off between Ramalingam and some of the Islamist activists went viral all over the State.

Ramalingam could be heard in the video questioning and objecting the PFI

activists' efforts to convert the people of his locality into Islam.

"Within hours of the argument, a group of people barged into the residence of Ramalingam and attacked him with knives and swords. They chopped one of his hands and a leg," said a local resident who did not want his name to be quoted.

Dr S Ramadoss, leader of the PMK condemned the act and asked the Government of Tamil Nadu to arrest the culprits behind the heinous crime. Office of the deputy superintendent of police, Thiruvudai-maruthur, under whose jurisdiction the incident occurred refused to reveal any information citing absence of staff.

500 fishermen in Pak custody: Govt

New Delhi: Over 500 Indian fishermen and more than 1,050 Indian fishing boats are believed to be in Pakistan's custody, the Government said on Wednesday. The Government said it has sought their early release and repatriation from the neighbouring country. Minister of State for External Affairs VK Singh, in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha, said the Government's persistent efforts have succeeded in securing the release and repatriation of 1,749 Indian prisoners, including 1,725 fishermen, along with 57 boats from Pakistan's custody since 2014.



Minister said.

Pakistan, through a list shared on January 1, 2019, has acknowledged the custody of 483 fishermen who are Indian or believed-to-be-Indian in their jails, Singh said. The 483 fishermen includes those who are in Pakistan for over 20 months. The Government has asked Pakistan to provide consular access and early release and repatriation of the remaining Indian prisoners and fishermen along with their boats in Pakistan's custody, he said.

More than 1,050 Indian fishing boats are believed to be in Pakistan's custody, Singh said. However, he said Pakistan has not acknowledged their custody so far. Responding to a question on whether the Government has recently received any representations regarding alleged attacks by Sri Lanka Navy on Indian fishermen and capture of their properties, Singh said the Government has received letters from the State Governments of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and also from

fishermen associations on it.

During the past three years, there have been occasions when the arrested Indian fishermen have complained of assault by Sri Lanka Navy, the Minister said. The fishermen issues have been raised at the highest level, including by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Lankan counterpart Ranil Wickremesinghe during the latter's visit to India in October 2018. To another question, Singh also informed the Lower House that 4,705 Indian nationals are in prisons in Gulf countries, which also includes Indian origin labourers imprisoned due to accidents. Replying to another question, Singh said the total number of Indians who have completed their jail terms but are still lodged in prisons of foreign countries is 434, out of which 396 Indians are in Pakistan. PTI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

PRIYANKA TAKES UP...

Priyanka's entry into active politics signals the Congress' intention to go all out in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh. Eastern UP accounts for around 40 Lok Sabha seats. The region is a BJP stronghold that includes the Varanasi constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gorakhpur, the home turf of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Priyanka's office is adjacent to the room of her brother at the party headquarters at Akbar Road here. She will attend her first official meeting on Thursday. Rahul has

convened the meeting of all general secretaries and incharges of various States to plan the strategy for the Lok Sabha elections.

Soon after assuming the new charge at the Congress headquarters, Scindia performed a Ganesh pooja. He later met some party workers, including those from western Uttar Pradesh.

Scindia shared a video of the prayer ceremony on Twitter and said, "Took over as Congress general secretary after doing 'Ganesh pooja' at the AICC office, with the resolve of strengthening the party in the State." Scindia (48), an MP from Guna in Madhya Pradesh, is

already the party's chief whip in the Lok Sabha. He said the Congress has a good opportunity to make a comeback in Uttar Pradesh by winning a number of Lok Sabha seats to form a Government at the Centre. The scion of the erstwhile royal family of Gwalior, Scindia has been entrusted with the onerous task of strengthening the Congress in western Uttar Pradesh, where the party did not win any seat in the last Lok Sabha elections. His skills will be put to test in the Hindi heartland State in uniting the party cadres. One of the main contenders for the chief minister's post in Madhya Pradesh after the

Assembly elections last year, he has settled for a Central role.

SHAH HAS A DIG...

government formed on the firm belief of Bulandshahr's jawans. Modiji ordered surgical strikes within 10 days. What happened everyone knows," he said. In Aligarh, Shah raised questions about Mamata's protest saying that money of poor people was embezzled in the name of Sharada chit fund scam. "Many leaders were arrested but Mamata never sat on a dharna. Now she is sitting on a dharna to save a police officer. How long can this go on? TMC workers

are killing BJP workers," he said. The BJP chief said: "Mamata Banerjee has stopped Yogi's helicopter. Why is Didi stopping BJP workers? We will win 23 seats in West Bengal." Hitting out at the SP-BSP, Shah said: "Bua-bhatija may come together and may also rope in Rahul Baba but that will not stop the BJP from getting 74 seats in UP." On the occasion, the BJP chief also gave pep talks to booth incharges saying that they were responsible for the party's victory. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and UP Lok Sabha incharge and Union Health Minister JP Nadda also addressed the workers.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RED, LUCKNOW, CIRCLE- LUCKNOW,
Address-Near Vikas Bhawan, Sarvodaya Nagar, Lucknow

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA
e-Procurement Notice

Letter No.-5151/RED/Computer/PMGSY/(PM)18-19 Dated : 30-01-2019

The Superintending Engineer, RED Circle-Lucknow on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids in electronic tendering system for Renewal of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the districts of Districts-Unnao for 03 Number of Packages with Estimated cost Totaling to Rs.4.2369 crore including. The eligible contractors registered with the UP/PWD/UP RED, in appropriate class (A, or B as per limit) or equivalent category in CPWD/MES/P&T/Railways and other State Govt. and Central Govt. Departments & should have T & P, Hotmix Plant Paver Finisher.

Sl. No.	Group No.	Package	Name of work	Total cost (with-out GST)	Period of Completion	Cost of Bid Document including all taxes	Bid Security (in Lakh)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	UP-69/15-R	UP 6906	PMS ROAD TO SARAINYA VIA RAKAR ROAD (1.65 Km)	162.24	03 माे	Rs.3500.00	3.25
		UP 6906	PMS ROAD TO DHANNIPUR (1.675 Km)				
		UP 6928	PURAWA MAGHIGANWA TO MADARPUR NARAYANPUR (3.72 Km)				
		UP 6928	KALU KHERA ASRENDA ROAD TO TISANDA (0.700 Km)				
		UP 6910	MMU ROAD TO LANGARPUR (1.225 Km)				
		UP 6933	BUA Road to Dhamanikhera (2.500 Km)				
		UP 6910	PURAWA PATAN ROAD TO RAWATPUR (1.475 Km)				
		UP 6911	GAWANTNAGAR CHAINPUR TO JALAPUR (1.950 Km)				
		UP 6916	IAR KHEERON TO GAURA VIA POKHARI (2.775 Km)				
		2	UP69/16-R				
UP 6918	PAWA DAMGADHI ROAD TO BHAGU KHERA VIA BIDANU (2.765 Km)						
UP 6919	SIKANDARPUR BHIMESHWAR ROAD TO MOHIDDINPUR VIA CHANDANPUR (2.450 Km)						
UP 6934	LUCKNOW BANGARMAU ROAD TO PESSARY (2.500 Km)						
UP 6920	BUA ROAD TO BHATANWA (1.815 Km)						
3	UP69/17-R	UP 6929	SAFIPIR RASULABAD ROAD TO LAHABARPUR (1.400 Km)	119.34	03 माे	Rs.3500.00	2.93
		UP 6920	AGG ROAD TO SHUKLAGANI VIA NIHALKHERA (3.600 Km)				
		UP 6981	BETHAR TO KULHAGADHA (11.180 Km)				
		UP 6924	MUNNA KHERA TO BAGAHA (1.300 Km)				

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 08.02.19
Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstendersup.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have a valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original Demand Draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B(ii) of ITB with Office of the Superintending Engineer, RED, Lucknow, Circle- Lucknow, Address Near Vikas Bhawan, Sarvodaya Nagar, Lucknow on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive.
Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 28.2.19 up to 12.00 Noon
Date of opening of bids through e-procurement: 28.02.19 at 12.30 pm
For further details please log on to www.pmgstendersup.gov.in

Superintending Engineer, RED, Lucknow, Circle-Lucknow, Address-Near-Vikas Bhawan, Sarvodaya Nagar, Lucknow (Designation and address of Authority inviting bids)

U.P. 137560, Dt.: 05.02.19
निविदान वेबसाइट www.upgpn.in पर उपलब्ध है।

Broken wings

The armed forces and its soldiers are suffering thanks to decades of political wrangling over major acquisitions



It is the lot of a warrior that he/she knows that he/she might die in a battle, something that is understood by their families as well. However, for soldiers to die in accidents, ones that are very often preventable during peacetime, is completely unacceptable and a needless waste of human life and resources. The death of two squadron leaders of the Indian Air Force (IAF) in an accident in Bengaluru is just one such case. In the past, Indian Navy vessels have had issues while at port and old Army equipment has failed, killing many of our soldiers. A touching poem

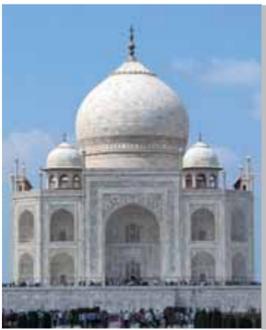
by Garima Abrol, the wife of Samir Abrol, one of the pilots killed, highlighted how Indian soldiers have to make do with painfully old equipment.

One thing that has to be laid out though is that even the most advanced armed forces in the world use old equipment. The backbone of the United States' Air Force's strategic bomber fleet is the B-52 that entered service in the late 1950s and the examples flying today are close to 60 years old. The US plans to keep the planes flying until 2050. This makes it obvious that even the richest countries in the world have to keep their military assets going for a really long time as equipment is very expensive, particularly in today's era of electronic warfare and precision munition. But that does not take away the fact that much of India's military equipment is painfully old and obsolete. There has been an inability by successive Governments to seriously acquire new hardware. It is also worth noting that India remains the world's largest military importer with its outdated ideas of procurement as well as problems in building a proper military-industrial complex where military hardware can be manufactured in-house. India's defence research, manufacturing and even upgradation have been woeful other than in developing missiles. The Arjun Tank and the Tejas light combat aircraft are but two examples of failure. While the Narendra Modi Government did try to promote more Indian companies under the 'Make in India' scheme, such a programme would always have led to accusations of corruption or favouritism and in the case of Rafale, they have. The inability of the Government to take the Opposition in confidence on the need to build indigenous military manufacturing capacity in the Indian private sector has been a major reason for the failure.

With elections nearing and the need to fund social sector schemes to alleviate poverty gaining momentum despite two well-armed neighbours and constant threats, India finds itself in a bind that few other nations do when it comes to security in the region. India has to be prepared for the eventuality of a two-front war and that needs investment in new military equipment and better management of existing resources. While affording equipment is a challenge, we cannot afford to lose lives needlessly. The next Government and the Opposition have to keep this in mind.

Taj still top draw

Our heritage sites are a source of revenue but it's time we engage with private conservators for their upkeep



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath may not agree that the Taj Mahal is intrinsic to Indian culture but it has topped the list of monuments with the highest revenue between 2015 and 2018. Going by Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma's statement in the Rajya Sabha, the others in the top 10 include Agra Fort, Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Sun Temple in Konark, Mamallapuram, Ellora caves, the Khajuraho temples and the Ajanta caves in Aurangabad. Of course, the bigger question is that despite their popularity

and the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI's) year on year increase in expenditure, some of these have already made the headlines for their dismal state of maintenance. As for the pollutant-beaten Taj Mahal, we only seem to take note of it when the Supreme Court desperately appeals to our national conscience in its several rulings. Then there is the larger issue of crowd behaviour with Indians prone to engraving their own legacy on historical facades. There have been reports of old stones, friezes and statues being stolen and sold from sprawling complexes of the Sun Temple at Konark and the limb by limb decimation of figures in Ajanta and Ellora. Clearly, the resource-strapped ASI is finding it difficult to be a custodian and conservator.

Which is why there is no harm in engaging in private-public partnerships for ensuring upkeep. Countries like Italy, Egypt and around the Mediterranean have sought resource and management sharing with private majors like fashion houses and soft drink conglomerates. Varanasi's ghats have been cleaned up and made presentable without tarnishing their cultural essence and ancient feel by private hotel chains. Delhi's citizens have found summer evenings pleasurable again with the restoration of the Humayun's tomb complex and the Sundar Nursery by the Aga Khan Trust. Both these heritage sites and the extended Nizamuddin Basti improvement project have not only restored Mughal architecture and gardens to their pristine glory but encouraged soirees, cultural confluences and most importantly, restored the city's biodiversity hotspots. Many private players have restored Delhi's havelis, converting them to heritage homestays. The big museum trusts around the world seek voluntary participation by experts and the community alike. And though critics may claim that corporates were encashing the footfalls while doing CSR, claiming tax benefits and were not entirely altruistic, fact is that signages or hoardings proclaiming their contribution have been limited to areas outside the core heritage arc. The privately run, family-owned Rajasthan forts have boosted the tourist economy and generated more resources for upkeep through specially curated walks and inner chamber access. PPP ventures have resulted in rescuing lost gems like the Nahargarh fort. Imagine a cleaned up Meena Bazaar elevated to the status of the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul. Of course, any private initiative has to be monitored and implemented by an expert committee under the supervision of the ASI. This should have multiple representation of historians, conservationists, archaeologists and keeper family trusts. The execution can be entrusted to those with a proven track record and depth of expertise. Heritage is our badge of honour and the more participatory we make it, the better we will respect and keep it.

An alternate universe

While the free world might have heaved a sigh of relief at the final acquittal of Aasia Bibi, she was just one example of continued victimisation by Pakistan's blasphemy laws



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Bibi Aasia Noreen, the Pakistani Christian woman who was on death row for blasphemy, is finally out of the woods. The Supreme Court of Pakistan recently rejected the final appeal against her acquittal. But she might still have to relocate to the West, as living in Pakistan could prove perilous for her. India could have set an example by inviting her to live in this country.

Imagine if Aasia Bibi were a Christian woman in India, working in an agricultural field alongside Hindu women. Consider a hypothetical scenario. Thirsty after working under the hot sun, she fetches a pail of water for fellow workers, but first drinks some herself from the metal mug lying beside the well. The other women, suddenly realising that she is a Christian, wonder whether Aasia Bibi had "polluted" their well and "diluted" their religion. And then, angered and hurt, Aasia Bibi reacts by telling some horrible things about Hindu deities as though she had been reading BR Ambedkar's *Riddles in Hinduism: The Annotated Critical Selection* the previous night.

What options would Hindu women have against Aasia Bibi? First, a cat-fight to teach her a lesson on the spot. Second, tell the owner of the land to dismiss her from services. Third, to complain to their respective husbands about the defilement. Fourth, to tell the priest about a local temple. Fifth, go to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) *karyakartas*. Sixth, to go to the law enforcing authorities like police and court.

The third and fourth options would have been treated as nothing more than gossip-mongering. Also, since Aasia Bibi is not a Bible-thumping Christian missionary, there would be little to excite the RSS and VHP *karyakartas*. The fifth option of approaching the law enforcing authorities would be positively dangerous for them as they would be hauled up under Section 3 of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, to enforce religious disabilities (denying access to water sources). Thus, rather than doing any harm to Aasia Bibi, they themselves would have ended up in prison for up to six months besides depositing a penalty.

But on June 14, 2009, Aasia Bibi was unfortunately in an alternate universe called Pakistan. She was arrested on charges of making derogatory remarks about Prophet Mohammed, based on the evidence of Mafia Bibi and Asma Bibi. Qari Mohammed Salam, a local cleric, filed a case of blasphemy with the police, based on hearsay. The case spiralled in importance with a local court awarding death sentence to Aasia Bibi for denigrating Prophet Mohammed in 2010, and later a Lahore court upholding its judgement in 2016.

The Pakistan Penal Code has several controversial sections (and sub sections thereof) ranging from 295 to 298-C under



offences related to religion, commonly called "blasphemy laws" that are discriminatory against non-Muslims. The most dangerous of them are 295-C (use of derogatory remarks with respect to Prophet Mohammed) and 295-B (defiling the Holy *Quran*) which carry a punishment of mandatory death sentence and life imprisonment respectively.

Some of these deadly provisions were inserted in Pakistan's Penal Code not when the Islamic Republic was founded but in the 1980s, when the rest of the world was seized with the idea of progress. Pakistan had inherited some blasphemy laws from the British period but those were religion-neutral. Their basic purpose was not to defend religious principles but maintain communal peace.

In three decades between 1947 and 1977, there were only 10 reported court judgements in Pakistan pertaining to offences against religion. The complaints were made mostly by Muslims against other Muslims, by non-Muslims against Muslims. No case was registered by a Muslim against non-Muslims for committing an act of blasphemy against Prophet Mohammed or "defiling" the *Quran*. But all these were about to change soon.

In 1974, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the Prime Minister, the first amendment to the

Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, was carried out to exclude the Ahmediyas from the legal definition of being a Muslim. The language of the amendment had a theological overtone incompatible with modern constitutions. It says that a person, who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the prophethood of the Mohammed, is not a Muslim for the purpose of the Constitution or law.

In 1977, General Zia-ul-Haq came to power through a *coup d'état*. The ensuing 11 years saw increased Islamisation of Pakistan in various spheres. These included insertion of five provisions relating to blasphemy in the Pakistan Penal Code between 1980 and 1986. Close to 1,500 people have been charged under those sections till date though none were actually hanged.

A Federal Shariat Court (FSC) was established in 1980, with the power to "examine and decide the question whether any law or provision of law is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam". The FSC's decisions are binding upon the Government unless the latter successfully appeals to the Shariat bench of the Supreme Court.

When Section 295-C was introduced in 1986, it had a provision of life imprisonment as an alternative to capital punishment. But in 1990, the FSC

recommended the removal of alternative provision of life imprisonment. Since the Pakistan Government did not appeal against this recommendation in the Supreme Court by the deadline of April 30, 1991, the capital punishment without an alternative attained finality.

A judgement of Peshawar High Court in 2006 expressed serious concern that whenever a person was charged with such an offence, the media gave extensive coverage and the accused person was abused by the society/people at large. Even under Islamic injunctions, the court added, it is for the Qazi alone to decide the guilt or innocence of the accused and none could be allowed to forejudge and condemn any person accused of such offence without facing proper and fair trial.

Right to fair trial is what the Supreme Court based its case upon in its judgements (dated October 7, 2015, and January 28, 2019). But unfortunately, the court could not discard or challenge the atrocious rubric of blasphemy laws. This means there will be no end to this madness in Pakistan. The courts could not counteract blasphemy because they know it is an integral part of Islam. Its misuse though has been possibly as old as its application itself.

Nicholas Mannucci (1638-1717), the Italian adventurer to India, relates in his *Storia do*

Mogor how a rich Jew in Aleppo (Syria) outwitted a Muslim Governor, who wanted to deprive him of his wealth, life and religion by abetting blasphemy in the 16th century. The Governor asked the Jew, who was the greatest Prophet among Moses, Christ and Mohammed? Had the Jew said Mohammed, he would be asked to accept Islam. Had he mentioned the others, it would be considered a blasphemy and he would be put to death.

The Jew, however, proved cleverer than expected. He narrated a story of how a rich man had a precious stone, which each of his three sons wanted to inherit on his death. So he got two exact replicas made from the lapidariaire; and gave away those to each son so that one had the original and the other two had replicas. But he told each to keep it a secret that he had given him the original and the false one to others. But only the father knew who got the original. So God gave three Prophetic religions viz Judaism, Christianity and Islam to three races. While each thinks his religion is true, God alone knows the truth. The Muslim governor conceded defeat in his mission and even rewarded the Jew.

(The writer is author of recently published book, *'The Microphone Men: How Orators created a Modern India'*. Views expressed are his personal)

SOUNDBITE

It's unfortunate for Modiiji that despite being married, he does not have a single poster of himself along with his wife.



Congress leader —Sanjay Singh

Pakistan must cease its behaviour that undermines stability and play a constructive role in achieving peace in South Asia.



Top American general —General Joseph Votel

I don't look at that as being typecast. Rather I feel it's good that the audience identifies you with a certain role.



Actor —Tusshar Kapoor

Understanding ground realities, interaction with people and observing aspirations of youth are important for those aspiring to be in public life.



Vice President —M Venkaiah Naidu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tall promises

Sir — The interim Budget presented by stand-by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal was cleverly crafted. It sought to lure all sections of Indian society, especially the middle classes and the worker communities. Although the Opposition termed the measures as a "drop in the ocean", one hopes that the Government will rise above rhetoric and deliver on the promises. It is true that the promise of *acheche din* continues to be a distant dream. Yet, if the measures as suggested in the Budget are implemented in earnest, the standard of living should improve substantially.

No Budget, however, can appease every section of society. The standard deduction limit has been increased from ₹40,000 to ₹50,000; taxpayers with an annual income higher than five lakh rupees are surely not as happy as the ones who will be exempted from taxes for earning less than the stated amount.

One must note that this year's Budget has not made a mention about the exact figure of the effective taxpayers' base.

Last year, the figure was shown to have increased from 6.46 crore to 8.27 crore. But this time, only the number of returns filed has been mentioned. Now, it remains to be seen if this is an intentional one. In any case, in a country with a population of over 130 crore, a lot remains to be done.

Hemant Kumar
Ambala City

Mamata's larger ambition

This refers to the editorial, "Round 1 to Mamata" (February 6). West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee is in the news these days after she escalated her street fight against the Centre and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) by vowing to continue her *satyagraha* till February 8 to save the country and its Constitution. Though Mamata has called off the *dharna*, it is true that her anti-Centre stance has caused a tsunami all over the country and many Opposition parties, including the Telugu Desam Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Rashtriya Janata Dal and even the Biju Janata Dal have announced their support to her cause.

At the same time, it wouldn't be wrong to say that Banerjee is fuelling her prime ministerial ambition by pitting herself directly against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. She and other leaders from her party have often attacked the Centre on the floor of Parliament and even



outside. I hope that her protest will free the country of anti-democratic elements. As for the CBI, it has been dragging feet on the Saradha scam since May 2014. It is up to the investigative body to complete probes and do justice to lakhs of defrauded depositors.

FR Murad
Kolkata

Hardly interim

Sir — In an election year, the Budget was expected to be interim. Ironically, this year's Budget sounded like a full-fledged one. Earlier, it was the announcement of indirect taxes that added some relevance to an otherwise largely inconsequential presentation — the interim Budget is imple-

mented for only four months of the new fiscal year.

Unfortunately, most such indirect taxes have been rendered obsolete by Goods and Services Tax. In their absence, the Centre has proceeded to outline policies that go beyond the usual practice of setting broad pointers for the incoming Government. The foray into direct taxation should have been avoided. The

Budget, at best, should have reduced tax incidence on the lower rungs of taxpayers rather than completely exempting a large chunk from the tax radar. This is misplaced populism. The saving grace is that it did not cut down tax on corporate entities. Fiscal discipline seems to have been adhered to, but it looks like it is based more on hope than on substance.

R Narayan
Navi Mumbai

Cancer bravehearts

Sir — One needs to express deep appreciation to cancer survivors, those who are bravely fighting the disease and also the medical fraternity. It is a combination of medicine, the fighting spirit and the never-say-die attitude which will aid them in recovery. The answer to cancer is: Never give up, fight back. Greater awareness and early interventions are much needed to tackle the disease.

TS Karthik
Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A sentence of death by torture

It is disheartening that despite strong animal protection laws in place, live export of cattle is a thriving business in India. We have to protect them



VARDA MEHROTRA

Abusing animals for human benefit dates back to centuries with supreme leaders form one community using animals as barter to prove their loyalty towards an influential leader. Horses for cavalry, sheep, goats, cows and even the rarest of deer were presented to leaders for food and clothing. Open murders of these animals were a common sight and with the lack of any laws protecting them from this enormous cruelty, there was no way they could be saved. The 17th century saw a growth in animal trade during the Mughal regime. Horses were transported by sea to please the interest of Mughal rulers, from as far as Persia and some Arabian countries. The *Jahangirnama* records the arrival of Muqarrab Khan in court to pay homage in 1610. He brought many Abyssinian slaves and Arabian horses for the then supreme leader of the country. It was believed that if six horses were sent to be transported, only one would survive to be gifted to the emperors. These animals were never likely to survive in abnormally harsh journeys they were sent on.

Today, centuries later, there are some laws and rules which protect animals from such torture but the situation remains largely the same. Maybe horses have been spared for the time being, but goats, sheep and cows are still traded and they are exported in horrific conditions of abysmal torture to countries where poor or no current laws of animal protection and welfare exist. Animals are transported by sea or air, treated as mere commodities and thrown into these flights of shame.

Thousands of sheep, goats and cows, trapped in a moving ship inside loose containers, face exhaustion with little food and water to survive the dreadful journeys. Many animals don't make it — they die due to trauma, heat strokes, dehydration, injuries, fatigue and diseases they catch on their way. All animals, who die during the course of the journey, are dumped into the ocean. The transportation chambers are never cleaned, thus leaving animals to lie in their own faeces — and this is just the tip of the iceberg. Lack of any veterinary care on board the ship/flight and the lack of any inspection on the way these animals are exported leave them at the mercy of exporters, giving the brokers an opportunity to bend laws as per their convenience. No cameras are allowed inside the ship and exporters make it a point to hide the manner in which these animals are transported from one country to another.

In India, the law recognises that it is the fundamental duty of every citizen and that of the state to protect and show compassion for the environment, wildlife and all living creatures. Yet, exporting animals in our country is not only unethical but also effectively illegal as these animals are subject to cruelty as defined by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (PCA). Export of live animals defeats the purpose of the Act, which is to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering on animals. None of the export rules and procedures made by the Government specifies how animals are to be exported. In the current socio-political environment in the country, the Government — both State and Central and pressure groups like animal NGOs and the Jain Samaj — have different opinions on the way animals are to be treated. The issue then is no longer for the animals but for vested interests of each stakeholder involved in the process.

This has presented us an opportunity to speak for the animals used in live export, to the top of our voices, and bring forth the visible torture they go through on these journeys of death. With continuous uproar in the public to stop this cruel practice once and for all, the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) has campaigned to 'stop live export of animals' across the country. Despite having strong animal protection laws, live export on the part of India is a mockery of the lives of these animals as well as the laws. We have to protect them. Recently, more than 3,000 sheep were transported from Nashik Airport, which brought together several activists and animal lovers. FIAPO has asked the Chief Minister of Maharashtra to ban the practice of live export like in the State of Gujarat. While we make resolutions for a bright new year, thousands of animals in live export face the darkest phase of their lives. Putting money ahead of animals' pain is unethical on several grounds. Animals are not iron or wheat. They are sentient souls who cannot protest against what happens to them. Handing them to individuals or groups, that have no concern of animal welfare, on to ships or flights with no special facility to carry them is completely immoral and effectively illegal. The Government needs to recognise, take a note of this and put an end to this extremely cruel practice.

(The writer is Executive Director, Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations)

I'VE HEARD ABOUT MAJOR SHUKLA'S BRAVERY. WHAT KIND OF A SOLDIER IS HE? A SOLDIER WHO TORTURED HIS OWN KIDS, THE CHILDREN OF JAMMU & KASHMIR? —J&K CHIEF MINISTER —MEHBOOBA MUFTI



WE MUST NOT TAKE HER (MEHBOOBA'S) STATEMENTS SERIOUSLY. WE WILL NOT LET SUCH STATEMENTS AFFECT THE MORALE OF OUR SECURITY FORCES. —J&K GOVERNOR SATYA PAL MALIK

Sabarimala and the way ahead

For the Marxists, it's a do-or-die battle in Kerala. The shrine row is but a ploy to stop the consolidation of Hindu votes. But it can't dilute *Sanatana Dharma*



P NARAYANA KURUP

It was expected that the fury and furore generated by the Sabarimala imbroglio would subside with the seasonal closing of the shrine. But controversy has resurfaced and resulted in a public outcry in Kerala once again. The latest provocation for the Hindus was the news widely publicised that the affidavit submitted by the lawyers of the Marxist Government of Kerala — that contained the names of women below the age of 50, who entered the Sabarimala shrine — is a fabricated list of lies. It has names of men and women over 50 years of age, whose age has been deliberately reduced and also the name of a woman, whose address cannot be traced. A heap of lies concocted by the Government is beginning to get exposed. But the question of larger significance, which more and more Hindus are asking themselves, that too vocally now is: Why this haste to reform our rituals alone? Why resort to lies, police brute force and false propaganda to demolish Hindu faith?

Marxism and Hinduism in Kerala: Marxism anywhere cannot be tolerant of religion. But in Kerala (and in West Bengal too) the party confronted an Indian reality. They could not attack the faith of the organised religions who had well-established vote banks. In Kerala, therefore, Hindu faith became the primary object of derision. In this task, they always had the unstinted support of the Western-biased media.

Sanatana dharma and Marxism: As the erudite Purohit Swami wrote in his autobiography, "Civilisations superstructure may be very fine indeed but it totters like a house of cards, for the everlasting kingdom is established in man's hearts and not an inevitable denouement outwardly to dazzle these eyes." Marxist Governments in USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and East European countries did totter like a pack of cards because they did not improve the inner man.

Marxism and social maladies: Hindu youths have been the most vulnerable targets for this loss of values and Marxist indoctrination. If weaned away from religious moorings, youth become rebellious and Marxist ideology can then be easily driven into such discontented minds. In northern Kerala, these unemployed and under-employed youth are being used as volunteers to carry out the political murder.

The intellectual pauperism: Sloganeering and repetitions of cliché have stunted independent thinking minds in the State. "Idiotically pompous" that is what most people have been reduced to by the communists' propaganda. They vainly mouth fascism, *sangh parivar*, renaissance (*navodhanam*) or any other phraseology coined by the communist bandwagon. While Vedantic traditions and faith hold through time, the communists are flogging a dead ideology.

Sabarimala and its unique tradition: Sabarimala has always been a temple that was intended to instill qualities of renunciation, peace and *brahmacharya*. A 41-day period of discipline regarding diet restriction, sleep



control and celibacy is followed by the devotees as they prepare for a visit to the holy shrine. Once they put on the bead garland, they are called *swamys*, suggesting they are worthy of respect. When the devotee reaches Sabarimala, he is better qualified to realise the ultimate truth, *tatvam asi* (thou art that) inscribed at the entrance of the temple. Sabarimala is not just a place of worship, it is a nursery for those desirous, who follow the path of yoga. It is for this very reason that the unique tradition of Sabarimala needs to be preserved.

Yogic traditions and media lies: Can't the women too practise these very virtues and discipline? They can, and it for this very reason that all temples, including the temple of Ayyappa, are open to women of all ages. The Sabarimala idol is conceived by the devotees as a *naishtika brahmachari*, a youth who has conserved all his vital energy and performs *tapas* for God's realisation. He is depicted as sitting in a unique posture, *yoga pattasana*, which *tantric* science says is conducive for the arousal of the Kundalini Shakti. If one observes the idol, with even a rudimentary knowledge of *tantra* and yoga (the writer claims nothing more), it can be seen that in this posture of sitting, pressure is put on the *mooladhara chakra* and the lower energy centres of the body. This posture is unique and Ayyappa idol at Sabarimala is the only deity depicted in this posture.

Is the total sublimation of the vital energy, conceived in the idol, ideally suited to be worshipped by women of reproductive age? To denounce esoteric religious practices in terms of modern-day rationality would be as absurd as dismissing the bread and wine taken by the faithful Christians during Eucharist as being bakery items of gastronomic delights or giving a biological explanation to the virgin's motherhood of Christ. Romo Rolland knew the dangers of state interference in spiritual matters and he was

prompted to say that had Shri Rama Krishna Paramahansa been born in the West, he would have been subjected to shock treatments.

Gender and Sabarimala: If my right to swing my walking stick ends where your nose begins, then the feminist bandwagon should realise that the right place to swing their walking stick is not the Sabarimala shrine. The faithful women devotees of Kerala realise this unique nature of the deity and this is the reason why they spontaneously carried out rallies against Government interference in Sabarimala. The faithful respect the right to worship for others and Sabarimala is the only temple (one or two local exceptions apart) where age restriction for women is followed.

The feminists, who still insist on swinging their walking sticks at other worshippers' noses, are State-sponsored activists of various hues. Many have shady pasts, police cases pending against them and have Maoist affiliations too. When the State Government manipulates the list of young women, who have already entered the temple premise, it was the culmination of a large game plan that divine intervention has exposed.

Gender, Sabarimala and some common sense: Gender parity is a pre-requisite for the functioning of democracy. There are times when you have to give Caesar what is his due and to God what is due to him. But again, who shall decide where Caesar's domain ends and God's begin? Justice Indu Malhotra said in her dissenting note that the judiciary itself should not judge matters of spiritual significance.

Media and the propaganda of lies: Ayyappa is no misogynist, nor is his celibacy under threat if women visit the shrine. Neither Ayyappa nor his devotees have contempt for menstruating women or consider them unclean. These are arguments concocted by Western-biased media and the communist propaganda machinery. If the true signif-

icance of Sabarimala's rituals and tradition is to be understood, surely it has to be by using the semantics of spiritual literature and not new fangled words imported from an alien culture. To paraphrase Sri Aurobindo's observations on Western psychology, the secret of the beauty of a lotus flower cannot be unravelled by analysing the composition of the mud in which it grows but it can only be done by looking at the ideal of a lotus existing in some heavenly sphere above.

The last citadel and the long fight: Kerala is the last communist citadel and the LDF would fight with all collective strength of the Government machinery, police force and the numerical strength of its well-knit party cadre against any consolidation of the forces of Hindu *dharma*. They will try to buy over the Christian and Muslim vote banks and also use nefarious tactics of widening caste divide to split the consolidation of Hindu votes.

For the Hindus of Kerala, the battle is a long drawn out one. They will be isolated, maligned by the media and curbed by police power. What the Hindus of Kerala need is belief, the perennial nature of *Sanatana Dharma* that has survived greater onslaughts and invasions. But Hindus need to fight without forsaking the spirit of tolerance and compassion fostered by their faith, without becoming cowards in the bargain.

But in the political battle field, Governments of the day will only acknowledge the strength of the vote bank. In the neo-Darwinian political scene of India, it is the survival of the vote bank. And it is here that divided Hindus will have to think wisely, decisively and cast their votes. Hindu religion never did stoop to fascism. It fostered civilisational values and strengthened nationhood. The writing on the wall is clearer now for the Hindus of Kerala than ever before.

(The writer is President, Thapasya Art and Literary Forum)

Scorching heat is melting the Himalayas

The ICIMOD's first ever assessment of climate change impacts on the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region must ring alarm bells. Blanket approaches will not work. All host countries need to step up efforts and work in tandem



SRIRAJ KOTA

February 4, 2019, was a significant day for the Himalayas as on this very day, the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) released the much-awaited first ever assessment report on the impact of climate change on the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region.

The region — spread over 3,500 square kilometres across eight countries, including India, Nepal and China — is also known as the Water Tower of Asia due to its reserve of frozen water. The region is considered to be the core area of the Himalayas, which by themselves, are not the only youngest mountain range but are also con-

ceptually the Third Pole.

But thanks to rapid climate change, the Himalayas hog the headlines and mostly for all the wrong reasons. The ICIMOD's assessment report is an effort by the inter-governmental body, involving a massive scientific exercise, comprising over 300 researchers and spanning over four years.

The report said that the HKH region is warming faster than the global average. And it would continue to do so during this century. This assessment is very concerning as the HKH region is an incredibly important asset for Asia and the world. It is a key source of water, energy, carbon stocks as well as rich biodiversity. For example, the rivers starting from HKH are home to about two billion people with the potential to generate 500 gigawatts of hydropower.

The region is, however, under threat from climate change in addition to a host of other changes, including ecosystem degradation, outmigration and air pollution.

Usually, mountains warm up faster than global averages. Even if we limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius, mountain temperatures would rise above two degree Celsius and if current trends continue, temperatures could go up by four to six degrees Celsius.

This holds dire consequences not only for our glaciers but also for food, energy, ecosystems and for the people, who rely on them in terms of ecosystem change, changing water flow patterns and increased hazards of disasters.

In a 1.5 degree Celsius world, about one-third of our glaciers will disappear by 2100 and under the current emission scenario, we will lose two-third of our glacier volumes. Many major cities in and near the HKH region have annual average PM2.5 concentrations of almost 10 times higher than the guidelines made by the World Health Organisation.

In addition to negative health impacts, this also adds to melting of our glaciers. Already, 70 to 80 per

cent of the habitat in biodiversity hotspots has been lost over the last 500 years and one-fourth of the endemic species could be lost by 2100.

Even now, overall condition in the HKH region is not good as poverty incidence is one-third as compared to the national average that's one-fourth.

Besides, over 30 per cent of the HKH population suffers from food insecurity and 50 per cent are faced with some form of malnutrition. Moreover, about 80 per cent of the rural population living in HKH countries lack access to clean energy for cooking. Added to this, there remains persistent gender and social imbalance in developmental activities.

Given these circumstances, it is crucial to bring global attention to the Himalayas. The ICIMOD, with its 350 researchers, practitioners and policy-makers, has put minds together to bring out this scientific assessment so that the message is spread without any confusion.

The Himalayas are the last citadel of nature and climate change is breaching it. There is an urgent need for the HKH countries to step up efforts to lower greenhouse gas emissions so that runaway temperatures can be controlled.

In order to get there, it is important that they rein in air and water pollution and promote sustainable energy. This will help contain biodiversity loss and assist some of the most poor and vulnerable people to adapt to the environment. Inter-governmental cooperation has to be the foundation for this effort and the ICIMOD's report can make for a good start.

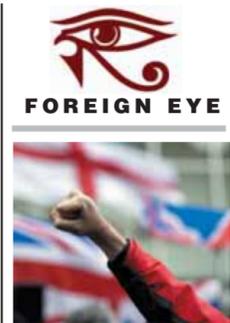
Yet another method is to draw the countries into a meaningful dialogue so that the importance of health of the HKH region in particular and the Himalayan region in general is emphasised. This will help politicians, Government officials, media, business and other influential people work together, in tandem with the goals of preserving the environment.

Countries in the HKH region can take inspiration from the Arctic Council where countries have united to share information, to jointly develop solutions and to speak with a common voice to the global communities about the impacts of climate change and other concerns.

The world will not realise as it will not stand to lose if the HKH region is climatically compromised but HKH countries will surely feel the adverse impacts of climate change on the region, and India being part of the same, must take the lead and sensitise the countries of the impending environmental problems of the region and do the needful.

The uniqueness of the HKH region is its topography and ecology. They have to be preserved. Ditto for its traditional culture and communities. However, this can be possible only by keeping climate change at bay at any cost.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



PRODUCT OF OUR DIVISIVE AGE

Some suggest that the police should not be concerned with incidents of hate crime, at the expense of "real" crime such as burglary or muggings. At best, it is wishful thinking or a well-meaning attempt to reassure; at worst it is a matter, in effect, of collusion. The only response to hate crime is to prosecute it. (The Independent editorial)

Reject politics of revenge

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A defiant President Donald Trump Wednesday vowed to build a controversial wall along the US-Mexico border to stop illegal immigration and sought an end to the "politics of revenge", as he appealed to the divided Congress to bridge differences to avert another costly government shutdown.

President Trump in his second State of the Union address demanded an end to "partisan investigations" into his presidency, touted economic gains during his first two years in office as well as legislative wins on issues like criminal justice reform. In his 82-minute address, the 72-year-old Republican president warned that deepening partisan tensions undermine America's progress.

The annual State of the Union (SOTU) address is the keynote prime-time speech by the president to the Congress in which he sets out his legislative agenda and national priorities for the next year and highlights his achievements to the American people.

Trump calls for reconciliation were met with mostly stone-faced silence from Democrats, who bitterly oppose his demand for USD 5.7 billion for the border wall, his divisive political agenda and accuse him of hastening the decline in cross-party cooperation.

The president had a record 35-day standoff with the Democrats led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi over his proposed wall along the US-Mexico border, which shut down the federal government and postponed the address which was earlier scheduled on January 29. The government shutdown cost the economy a whopping USD 11 billion, including a permanent USD 3 billion loss, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office said last month.

"In the past, most of the people in this room voted for a wall — but the proper wall never got built." "I'll get it built," Trump vowed. The "smart, strategic, see-through steel barrier", he said, will bring down the illegal crossings from Mexico. Trump presented himself as a leader who can work across party lines. "We must



President Donald Trump shakes hands with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as Vice President Mike Pence looks on, as he arrives in the House chamber before giving his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress, Tuesday. AP

reject the politics of revenge, resistance and retribution and embrace the boundless potential of cooperation, compromise and the common good," he said, earning a chant of "USA, USA" from his supporters but a disapproving stare from Speaker Pelosi.

"Together, we can break decades of political stalemate. We can bridge old divisions, heal old wounds, build new coalitions, forge new solutions and unlock the extraordinary promise of America's future," Trump also hit out at the "ridiculous partisan investigations" into his presidency, a reference to Special Counsel Robert Mueller's probe of Russian interference into the 2016 election which he won.

Trump has long branded the special counsel's probe a "witch hunt". "We must be united at home to defeat our adversaries abroad," he said. "If there is going to be peace and legislation, there cannot be war and investigation. It just doesn't work that way!"

"An economic miracle is taking place in the United States the only thing that can stop it are foolish wars, politics or ridiculous partisan investigations," Trump said, as Pelosi visibly scoffed behind him. "If there is going to be peace and

legislation, there cannot be war and investigation. It just doesn't work that way!"

Trump said that illegal immigration was an urgent national crisis and he vowed to build the border wall with Mexico. While the president wants USD 5.7 billion for the wall, the Democrats have offered funding for other border security measures.

Trump agreed to open the government until February 15 while lawmakers negotiate a border security funding package, but has threatened to shut the government again or declare an emergency to secure wall funding if the deal is not to his liking.

"Simply put, walls work and walls save lives. So let's work together, compromise and reach a deal that will truly make America safe," he said. Trump also declared that the US "will never become a socialist country". Though Trump spent much of his address to Congress urging lawmakers to overcome partisan gridlock, he also devoted some time to foreign policy.

He celebrated the defeat of the Islamic State, adding it was time to bring US troops home from conflict zones in the Middle East. "Great nations do not fight endless wars," he said that the time had now come for

a political solution to the Afghanistan problem.

Trump described Iran as a "radical regime" and "the world's leading sponsor of state terror," adding: "They do bad, bad things." Trump vowed to right "calamitous" trade policies and sought to expand his power to impose tariffs which he said would empower him to respond faster during trade wars.

Trump told Congress that Washington's aggressive trade negotiations with China would mean an end to its alleged "theft" of US jobs and wealth. He also asked Congress to pass the United States Reciprocal Trade Act.

The United States Reciprocal Trade Act, if signed into law, could have consequences on bilateral trade with countries like India. The proposed legislation would expand the White House's latitude to impose tariffs if other countries' tariffs or non-tariff barrier exceed US ones. Trump also reiterated the US opposition to embattled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Last month, Trump recognised opposition figure Juan Guaido as the legitimate leader of Venezuela amid the country's economic turmoil and political strife that has sparked a massive refugee crisis.

2nd Trump-Kim summit on Feb 27-28 in Vietnam

Washington (PTI): US President Donald Trump will hold a second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Vietnam on February 27 and 28 to jump-start a diplomatic effort to dismantle the reclusive nation's nuclear and missile programmes. The announcement about the meeting came during Trump's second State of the Union address. Kim and Trump met in Singapore last year, marking the first bilateral meeting between leaders of the two countries. While North Korea since then has refrained from overtly provocative actions like testing nuclear warheads or ballistic missiles, it has yet to agree to actually give up any piece of its atomic arsenal.

Addressing Congress, Trump said progress has been made in his administration's efforts to achieve peace on the Korean peninsula. "We continue our historic push for peace on the Korean Peninsula. Our hostages have come home, nuclear testing has stopped and there has not been a missile launch in more than 15 months," Trump said during the address that lasted for more than 80 minutes.

"Much work remains to be done, but my relationship with Kim Jong-un is a good one," Trump said. "Chairman Kim and I will meet again on February 27 and 28 in Vietnam," he said. Trump, however, also gave an ominous warning about the risks of heightened tensions with Pyongyang.

"If I had not been elected President of the United States, we would right now, in my opinion, be in a major war with North Korea," Trump said. It is not clear in which city the summit will take place. Hanoi, the nation's capital, and Da Nang, a coastal resort town, have both been floated as possibilities.

A source familiar with the negotiations told CNN that North Korea favours Hanoi given that they have an embassy there.

Taliban sit for 2nd day with Afghan leaders in Moscow

AFP ■ MOSCOW

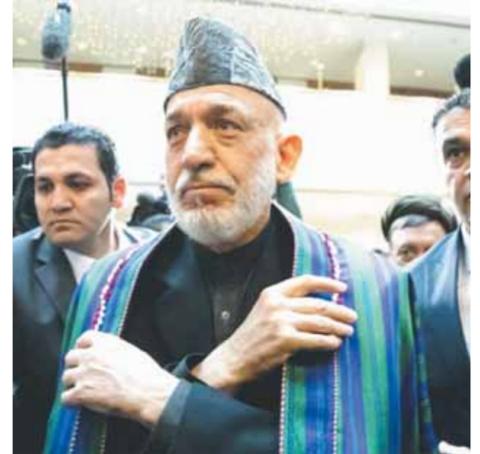
The Taliban entered a second day of unprecedented talks Wednesday with powerful Afghan politicians in Moscow, sidestepping the Kabul government as it pursues a leading stake in the war-torn country. The rare public appearance that kicked off a day before saw Taliban officials spell out their vision for Afghanistan in front of rolling cameras and a host of political heavyweights, including former president Hamid Karzai.

The insurgents went around President Ashraf Ghani and sat down with his chief rivals for an extraordinary meeting that saw Karzai and other sworn enemies of the Taliban praying with the militants. No government official was invited, despite Ghani's offers to talk peace, underscoring the Taliban's hostility toward the increasingly marginalised Kabul administration. The Moscow meet comes a week after the Taliban held separate talks toward ending 17 years of fighting with American negotiators in Doha, where Ghani was again not invited to the table.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday described those talks as "constructive" and voiced cautious hope for a negotiated end to America's longest war. The Taliban claimed Wednesday that the United States agreed in Doha to withdraw half its ground troops by the end of April — and the process had begun.

"The Americans agreed to withdraw half of their troops immediately. The withdrawal will start from February 1 and continue until end of April," Abdul Salam Hanefi, deputy head of the Taliban's political office in Doha, told reporters in Moscow.

But US negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad has repeatedly stressed that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed." "Everything" must include an intra-Afghan dialogue and comprehensive ceasefire. The US has issued



Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, center, arrives for the "intra-Afghan" talks in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday. AP

no details on any potential withdrawal plan.

The Taliban routinely exaggerates its attacks and details of other engagements, and NATO and Afghan officials deny the claims. Ghani's allies in Washington insist Afghans should lead the peace process, and ostensibly the months-long push by the US to engage the Taliban has been aimed at convincing them to negotiate with Kabul. A top US general also said that Kabul must be involved in talks if a push for a peace deal is to be successful.

"Ultimately, we need to get to a Taliban-Afghanistan discussion," General Joseph Votel, the head of US Central Command, told US lawmakers. "Only they will be able to resolve the key issues involved in the dispute." Ghani spoke with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo late Tuesday, who had "underscored the central importance of ensuring the centrality of the Afghan government in the peace process", the president said.

But Ghani has vented frustration at being relegated to the wings as his political enemies shared prayers and

meals with the Taliban while discussing the future of his country. "The Moscow meeting is nothing more than a fantasy. No one can decide without the consent of the Afghan people," Ghani told Afghan broadcaster TOLONews.

"Those who have gathered in Moscow have no executive authority. They can say what they want, but who are they representing?" The Moscow conference is the Taliban's most significant engagement with Afghan leaders in recent memory — and unique for the militants who banned television when they ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001.

Their leadership is rarely seen in public and scenes of Taliban officials clad in black turbans outlining their manifesto for live television is virtually unheard of. Before the Afghan envoys — including female delegates — the Taliban promised to loosen some restrictions on women and not seek a monopoly on power. They have proposed an "inclusive Islamic system" of governance but demanded a new Islam-based constitution for Afghanistan.

Canadian crypto exchange may have lost \$145 mn after its CEO died in India

Toronto/New York (PTI): One of Canada's largest cryptocurrency exchanges has been granted bankruptcy protection after its 30-year old founder died unexpectedly in India, taking with him passwords of tens of thousands of customers who are unable to access USD 145 million in funds.

Quadriga said it was unable to gain access to Canadian dollar 190 million (USD 145 million) of bitcoin and other digital assets after Gerald Cotten, its CEO and co-founder, died in December. He died of complications arising from Crohn's Disease, an inflammatory bowel ailment, while volunteering at an orphanage in India.

Many of the digital currencies held by Quadriga are stored offline in accounts known as "cold wallets", a way of protecting them from hackers. Cotten is the only person with access to the wallets, according to the company. Cotten's sudden death has plunged Quadriga into crisis and left it struggling to figure out how to refund more than 100,000 of its users, CNN reported.

On Tuesday, the Vancouver-based company said it was granted creditor protection in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court in British Columbia as it tries to sort out its financial mess. Cotten's widow, Jennifer Robertson, described people posting inaccurate speculation on social media about "whether he is really dead." For the past weeks, we have worked extensively to address our liquidity issues, which include attempting to locate and secure our very significant cryptocurrency reserves held in cold wallets," Quadriga said in a statement. "Unfortunately, these efforts have not been successful."

Robertson said that the laptop that Cotten used to run the currency exchange is encrypted, according to a copy of her affidavit posted online by cryptocurrency news site CoinDesk. "I do not know the password or recovery key," she said.

'Special place in Hell' for no plan Brexiteers: EU leader

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

European Union leader Donald Tusk on Wednesday condemned those calling for Brexit with no idea how to carry it out, saying he hopes Theresa May now has a "realistic" plan.

The British prime minister is due in Brussels on Thursday to discuss ways to ensure Britain's orderly withdrawal from the EU and avoid

what Tusk warned would be a "fiasco." But Tusk, standing by Irish leader Leo Varadkar, warned once again that the divorce deal May agreed last year but failed to sell to her parliament will not be reopened. Neither will the deal's "backstop" that ensures an open Irish border, he said, denouncing the British eurosceptics pushing for an abrupt "no deal" departure.

"I've been wondering what that special place in Hell looks like, for those who promoted Brexit without even a sketch of a plan how to carry it out safely," Tusk said. Ireland's Varadkar met Tusk, who represents EU member states as president of the European Council, before talks with EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker. Both top EU officials are due to host May on Thursday, but few in Brussels expect

her to come with an acceptable offer to revive the deal, 50 days from Brexit. "Today our most important task is to prevent a no deal scenario," Tusk said, stressing that the EU "is not making any new offer" and the deal is "not open for renegotiation." Offering warm support for his guest, Tusk said the European Union "will not gamble with peace" on the Irish border by

removing the backstop from the deal. "I hope that tomorrow we will hear from Prime Minister May a realistic suggestion on how to end the impasse," he said. But he added: "A sense of responsibility also tells us to prepare for a possible fiasco." Varadkar, whose government has stressed the importance of maintaining an open border between Ireland and Northern

Ireland after Brexit, thanked Tusk. "While we expect the backstop will never be used, we agreed again today it is needed as a legal guarantee to ensure there is no return to a hard border," he said. May fears she will not be able to command a majority in the House of Commons to ratify a withdrawal that binds Britain into a customs union until the border issue is resolved.

Study: Our 'oohs' and 'aahs' convey 24 types of emotion

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

The spontaneous sounds that we make to express everything from elation to embarrassment, such as 'woohoo' and 'oohs', convey at least 24 kinds of emotion, according to a study on people from four countries, including India. Scientists at the University of California (UC), Berkeley in the US conducted a statistical analysis of listener responses to more than 2,000 nonverbal exclamations known as "vocal bursts" and found they convey a lot more about what we are feeling than previously thought. Previous studies of vocal bursts set the number of recognisable emotions closer to 13.] The results, published in the American Psychologist journal, are demonstrated in vivid sound and colour on the first-ever interactive audio map of nonverbal human emotions based on the sounds we make, he said. Though limited to US responses, the study suggests humans are so keenly attuned to nonverbal signals — such as the bonding "coos" between parents and infants — that we can pick up on the subtle differences between surprise and alarm, or an amused laugh versus an embarrassed laugh.

Researchers recorded more than 2,000 vocal bursts from 56 male and female professional actors and non-actors from the US, India, Kenya and Singapore by asking them to respond to emotionally evocative scenarios. More than 1,000 adults recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk online marketplace listened to the vocal bursts and evaluated them based on the



emotions and meaning they conveyed and whether the tone was positive or negative, among several other characteristics. A statistical analysis of their responses found that the vocal bursts fit into at least two dozen distinct categories including amusement, anger, awe, confusion, contempt, contentment, desire, disappointment and disgust. For the second part of the study, researchers sampled YouTube video clips that would evoke the 24 emotions established in the first part of the study, such as babies falling, puppies being hugged and spelling-binding magic tricks. This time, 88 adults of all ages judged the vocal bursts extracted from YouTube videos, researchers said. Again, the researchers were able to categorise their responses into 24 shades of emotion. "These results show that emotional expressions colour our social interactions with spirited declarations of our inner feelings that are difficult to fake, and that our friends, co-workers, and loved ones rely on to decipher our true commitments," Cowen said.

Macedonia signs NATO accession accord

Brussels (AFP): Macedonia signed accession papers with NATO on Wednesday, a key step on the way to joining the alliance after resolving a long-running name row with Greece. The Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov and representatives of all current NATO members signed the protocol at alliance headquarters in Brussels.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said it was a "historic day" which will lead to Macedonia becoming the 30th alliance member once the deal has been ratified by all the other capitals. "All #NATO Allies have signed the Accession Protocol ... which will bring more security & prosperity to the whole region. I look forward to the day when 30 flags will fly outside NATO HQ," Stoltenberg tweeted.

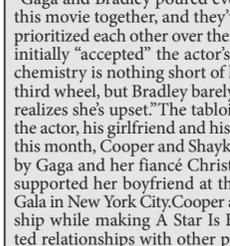
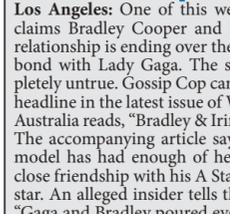
The agreement last month with Greece to change the name of the former Yugoslav republic to the Republic of North Macedonia ended one of the world's longest diplomatic disputes and paved the way for Skopje to join NATO and the European Union. Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev said it was a "great, historic day for all our citizens." "Today the largest security alliance in the world, NATO, has welcomed us," he wrote on Facebook and Twitter.

GLOBE TROTTING Irina Shayk, Bradley Cooper ending relationship over Lady Gaga?

Los Angeles: One of this week's tabloids claims Bradley Cooper and Irina Shayk's relationship is ending over the actor's close bond with Lady Gaga. The story is completely untrue. Gossip Cop can debunk it. A headline in the latest issue of Woman's Day Australia reads, "Bradley & Irina: It's Over!" The accompanying article says the supermodel has had enough of her boyfriend's close friendship with his A Star Is Born co-star. An alleged insider tells the magazine, "Gaga and Bradley poured everything into this movie together, and they've become ridiculously close as a result, to the point where they've prioritized each other over their own relationships." The supposed source goes on to say that Shayk initially "accepted" the actor's rapport with his co-star, "but it's getting to the point where their chemistry is nothing short of humiliating for her." The suspicious tipster adds, "She feels like the third wheel, but Bradley barely notices. Irina's going to have to walk out altogether before he even realizes she's upset." The tabloids have spent a lot of time trying to create a love triangle between the actor, his girlfriend and his co-star, but there's simply no drama or jealousy taking place. Earlier this month, Cooper and Shayk showed a ton of PDA at the Golden Globes, where they were joined by Gaga and her fiancé Christian Carino. A few days later, the model supported her boyfriend at the National Board of Review Awards Gala in New York City. Cooper and Gaga formed a very close friendship while making A Star Is Born, but they're both in committed relationships with other people.

Jennifer Lawrence officially engaged to Cooke Maroney

Los Angeles: Jennifer Lawrence and Cooke Maroney have got engaged after dating for over nine months. According to PageSix, the 28-year-old Oscar winner was recently seen wearing a massive engagement ring while she was hanging out with the 34-year-old art gallerist in New York City. "It was a giant rock. They seemed like they were celebrating and people were talking about it," a source told the outlet. "The ring was very noticeable. They were sitting back in a corner. She was wearing a cute black dress with white polka dots," it added. A representative of the actor confirmed to the outlet that the couple will be getting married soon. She was first romantically linked to Maroney in June 2018. They are reported to have been introduced by Lawrence's best friend Laura Simpson. Before Maroney, Lawrence was in relationship with director Darren Aronofsky, who directed her in 2017's "mother!".



Pak SC clips wings of armed forces, ISI

... says stay away from politics, act within law

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

In a rare rebuke to Pakistan's powerful military, the top court on Wednesday prohibited them from engaging in political activities and directed spy agencies like the ISI to operate within the law. Delivering a landmark verdict on the 2017 Faizabad sit-in by the hardline Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and other smaller groups, a two-member Supreme Court bench also ordered the government to act against those propagating "hated, extremism and terrorism".

"We direct the federal and provincial governments to monitor those advocating hate, extremism and terrorism and prosecute the perpetrators in accordance with the law," the bench comprising Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Mushir Alam ruled.

The court directed all government agencies and departments, including those run by the army like spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to operate within the limits defined by the law.

The bench ordered that members of the Armed Forces were prohibited from engaging in any kind of political activity, which includes supporting a party, faction or individual.

"The government of Pakistan through the Ministry of Defence and the respective Chiefs of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force are directed to initiate action against the personnel under their com-



mand who are found to have violated their oath," the court said.

Several experts were of the view that Prime Minister Imran Khan was supported by the country's powerful army in the last year's general election.

Pakistan's powerful military has ruled the country through various coups for nearly half of the country's history since independence in 1947. The military plays an important role in the country's decision making. The apex court also outlawed religious edicts called fatwas that aimed to harm others.

"A person issuing an edict or fatwa, which harms another or puts another in harm's way, must be criminally prosecuted under the Pakistan Penal Code, the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 and/or the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016," the court ruled. The court upheld that subject to reasonable restrictions imposed by law, citizens have the right to form and to

be members of political parties. They can also assemble for peaceful protest.

It said the right to assemble and protest is circumscribed only to the extent that it infringes on the fundamental rights of others, including their right to free movement and to hold and enjoy property. The court ordered that those protesters who obstruct people's right to use roads and damage or destroy property must be proceeded against in accordance with the law and held accountable.

It initiated suo motu proceedings on November 21, 2017 after TLP blocked a main highway leading to Islamabad. During the 20-day long protest in 2017, daily life in Islamabad was disrupted when protesters belonging to the TLP, Tehreek-i-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah, the Tehreek-i-Khatm-i-Nabuwat and the Pakistan Sunni Tehreek occupied the Faizabad Interchange which connects Rawalpindi and Islamabad, the busiest roads in the twin cities.

Gilani stopped from leaving country

PTI ■ LAHORE

Former Pakistan prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, who is facing corruption charges, was stopped from leaving the country by immigration officials at the Lahore airport after his name popped up in the no-fly list.

According to the Federal Investigation Agency, 66-year-old Gilani reached the Allama Iqbal International Airport here Tuesday night to board a flight for South Korea via Bangkok to attend a conference. However, his name was on the no-fly list. "At the immigration counter, Mr Gilani was

told that his name was placed on the black list therefore he could not leave the country," the FIA said, adding that it was following orders from the interior ministry. Reacting strongly, the senior Pakistan Peoples Party leader said he always appeared in courts in the different cases against him.

"There was no point in placing my name on (the) no-fly list. I was not fleeing the country.

Prime Minister Imran Khan's sole agenda seems to be targeting his political opponents," Gilani said. "The ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI



government should have informed me about blacklisting my name," Gilani said, adding that he will challenge the "illeg-

gal decision" of the government.

Gilani is facing several corruption cases and last week, the accountability court of Islamabad rejected his plea seeking exemption from personal appearance in a case related to awarding alleged illegal advertising contract to a private agency. He is accused of misusing authority to illegally grant Messrs Midas an advertising contract in contravention of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules.

The act is reported to have cost the national treasury Rs 129.07 million.

'Pak must stop its behaviour of undermining regional stability'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Pakistan's actions are often a source of "frustration" to US' regional efforts in Afghanistan, a top American general has said as he asked Islamabad to cease its behaviour undermining stability and play constructive role in achieving peace in South Asia.

During a Congressional hearing, Commander of the US Central Command General Joseph Votel told the lawmakers on Tuesday that militants operating out of Pakistan and Afghanistan continue to threaten Afghan stability as well as stoke tensions between Pakistan and India. "We look to regional actors such as Pakistan to cease behaviour undermining regional stability and play constructive role in achieving peace in Afghanistan as well as the whole of South Asia," General Votel told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. In his testimony,



General Votel said that Pakistan has taken positive steps to assist Special US Representative of Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad in support of Afghanistan reconciliation by facilitating talks with the Taliban. But Pakistan "has avoided taking any concrete or irreversible steps such as arresting or expelling Taliban leaders who do not cooperate with reconciliation efforts," he said. Since being appointed in September last, Khalilzad has

good on its promises of support to US efforts focused on finding a negotiated settlement to the Afghanistan conflict," the US Commander said. If Pakistan plays a positive role in achieving a settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan, the US will have opportunity and motive to help Islamabad fulfil that role, as peace in the region is the most important mutual priority for the US and Pakistan, he said.

Pakistan, Votel said, presents the US with challenges and opportunities in the execution of its South Asia Strategy. As a state possessing nuclear weapons that sits at the nexus of Russian, Chinese, Indian, Iranian, and US geopolitical interests, Pakistan will always be a country of importance to the US, he noted.

"However, Pakistan's actions are often a source of frustration to the US regional efforts in Afghanistan," Votel said. The Pentagon's

posture with Pakistan involves supporting Department of State as they pursue a diplomatic solution with Islamabad to end the conflict in Afghanistan while ensuring that Pakistan's equities are acknowledged and addressed in any future agreement.

Votel told lawmakers that Pakistan has not taken concrete actions against the safe havens of violent extremist organisations or VEOs inside its borders. "Similarly, VEOs located in Afghanistan conduct attacks inside Pakistan. This cross-border instability and violence generates tension along both sides of the border," he said.

"The suspension of US security assistance funds to Pakistan remains in place. Meanwhile, some US Pakistan military cooperation activities have continued, demonstrating the importance of military cooperation, despite challenges in the bilateral relationship," the general said.

Egypt Oppn rejects move to extend el-Sissi's rule

Cairo (AP): Egyptian opposition parties have formed a coalition against proposed changes to the constitution that would allow President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to stay in office well beyond the end of his current term in 2022, two opposition leaders said on Wednesday. Egypt's parliament has given its preliminary approval to the changes, after two-thirds of the general committee endorsed the proposed amendments on Tuesday.

The 596-seat assembly — which is packed with el-Sissi supporters — will take a final vote on February 17, but the amendments would also need to be put to a national referendum. Abdel-Aziz el-Husseini, a senior leader in the Karama, or Dignity party, said that 11 parties met the previous day and declared their opposition to the proposed changes.

The group established a "union for the defence of the constitution" that includes secular and left-leaning parties and lawmakers, he added. Khaled Dawood, another opposition leader and former head of the liberal Dostour, or Constitution party, questioned the legitimacy of the process to amend the 2014 charter, citing a constitutional clause that bars extending the two-term limit.

"We will challenge the proposed amendment before the country's Supreme Constitutional court," he said. Amending the constitution was widely expected. Pro-government lawmakers and media figures have argued for years that the constitution is crippling the president's efforts to advance the country, including overhauling its economy and defeating Islamic militants. El-Sissi himself said in 2015 that "the constitution was drafted with good intentions." A draft of the proposed amendments shows concerted efforts by the pro-government "Supporting Egypt" coalition to consolidate el-Sissi's power.

The 64-year-old leader could be allowed to run for a third and fourth six-year term, potentially extending his rule to 2034. Talaat Khalil, a lawmaker attending Monday's meeting, decried the proposed changes, especially a broad clause stating the military's duty is to protect "the constitution and democracy and the fundamental makeup of the country and its civil nature."

He told a press conference on Monday that this could allow the armed forces to support one politician at the cost of another. "And this is a great danger," he said.

Hindu temple vandalised in Pak, PM orders swift action

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/KARACHI

A Hindu temple was vandalised in Pakistan's Sindh province by miscreants who set the holy books and idols on fire, drawing a strong reaction from Prime Minister Imran Khan who ordered swift and decisive action against the perpetrators.

The incident happened last week in Kumb, a town in Khairpur district. The unidentified assailants fled the after vandalism. Khan Tuesday night took to Twitter to call upon the provincial authorities to take swift action against the culprits.

"The govt of Sindh must take swift and decisive action against the perpetrators. This is against the teachings of the Quran," Khan said. The community has approached the police to register a case against unidentified persons.

There was no caretaker at the temple because the community felt that it was safe enough, since it was surrounded by their houses. After the incident, the



Hindus in the area held a protest in the city, Samaa TV reported. Rajesh Kumar Hardasani, the adviser of the Pakistan Hindu Council, has demanded the formation of a special task force for the security of Hindu temples.

"This action has caused unrest among the Hindu community. These types of attacks are done in an attempt to disturb religious

harmony across the country," he said. Police said that they were hunting for the attackers but so far no arrest was made. Nobody or group took responsibility of the attack. Hindus form almost two per cent of the 220 million population in Muslim-majority Pakistan. Most of the Hindus live in Sindh province. They often complain of harassment by the extremists.

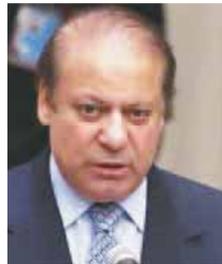
Sharif to be shifted to cardiac facility

PTI ■ LAHORE

Nawaz Sharif will be shifted to a cardiac facility for treatment of his heart complications, an official said on Wednesday amid reports that jailed former prime minister wanted to go to London. Sharif, 69, is serving a seven-year jail term over graft charges. Sharif was shifted to the Services Hospital from Kot Lakhpat jail Lahore on Saturday on the recommendations of the third special medical board. The fourth medical board at the Services Hospital said Sharif's treatment is possible in any specialised cardiac health facility in Pakistan.

"We examined Nawaz Sharif and carried out his tests related to blood count, hormones, bio-chemistry, radiology, heart, kidneys, brain and eyes. He also underwent CT scan, ultrasound and Colour Doppler tests at the Services Hospital Lahore," Professor Mahmood Ayaz, the head of the medical board at the Services Hospital, said.

"After examining all results, the medical board has reached a unanimous deci-



sion that Sharif needs some kind of cardiac intervention. For the purpose he should be shifted to a cardiac institute," he said. Sharif had heart issues because of his previous history of some diseases, including high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney problem, he added.

"According to the findings of the board, Nawaz Sharif is facing some problems in blood supply of heart veins that must be addressed by cardiac specialists. We had engaged some cardiac specialists from the Punjab Institute of Cardiology who examined the patient and his test reports and suggested little change in Mr Sharif's medicines," Ayaz said.

He said the board has recommended to the Punjab government that Sharif should be thoroughly examined by cardiologists for his cardiac complications. A Punjab government official told PTI that Sharif will be shifted to the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) Lahore for treatment of his cardiac complications. "A new board will be constituted at the PIC and any decision to shift him back to hospital will be taken on its recommendations," the official said.

The three-time prime minister, who is serving a seven-year imprisonment in Al-Azizia Mills corruption case, was earlier rushed to Lahore's Punjab Institute of Cardiology after he complained of heart-related complications. He was later discharged from the hospital and taken back to jail following the medical tests.

Sharif's party PML-N has been demanding that Sharif should be shifted to London for better treatment. "Sharif always had treatment in London as he is best managed there," PML-N spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb said.

The PML-N's reported request to shift him to London has triggered speculation that it is keen to strike a deal with government. When asked if Sharif would be being shifted to London for treatment under some deal, his daughter Maryam Nawaz told reporters in hospital that her father was more interested in going back to jail.

"Mian sahib wants to go back to jail." Sharif has been behind the bars since December 24, 2018, after an accountability court convicted him in one of the three corruption cases filed under the direction of the Supreme Court. The Al-Azizia Steel Mill case was about setting up steel mills in Saudi Arabia allegedly with corruption money.

Three corruption cases - Avenfield properties case, Flagship investment case and Al-Azizia steel mills case - were launched against the Sharif family by the National Accountability Bureau in 2017 following a judgment by the Supreme Court that disqualified Sharif in the Panama Papers case in 2017.

BRITAIN ROYAL GUN SALUTE



Regular and Reserve soldiers fire gun salutes to mark the 67th anniversary of Her Majesty The Queen's Accession to the Throne, in Green Park beside Buckingham Palace, London, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019. Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne on the death of her father King George VI on Feb. 6.

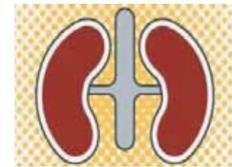
Made-to-order human kidneys one step closer

PTI ■ TOKYO

Researchers say they have successfully grown functional kidneys inside rats using just a few donor stem cells, an advance with significant implications for human organ transplantation. For patients with end-stage renal disease, a kidney transplant is the only hope for regaining quality of life, according to the study published in the journal Nature Communications. Yet many of these patients will never undergo transplant surgery due to a chronic shortage of donor kidneys, said researchers from the National Institute for Physiological Sciences in Japan.

With 95,000 patients on the waiting list for a donor kidney in the US alone, demand far outstrips supply, they said. However, researchers have been working on ways to grow healthy organs outside the human body. One such method, called blastocyst complementation, has already produced promising results.

Researchers take blastocysts, the clusters of cells formed several days after egg fertilisation, from mutant animals missing specific organs



and inject them with stem cells from a normal donor, not necessarily of the same species. The stem cells then differentiate to form the entire missing organ in the resulting animal.

The new organ retains the characteristics of the original stem cell donor, and can thus potentially be used in transplantation therapy. "We previously used blastocyst complementation to generate rat pancreas in a pancreatic mutant mice," said Teppi Goto, the lead author of the study.

"We therefore decided to investigate whether the method could be used to generate functional kidneys, which would have much greater application in regenerative medicine owing to the high donor demand," Goto said. Initial attempts by the researchers to grow rat kidneys in mice proved un-

successful, as rat stem cells did not readily differentiate into the two main types of cells needed for kidney formation.

However, when the reverse scenario was attempted, mouse stem cells efficiently differentiated inside rat blastocysts, forming the basic structures of a kidney. After being implanted into pseudo-pregnant rats, the complemented blastocysts matured into normal fetuses, researchers said. More than two thirds of the resulting rat neonates contained a pair of kidneys derived from the mouse stem cells.

Further screening showed that all of the kidneys were structurally intact, and at least half could potentially produce urine. "Our findings confirm that interspecific blastocyst complementation is a viable method for kidney generation," said study corresponding author Masumi Hirabayashi.

"In the future, this approach could be used to generate human stem cell-derived organs in livestock, potentially extending the lifespan and improving the quality of life of millions of people worldwide," said Hirabayashi.

J&K IS INDIA'S NEXT POWERHOUSE

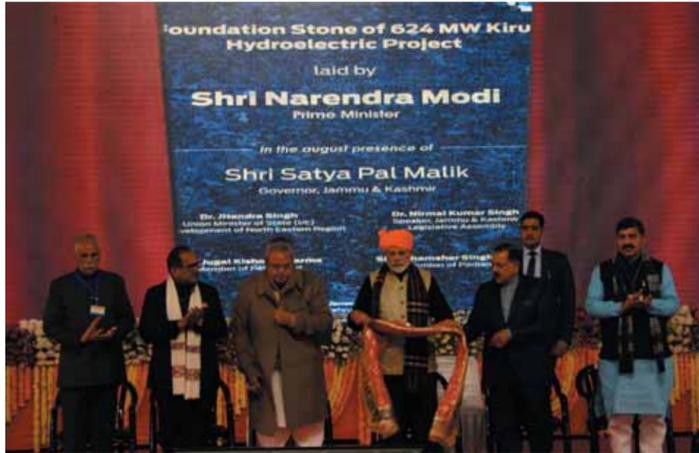
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir, laid the foundation stone of the 624 MW Kiru Hydro Electric Project at Vijaypur. The project aims to harness the hydro electric potential of the state and help in the development of the region significantly

The Kiru Hydro Electric Project is being implemented by the Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Limited (CVPPPL) and is a joint venture between the NHPC Limited, Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Limited (JKSPDC), and PTC India Limited.

Satya Pal Malik, Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region, Dr Nirmal Singh, Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Shamsheer Singh, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha also graced the occasion.

During the address Modi said that the hydro electric project shall not only meet the increasing energy requirement of the state but also provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to thousands of persons during the construction phase and thereafter during the operation phase.

Kiru HEP, to be constructed on River Chenab in the District Kishtwar, in Jammu and Kashmir, is one of the biggest hydroelectric projects under implementation in the state. The project is scheduled to be completed in 54 months at an estimated cost of Rs. 4708



crore. The annual generation from the project shall be 2272 MU. The project envisages construction of 135 m high concrete gravity dam and an underground power house with four units of 156 MW each (624 MW).

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has accorded a waiver of free power at decremental rate for the first five years and the water usage charges for the first ten years after the commissioning of the project besides the exemption of levy of tolls on all imports. It has also given a consent for waiver of nine per cent

state GST for the project on order to keep the project cost and its tariff at the minimum. The government will get 12 per cent free power from the sixth year of the commissioning and the water usage charges after 10 years.

The welfare of the people affected from the hydroelectric project shall be taken care of through the proper implementation of a comprehensive rehabilitation and resettlement plan. The cost of the land for house and house construction assistance, scholarship to children of the project affected families, training program for

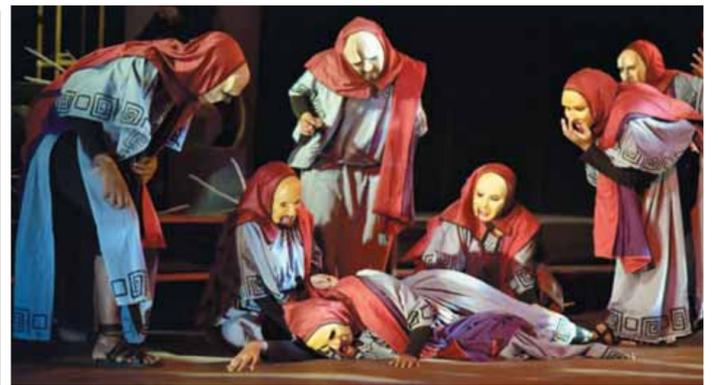
skill development and so on has been included in the plan. Also, a provision of Rs 29 crore has been earmarked in the plan for infrastructural development in the project affected areas to improve the socio economic condition of the people.

An additional one per cent free power towards Local Area Development Fund (LADF) shall be provided by the CVPPPL with a matching contribution by the Jammu and Kashmir Government after the commissioning of the project as per the Hydro Power Policy of the Government of India

and an annual revenue of approximately Rs. 25 crore shall be available for the infrastructural development and welfare schemes for the Project Affected People on a continuous basis over the life of the project.

Extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities have also been taken up in the region for the development of local area. The construction of the project will also lead to a considerable improvement of the roads and bridges as well as the communication systems and electric supply system in the region, thereby developing the area socio-economically.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is bestowed with huge hydro potential and in the Kishtwar region there are many projects in the pipeline for construction. This potential has to be harnessed so that the state can become the power house of the country which will bring about an overall development of the region as well.



Bharat Rang Mahotsav brings the largest theatre spectacle

The 20th edition of the largest theatre festival of Asia-Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM), is being hosted in Delhi which has brought together over 100 national and international theatre acts in a 21-day long spectacle. Organised by the National School of Drama, the 20th BRM has put forth some very innovative and creative performances and street plays since its beginning.

Some interesting plays included 'Besure Gramophone Wala Mechanic', a play by Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women (IGDTUW). The play revolved around an old mechanic who owns a repairing shop and is given a 72-year-old gramophone to repair. What if the instrument goes beyond repair? Another play, 'Kahkasha' by the Jesus and Mary College, revolved around hyper masculinity. It explored the themes of childhood learning at home, how masculinity and femininity are complete opposites with no flexibility. The play talked about issues of body image and how it's not just a woman's problem. Special emphasis was placed on eating disorders and muscle dysmorphia and normalising the fact that men have them too.

The play also addressed the correlation between the problematic representation of male characters in pop culture and how it propagates ideas of hyper masculinity.

Some notable plays that have been performed in this year's festival were 'Abhimanya Sundari Thirukalyanam', a Tamil play dramatised from the Mahabharata's story of Abhimanya Sundari Thirukalyanam; 'Titas



Ekti Nodir Naam', a Bengali play which talked about the fishermen societies residing on the banks of Titas in Bangladesh; 'King Oedipus', a Bengali play which followed the abode of Cadmus, who was burnt to ashes because of the wrath of the Gods; 'Ananyaa', a Marathi play which is a story of an ordinary girl, Ananya, who possessed the potential to do something extraordinary and 'Shifa...The Healing', a Hindi play which was based on the HIV+ people talking about the positivity of life and about searching within oneself, to find a new way of life.

Ambiance performances are a daily feature of the BRM which showcase a colourful landscape of the culture. These performances show the lesser known local, traditional, and folk forms from the states to the heart of the national capital. They are being performed at intervals within the NSD premises at the auditoriums before the plays. Some notable performances include Laihra, Bamboo Dance and Gidda.

CORPORATE BRIEFS

43 EXECUTIVE TRAINEES INDUCTED IN POSOCO



The Power System Operation Corporation Limited (POSOCO) has commenced a one year training programme—AARAMBH, for its third batch Executive Trainees. The ceremony was inaugurated by the chairman and managing director of POSOCO, KVS Baba in presence of all the directors of the

company. The batch of 43 trainees from Electrical Engineering, Finance and Computer Science will undergo a modular program of four month's classroom training followed by an on-the-job training. These trainees will be placed at the various RLDCs upon the successful completion of the programme.



The 12th edition of KIIT Premier League (KPL) All India (D&N)-T-20 Cricket Tournament organised by KIIT Deemed University kicked off at the KIIT Cricket Stadium recently. The tournament was inaugurated by Dr Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT and KISS in the presence of BCCI selectors Banta Singh, MS Kumar, Jaikumar Sinha, Abinash Kumar and Lalit Patel. Divided into four pools, teams from 12 universities from across the country are participating in the tournament.

BSES GETS CII'S AWARD FOR 'CUSTOMER OBSESSION'

BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) has been conferred with the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) Award for 'Customer Obsession' for 2016 in the service sector in the large business category. With this, the BYPL has become the first power distribution utility to bag this coveted honour. The award was presented by Nalin Kohli, Chairman, CII National Committee on MSME Council and Start-up Council and Kiran Karnik, CII National Committee on Telecom and Broadband. Additionally, BYPL also received a special recognition for 'Leveraging Digital Technology for Superior Customer Experience'. Instituted for promoting pro-customer culture in the Indian industry, the awards aim to help organisations understand the various critical elements for delivering superior customer experience across the entire value chain.

IGNCA'S EXHIBITION ON PAPER CRAFT AND CALLIGRAPHY

In celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and the Dastkari Haat Samiti have collaborated to present a unique exhibition, combining hand-made paper and calligraphy on the theme of Mahatma Gandhi. The event explores images, symbols, words and thoughts related to Mahatma Gandhi for Gandhi Virasat-Kagazkala. Eleven

calligraphers from across the country have presented their work in their inimitable styles and regional scripts, collectively offering 61 works which are on display at one of the twin galleries at the IGNCA on Janpath. They show how handmade paper and calligraphy enhance each other on beautifully textured canvases to convey Gandhi's deeply valuable messages to humanity.

SANJAY DALMIA ANNOUNCES HOUSING AND CLEANLINESS SCHEME



The former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and a renowned businessman, Sanjay Dalmia, has announced a 'Housing and Swachhta Abhiyan' at Chirawa in Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan in the memory of his late parents, Lalita Dalmia and Vishnu Hari Dalmia. Expressing grief on the demise of his father, Dalmia announced this scheme for the needy people of the area. Chirawa is the native place of the Dalmia family and they have been constantly working for the betterment and upliftment of the region. Under the aegis of the Dalmia Seva Trust, Sanjay Dalmia continuously conducts various philanthropic activities for the underprivileged in Rajasthan.

SCOPE ORGANISES CONCLAVE ON STARTUPS

The Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) is organising a two-day Conclave on Startups between February 14 and 15. This is a unique initiative of SCOPE to bring together the stakeholders, viz. government entities, state startups missions, public sector enterprises, industry champions, knowledge partners and the media on a common platform. To be addressed by key stakeholders of the industry, the event will offer an opportunity to the senior executives of the public sector enterprises, banks and insurance companies to participate on nomination.



Muzaffar Hussain Baig, MP, distributed wheel chairs and other assistive devices in the presence of Dr Nasir Ahmad Naqash, DC, Baramulla, Manoj Kumar, Chief General Manager, Uri-I Power Station, NHPC Limited and Manish Sahai, General Manager (Civil), Uri-II Power Station at Dak Bungalow, Baramulla.



CONFLUENCE OF ART AND CULTURE AT INDIA ART FAIR

The India Art Fair, a four day exhibition recently held in Delhi, brought together artists from India and abroad who showcased their state-of-the-art paintings, sculptures and masterpieces of diverse ranges-traditional, minimal, miniature, contemporary, and modern art. The event promoted the cultural discourse through a bright line up of large-scale installations, conversations, screening, performances and live events to the audience.



Dr Udit Raj, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, inaugurated the newly extended Foot-over-Bridge at Ghevra (North-West Delhi) Railway station. Rajiv Dhanker, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infra), Northern Railway, Delhi and other senior railway officers were also present on the occasion.



Dr M Ravi Kanth, the chairman and managing director of HUDCO inaugurated the 'HUDCO Annual Sports Day' at the Thyagaraj Stadium in New Delhi.

KGH ORGANISES CANCER AWARENESS DRIVE

A Cancer Awareness programme was organised by the Kasturba Gandhi Hospital (KGH) of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) in the Vivekanand Auditorium, Delhi which was presided over by the hospital's CMO, Dr Alok Majumdar. He discussed tobacco related cancer in detail and advised people to desist from the use of tobacco related products. Dr Tulu Chakraborty, Senior DMO/FC, focused on the subject—'Guard Her Against Cervical Cancer', and stressed that how cervical cancer can be prevented through HPV vaccines.

Now 24x7 power in Ladakh

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 220 kV Srinagar-Drass-Kargil-Khaltsi-Leh Transmission System, in a step towards powering Ladakh and connecting the country's northern most part to the National Grid. He commented, "I got the opportunity of laying the foundation stone of this project and today, again, I have got the opportunity to dedicate this project. With this over ₹2,000 crore project, the problem of electricity in Leh-Ladakh is going to be minimised."

The PM had laid the foundation stone for this project on August 12, 2014 and within 4.5 years, the project has been successfully completed.

Built at a height of around 3000-4000 meters, this approximately 335 km long transmission line has been constructed by the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Navratna company of the Government of India, under the Ministry of Power. Under this project, the four new state-of-the-art 220/66 kV Gas Insulated Substations built at Drass, Kargil, Khaltsi and Leh, will help to ensure 24x7 quality power in all weather conditions.

This project will not only help evacuate surplus power of the Kargil and Leh Hydel stations of NHPC in summers, but will also supply power to the region in winters when temperatures dip and the hydro electricity generation



does not match up. The project will meet the power demand of Ladakh region at economical rates.

This transmission project of approximately ₹2,266 crore will result in minimising the massive use of diesel generating sets during winters, and thus will not only help in protecting the environment, but will also save on the import expenditure in foreign currency, which is being incurred on crude oil, thereby benefiting the state exchequer. It will also give a boost to the tourism sector, especially the hospitality industry in Ladakh, as quality electricity at reasonable rates will be accessible due to non-reliance on diesel.

This task executed by POWERGRID in unforeseen weather conditions was made possible by immaculate project monitoring skills, high team spirit and strategic planning and with the use of modern technologies. The line remains snow covered for nearly six

months with the minimum temperature going down to as low as -40 degree Celsius at Drass. Therefore, specially designed tower foundations were constructed with the assistance from the Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) to spore the tower foundations, as the work force braved the challenge of working at lesser oxygen levels.

The event, where the PM made the announcement, during his recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir, was attended by Satya Pal Malik, the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region along with Haji Anayat Ali, Chairman, Legislative Council, Jammu and Kashmir, Jamyang Tsering Namgial, Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC, Feroz Ahmed, Chairman, LAHDC, Kargil, and Chering Dorjay, Member of Legislative Council, Leh.

Soya for a healthy and tasty living

The Vezley Foods is showcasing its range of soya-based products for the vegetarian food lovers at the ongoing 33rd International Crafts Mela at Surajkund in Faridabad. The visitors to the fair can enjoy finger-licking snacks like nugget, shawarma, chop sticks and soya chhika.

The company's managing director, Amit Bajaj said, "Unfortunately soya has been ignored in the food market for a long time. We have introduced this magic bean with a new thought which tastes good too. Today we face many health related problems like blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and so on and one of the biggest reasons behind this is an unbalanced and an unhealthy diet. Our products are an alternate to junk food since they are healthy. We believe in healthy



and delicious food for all and no compromise is made with the quality, hygienic and the nutrition value of the products."

Commenting on the health benefits of the key ingredient—soya, Bajaj said that soya is one of the best sources of protein. Soya has a substance named Lecithin, which is very good for the skin and is also beneficial for a healthy heart. "Soya con-

tains all essential amino acid proteins which are required for the body. Besides, soya is rich in vitamin, carbohydrate, fibre, iron and calcium and can provide all necessary nutrition to the body in case one does not consume meat, fish or eggs. One can consume good, unsaturated fat from soya which controls cholesterol," added Bajaj.

CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION IN DELHI

The People's Republic of China, in coordination with the CD Foundation, organised the Chinese New Year Celebrations at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi. The annual 'Happy Chinese New Year' program is supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China. The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Suresh Prabhu, graced the event as chief guest along with His Excellency Luo Zhaoxue, the Chinese Ambassador to India.

Trend Slazer

Priyanka on adding Nick's name

Actress PRIYANKA CHOPRA said that she always wanted to add singer and husband Nick Jonas' name to her own, and says it doesn't take anything away from her identity.

Priyanka changed her Instagram handle to Priyanka Chopra Jonas after getting married to him in December. She opened up about her decision when she appeared on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* to promote her Hollywood Netflix film *Isn't It Romantic*.

"I always wanted to add his name to mine because I feel like we are becoming family. And I'm a little traditional and old school about that," said she.

The actress also said it doesn't "take away my identity. He gets added to who I am."



'We shouldn't label special numbers as item songs. I have done so many songs and I never felt objectified in any of them. I have done all the songs willingly, and knowing the situation. But if anyone feels objectified with the songs then it is important for them to come forward and speak.' —Malaika Arora



Actress SHIKHA TALSANIA will be making her debut in the digital space with web series *Gormint*. Shikha will be seen essaying a "pivotal role" in the Amazon Prime Original Series. "Manav Kaul and Girish Kulkarni have also joined the show. In the political satire, Shikha will be seen as one of the key members of Manav Kaul's team. The cast has already started shooting together," said the source.



Ariana won't perform at Grammys

Singer ARIANA GRANDE won't be performing at the forthcoming Grammy Awards. The decision came after Grande and producers sparred over which songs she would perform at the gala.

She felt "insulted" after producers initially refused to allow her to perform 7 rings, the latest single from her next album *Thank U, Next*. Grande is also nominated for two awards — Best Pop Vocal Album for *Sweetener* and Best Pop Solo Performance for *God is a woman*. The 2019 Grammy Awards will take place on February 10.



THE CASE

Actress SWARA BHASKER talks about how the law that swears to protect the people in turn creates trouble for them because of their lack of awareness. By CHAHAK MITTAL

DOESN'T REST

Did you know that a woman can't be arrested after six in the evening and if she is being taken into the police custody after that, there has to be a woman guard around her all the time till she's there. Well, actress Swara Bhasker came to know the fact recently.

There are laws that lay down the substantive rights of the masses, pertaining to the benefits of the people. However, due to lack of proper awareness, such provisions hardly yield any justice, highlights Swara as she speaks about the forthcoming drama on Colors, *Courtroom*.

She says, "There are numerous laws which people don't know about but should be aware of. The show will make these legal procedures and important laws accessible to people in an interesting way." It is because none will ever specifically open a book to read about laws, else they would have been lawyers.

She says that there's a fear that grips people when they first hear of court and legal procedures. "They always want to avoid them. They start thinking about the high court and repeated visits to the lower ones for case proceedings, feeling that the next 25 years of their lives might just get wasted doing this. Pendency is a great issue in our country. But that is also because common people hardly know the exact court procedures and the way law works in the country," says Swara. She highlights that it's interesting "how law is made for people's protection and that in turn puts them into trouble."

The actress says that when she got to know about the show, she found it very "interesting" even though she is not a part of it, she wanted to support it.

The *Anarkali of Aarah* actress believes that it's important for our society to question the right and wrong of things. She says, "In our country most people act without thinking. We are just reacting to things. Such shows are important for them to know, think, question and act accordingly."

There have been shows like *Crime Patrol*, *Savdhaan India*, that have showed numerous real-life cases of crime against humanity and alerted the society. Swara believes that such shows are capable of analysing fear as well as tracing the criminal mindset.

She says, "It depends on the way a particular crime is portrayed. No subject in itself is good or bad." She believes that if you choose to "fetishise" a crime or "sensationalise" it and show it in a "dhinchak" way by using sensational headlines around it, it will only make it seem justified to those who have a pervert mindset. We don't need to look at fiction for sensationalising any crime as our TV soaps and news channels are enough. Many of them report on such heinous events in an irresponsible manner."

Giving an example, she talks about the film *Talvar*, a repertory on Arushi-Hemraj murder case of

2008. She exclaims, "There's a difference in the way the film shows the case as compared to some TV shows that have tried to show the same case in a sensational manner. No subject in itself is good or bad. It's important for people who create fiction to show a crime in a sensitive manner that makes people also delve deeper into it seriously and as something that is unjustified."

Adding on to that, she says that showing a rape or molestation of a woman that objectifies their body and fetishises the violence in a perverse manner "can only make the crime appear pleasurable and justified to some people. It's all a game of perception."

Even though the actress has been trolled by multiple accounts, she continues to be very active on social media when it comes to raising concerns over crimes against women. She says that she doesn't believe in making social media as a courtroom of justice just like it increasingly is becoming.

"Social media has become a court in itself and I am very much against this idea. You can't replace the judiciary with mob lynchings, virtual trails or any kind of revolution on Twitter. It's for connecting and socialising and spreading views, not for making a jury out of it," says she.

Recalling the Mumbai attacks of 26/11, she says that when Kasab had been caught, "there was an anger and *josh* among people to kill him by hanging him on the streets. Such a dangerous thing to do and ask for! There was mob violence all around. Indeed he was terrorist and had to be punished. But not in this way."

She goes on to add, "We have to be very careful when we talk about justice. We can't turn into inhuman carnivores or devils in order to get justice. Hence, there's a court and a room of people who have read about the Constitution and law to give justice to us. They know the way and are much qualified, trained and smarter than us common people to take law in their hands. Let it happen the rational way."

Swara, who was trolled incessantly for her masturbation scene in her film *Veere Di Wedding*, says that she doesn't regret doing or saying anything that she does, especially on social media. "I don't ever regret it. I don't feel the need to. When

you are under the public eye, you have to have a thick skin and be firm on whatever you say. People will always dig something out of it. This doesn't mean you stay quiet against the wrong."

Talking about challenging patriarchy at home, she says that it will be done only when we start speaking up. It is something that equally affects the boys as it does to the girls. "The first step to challenging it is to say something against it and stop it. If someday a girl is tired or has an injury and she has to serve tea to her father, why does not the son do it in that case? Why only the daughter? If the child comes back at 3 'o' clock in the night, the mother will wake up to ask about serving food for him/her. Why?"

Hence, it "begins" with such basic habits, she says, adding that "fighting for it is a later scenario, the first thing is to learn how to recognise it."

Talking about her previous opening on sexual harassment at the workplace, she says that women don't know what is happening to them. "When I shared about the incident, I realised that just because the harasser never touched me, it doesn't mean that it wasn't harassment. I managed to save myself. I realised at that time it didn't feel like harassment to me because of a lack of awareness. To recognise, we need to break the silence and start conversations."

She says that women have been raising their voices since time immemorial but it's only now that our ears have risen to hear them out. "The Vishakha case is an example and it was in the late 1990s. We are fighting for the same thing even today — sexual harassment at workplace. It's been three decades since," says Swara.

Talking about the #MeToo movement, she says that we are looking at the movement in just one way — how many women have come and spoken against their harassers.

But she feels we shouldn't judge the campaign only on that basis. "We should look at it as a cathartic movement which is breaking a silence and teaching to recognise the wrong. It is also about accepting and recognising that this happened to me years ago and today I have the courage to speak up against it. People through this, could realise that a certain person wasn't just a stupid or insane man, rather he was a predator," she says.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar

YIN AND YANG

Actress SANA SAYYAD feels that the fight for good over evil is universal. By AYUSHI SHARMA

From *kundali* to tarot card reading, people across the globe have been curious about predicting their future. Everyone has been trying to alter their destiny with gemstones to warding off evil and wanting to know what future has in store for them. But do these fortune-tellers even exist? They sure do, in tales.

Actress Sana Sayyad plays the character of Drishti in StarPlus' new offering — *Divya Drishti*, a narrative of twin sisters who are blessed with powers, they have been separated by fate but hope of reuniting with each other keeps them going. Sana's character, who is born with a superpower, can see the impending forthcoming and Divya, on the other hand, can change them.

Sana explains that in the show, as Drishti and Divya try to reunite with each other on every full moon's night, a threat looms over them. The wicked witch or *pishachini*, who is equipped with a powerful dagger and has a hollow eye, haunts Drishti by malevolent visions of her. There are certain events including the witch's regular appearances that make her wonder whether her gifted superpowers are really a boon or a mere jinx?

Sana says, "The show has been conceived keeping in mind the new wave of concepts that comes with a little element of thrill and keeps viewers on the edge of the seats."

She feels that these days, such kind of fictional shows are "quite in trend." Even though people don't believe in it, they enjoy watching it. She says, "Every genre has a certain kind of audience."

She hasn't done anything of this kind before and this is the reason why Sana is excited to play such a character. "Initially I had no idea how to react on the script. I



had to do a lot of home work like watching a few series and films. I am still trying to adapt to a lot of things. The whole idea of working hard, showcasing something new and the challenges that I had to fulfill just got me on it," says Sana.

The actress shares that the show has got many layers to it. Having superpowers is the "USP" but apart from that there are other relevant things as well. "You'll see the bonding between two sisters, a lot of thrill, suspense, twist and turns, moral values, romance and friendship."

Sana explains that the show's story telling value is good versus evil. She says, "Conflict of good and evil is a concept that has survived for over ages and has long been ingrained into literature. The fight is considered to be universal. It is usually seen that the good must defeat the evil, and this is also that journey in its simplest form. It's always important to showcase the *achayi ki burayi pe jeet* type of content."

What's your kid browsing?

A survey reveals people's habits and behaviour towards internet safety. By TEAM VIVA

Today, we cannot imagine our lives without the internet. It's not an era of gaining knowledge through spending hours in libraries and with books. It's a Google Search era. However, not many are aware of the impact it has on people and about creating a safer and better internet.

On the Safer Internet Day, an online marketplace company released a survey about 2019 internet behaviour and impact. The survey with 26,000+ netizens revealed internet behaviour and attitude towards safety — both online and in general — with an aim to drive awareness and call for action to all users and play an active role towards creating a better and safer internet for all, especially the younger lot. The survey covers respondents between 18 to 55 years of age from Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Chennai and Hyderabad.

As per the survey, a majority of netizens neglected cybersecurity practices in their personal lives. Around 57 per cent respondents showed negligence towards their safety — both online and offline.

Around 56 per cent of netizens freely shared their personal details like mobile number on their professional or official social media accounts. Over 14,543 users made their contact numbers visible online on accounts like LinkedIn, whereas only 11,648 users didn't share it.

There were some personal revelations too. While 6,355 netizens said that they regularly monitor their children and what they do online,

9,600 of them never did it, whereas, around 10, 236 netizens said that they don't have children. The total graph showed that 60 per cent of the parents in the surveyed group didn't monitor the content their kids consume online.

Moving on to personal awareness, around 67 per cent said they skipped reading the 'terms & conditions' or any other safety/legal guidelines while signing up to a website or using a product. There only 8,689 users who read the terms and conditions against 17,502 users who didn't.

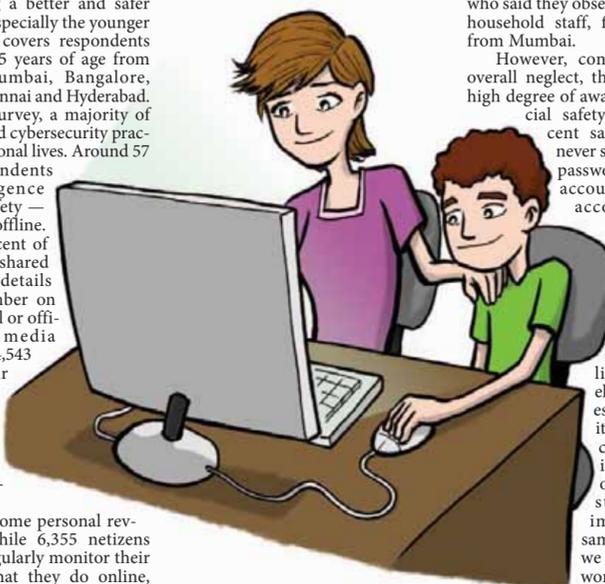
The survey also revealed some regular habits like changing of pass-

words. While 54 per cent of the people said they had not changed the passwords to their social media accounts in the last six months to a year, 31 per cent admitted they cannot even recall how long had it been since they last changed their passwords.

A similar neglect towards safety measures was also observed with police verification of household staff. Around 75 per cent confirmed that they had not conducted a police verification or did not know if one had to be done. About only 25 per cent confirmed having observed this process for household staff. Respondents from Delhi were the highest among those who said they observe this process for household staff, followed by those from Mumbai.

However, contradictory to the overall neglect, there also existed a high degree of awareness with financial safety. Around 68 per cent said that they had never shared their OTP or password for their bank account, social media accounts, laptop or phone with anyone.

L a v a n y a Chandan, general counsel of the said company, said, "The internet dominates our lives like nothing else. It is in our interest, therefore, to use it in a manner that continues to improve the quality of our lives while staying safe by implementing the same level of caution we exercise in the real world."



VIDARBHA SNIFF SECOND TITLE

Chasing 206 to win elusive Ranji Trophy, Saurashtra struggle at 58/5 against defending champions

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Saurashtra stared down the barrel after Cheteshwar Pujara's second successive failure that put defending champions Vidarbha on the brink of an encore after a stirring fourth day of the Ranji Trophy final on Wednesday.

Left-arm spinner Aditya Sarwate once again turned out to be star batsman's nemesis as he was trapped leg before for nought with Saurashtra tottering at 58 for 5 in their pursuit of 206.

Sarwate (3/13 in 10 overs) bamboozled the Saurashtra batsmen after being handed the new ball on a track that offered turn and variable bounce.

Saurashtra were best chasers during the knockout stage but their reliable batsmen came a cropper in the most-important clash.

Going into the final day, Saurashtra who have ended runners-up twice in the past, need to score 148 more runs on a tricky track with Vishvaraj Jadeja (23) and Kamlesh Makvana (2) set to resume the chase.

It will be more about the battle of nerves, considering that lower-order batsmen from both the sides have shown that scoring runs is not impossible, if the application is correct.

Earlier, left-arm spinner Dharmendrasinh Jadeja (6/96) had cleaned up the Vidarbha top-order early in the day to hand Saurashtra an advantage but to their credit, the hosts did extremely well to reach 200 after being reduced to 147 for eight.

Mohit Kale contributed 38 off 94 balls and Sarwate, batting at number eight, produced a combative 49 after hosts resumed the day at 55 for two.



Vidarbha bowler Aditya Sarwate exults after dismissing a Saurashtra batsman on Day 4 of the Ranji Trophy final match in Nagpur



Sarwate faced 133 balls in his fighting knock and hit five boundaries, negating the good work done by Saurashtra bowlers.

Sarwate, who was the last man out in Vidarbha innings, then returned to rattle the Saurashtra top-order with his left-arm spin. In a mesmerising spell, Sarwate dismissed first innings centurion Snell Patel (12), Harvik Desai (8) and Pujara (0) in his first five overs, and conceded just 13 runs in his 10 that he bowled on the day.

India pacer Umesh Yadav, who was expensive in his first two overs, returned for a second spell to sent back young Arpit Vasavada (5), who fished one outside off to be caught behind.

Sheldon Jackson (7) was guilty of playing a reckless shot as he stepped out to hammer Akshay

Wakhare, completely missed the ball and was bowled.

At the start of the day, Jadeja came out with a clear plan of bowling wicket-to-wicket on the slow VCA stadium track to register the most significant figures of his first class career, helping Saurashtra bundle out the hosts for an even 200.

Jadeja scalped four batsmen, including key man Wasim Jaffer (11) and Ganesh Satish (35), in the first session.

This was after Saurashtra began with a two-pronged pace attack with captain Jaydev Unadkat and Chetan Sakariya attacking in tandem. But it was Jadeja, who produced a sensational spell in which he dismissed both the overnight batsmen.

First it was Jaffer, who strug-

gled when a delivery kept low. The resultant faint edge was pounced by substitute wicket-keeper Avi Barot.

Barot has been doing the duty behind the stumps since Vidarbha innings in place of Snell Patel, who was hit on helmet by Umesh.

Jadeja then trapped Satish with a full-length ball. The TV replays showed an inside edge carried to the silly-point fielder. Later the officials changed the decision as he was declared caught by Vishvaraj.

Vidarbha failed to recover from the twin blows even as Saurashtra skipper Unadkat uprooted stumps of Akshay Wadkar, who went without both-ering the scorers.

In first 11 overs of the morning, Vidarbha had lost three wickets and added just 18 runs.

Unadkat after bowling eight testing overs, took himself off the attack but continued with a pacer from one end, handing the ball to left-arm seamer Chetan Sakariya.

Soon off-spinner Kamlesh Makwana was introduced into the attack, replacing Sakariya and he delivered in his third over of the spell, sending back dangerous Akshay Karnewar (18).

It was a flighted ball outside off, Karnewar went for an expansive drive and ended up edging to first slip where Desai took a comfortable catch.

The hosts lost remaining four wickets in the post-lunch session with Jadeja taking two more to complete his six-wicket haul.

SINGLES

INDIA DRAWS PAK FOR AWAY TIE IN SEPT

NAGPUR: The Indian Davis Cup team was on Wednesday drawn to meet Pakistan in away tie, which could well be shifted to a neutral venue provided the central government sticks to its current policy of not allowing sporting teams to travel to the neighbouring country. No Indian Davis Cup squad has travelled to Pakistan since March 1964 and in that tie, held in Lahore, India had won 4-0. The draw for the tie, which will be held in September this year, took place in London. The winner will move to the World Group Qualifiers. India, who is a formidable side in Asia/Oceania zone, have never lost to Pakistan in six meetings so far. Pakistan would be no match to India since none of their singles players are even ranked on ATP computer as per the new regulations. They have a good competitor only in Aisam-ul-qaq Qureshi, who is ranked 67 in the doubles.

CASE FILED AGAINST HARDIK, RAHUL, KJO

JODHPUR: In fresh trouble for cricketers Hardik Pandya and K L Rahul and filmmaker Karan Johar over comments on women made on a television show, the police here have registered a case against them. The two cricketers were made to sit out of the India-Australia ODI series and were briefly suspended by the BCCI after a row over their comments on chat show 'Koffee with Karan', which many thought were sexist and vulgar. The FIR was lodged on the directions of a magistrate's court, Luni station house officer Bansil Lal said on Wednesday. Local resident D R Meghwal had approached the court seeking an order for the police to register a case against the three men. The petitioner termed the remarks indecent and said they were made deliberately to increase the popularity of the show. In his complaint, Meghwal said Johar deliberately presented content that humiliated women.

DIPA TO COMPETE AT WORLD CUPS

NEW DELHI: Ace Indian gymnast Dipa Karmakar will be competing in back-to-back World Cups next month to enhance her chances of qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Dipa had claimed a Bronze at the vault event of the Artistic Gymnastics World Cup in Cottbus, Germany in November, last year, to make a strong bid for her Olympic qualification. It was Dipa's first appearance after recovering from a knee strain which spoilt her Jakarta Asian Games, where she missed the vault final and also had to pull out of the team event due to a knee strain. The Indian, who vaulted her way to a fourth place finish at the Rio Olympics, will now compete at the Baku World Cup (March 14-17) and Doha World Cup (March 20-23). The two events are part of an eight-event qualifying system for the 2020 Olympics, under which the gymnasts will make the cut based on the their top three scores.

EAST BENGAL KEEN TO KEEP HOPES ALIVE

KOLKATA: Buoyed by their derby win over city rivals Mohun Bagan, East Bengal would look to do a double on Neroca FC and stay in contention for I-League title in a crucial match at the Salt Lake Stadium on Thursday. East Bengal blanked Mohun Bagan 2-0 in their last outing on January 27 to capture the season's both derby legs for the first time in 15 years. Having defeated the Imphal outfit by an identical margin at the start of the season way back in October last year, East Bengal will start with psychological advantage on Thursday. East Bengal have 25 points from 13 matches and another win by them would narrow the gap at the top of the table. Neroca's title chances have receded as they have 25 points from 15 matches. The Kolkata heavyweights will hit the road next to face title contenders Real Kashmir within three days as they have a tight schedule, playing four of their last six matches in 10 days.

INFANTINO SET FOR SECOND TENURE

PARIS: FIFA president Gianni Infantino is set to serve a second term after world football's governing body said on Wednesday he would be the only candidate for June's vote. The 48-year-old has been in charge of FIFA since February 2016, after succeeding the disgraced Sepp Blatter following the corruption scandal which rocked the organisation. The election will take place on June 5 in Paris ahead of the women's World Cup. Former Tottenham defender Ramon Vega had announced his intention to stand against Infantino, but failed to garner the required support of five of FIFA's 211 member federations. Infantino has introduced plans to increase the World Cup from 32 teams to 48 from 2026, with the possibility to bring forward the expansion to the



Rahul, Pacers highlight Lions Test

PTI ■ WAYANAD

England Lions will be one of the innumerable stops that out-of-form opener KL Rahul will encounter in his road to redemption as he gears up to play for India A in the first unofficial Test.

The match will also feature two of India's quickest bowlers in young Avesh Khan and the not so young Varun Aaron, who will be keenly watched by the national selection committee.

Virat Kohli wants three more fast bowlers which will broaden the base of the current pool of speed merchants and that's the specific reason why injury prone not known for his consistency has been recalled.

It's all about sheer speed and same for Avesh, who has really intimidated the domestic batsmen during the season.

Rahul hasn't exactly set the stage on fire during the limited overs games having come back from an interim suspension for his sexist comments on a television chat show.

India chief coach Ravi Shastri has recently made it clear that he would like Rahul to play a lot of A games in order to regain form.

The India 'A' team led by Ankit Bawne, comprising domestic performers, will be favourites against the Lions, who have not had the best of time on the tour so far.

Kerala all-rounder Jalaj Saxena finds a place after a strong Ranji Trophy season as has Siddhesh Lad along with spinners Shahbaz Nadeem and Mayank Markande.

The visiting Englishmen, on the other hand, have had a tough time, being hammered in the five-match ODI series, losing 1-4 and will look for redemption.

Captain Sam Billings has been in good form and will look to carry it into the longer format too. The young team includes players with Test experience, including Ben Duckett and Ollie Pope.

Lanky pacer Jamie Overton has impressed with his performances and will be assisted by Tom Bailey. The spinners-Danny Briggs and Amar Vardi will have a big role to play on a track expected to be bowler-friendly on the evidence of the recent Ranji matches.

Real Kashmir ignite title race

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

The fairy tale run of Real Kashmir Football Club in the I-League continued as the club from the Valley defeated Gokulam Kerala FC by a solitary goal to go to the top of points table on Wednesday.

The match between the 'Snow Leopards' and Gokulam was played at the TRC Ground in chilling weather conditions amid a mix of rain and snow-fall with none of the teams willing to yield the ground.

Ivorian striker Gnohere Krizo scored the all-important goal in the 51st minute to hand Real Kashmir full three points from the match.

The win propelled the Jammu and Kashmir side to the top of the table with 32 points, dislodging Chennai City FC (30 points) which, however, have two games in hand over Real Kashmir.

Chennai City will take on Indian Arrows on Friday while Real Kashmir will meet East Bengal at home on Sunday. Each team will play 20 matches in the league.

It started snowing before the match and heavy rains lashed the ground later on. The two sides played a goal-less first half as controlling the ball became difficult for the players of both the teams due to waterlogging in many patches



of the Synthetic Astro Turf pitch. Real Kashmir should have taken the lead in the first half but Krizo missed several easy chances to put his side ahead.

Mason Robertson, son of head coach David, who was playing behind Krizo in a 4-4-1-1 formation, also missed a couple of chances to score. However, it was Krizo who broke the deadlock after the break, pouncing on a rebound in front of the Gokulam goal in the 51st minute.

Local boy Farhan Ganiea saw his fierce shot from the top of the box stopped by Gokulam custodian Arnab Das but Krizo was well placed to tap in the rebound. After taking the lead, Real Kashmir players relaxed a bit, allowing a window of opportunity for the team from

Kerala to push for an equaliser.

While Kerala striker Marcus Joseph was wayward in most of his attempts at the goal, Real Kashmir goalkeeper Bilal Khan was in top form to deny the visiting team.

Real Kashmir had the chance to double their lead in the 80th minute but Abednego Tetteh, who came on for Krizo in the 73rd minute, shot wide of Das' right post from 15 yards.

This was the ninth clean sheet for the Real Kashmir, which has the meaneast defence in the I-League this year, having conceded only eight goals in 16 games so far.

Werder Bermen shoot out Dortmund in DFB Pokal



AFP ■ DORTMUND

Bundesliga leaders Borussia Dortmund crashed out of the German Cup on Tuesday, losing a penalty shoot-out at home to Werder Bremen following a 3-3 draw after extra time.

Goalkeeper Jiri Pavlenka was Bremen's hero in the shoot-out as he saved Dortmund's opening attempts from Paco Alcacer and Maximilian Philipp as Bremen won the last-16 tie 4-2 on penalties.

It finished 1-1 over 90 minutes after Dortmund captain Marco Reus rifled home a direct free-kick to cancel out an early goal by Bremen's Milot Rashica.

The game exploded into life with four goals in extra time as Bremen twice equalised, through substitutes

Claudio Pizarro and Martin Harnik, to force penalties after Chelsea-bound Christian Pulisic and Achraf Hakimi had scored for Dortmund.

"It's a bitter defeat," admitted Dortmund striker Mario Goetze.

"We shouldn't have conceded two equalisers in extra time and then to lose on penalties is really tough."

Peru veteran Pizarro, who turns 41 in October, was delighted with his 56th German Cup goal.

It meant third-choice keeper Eric Oelschlaegel made his Dortmund debut against Bremen, the club he left last June after six years.

Earlier on Tuesday Bayer Leverkusen, who pulled off a shock 3-1 win over Bayern last Saturday, was another big name casualty as they slumped to a 2-1 defeat at second-division Heidenheim.

NorthEast look to avoid hiccups

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

NorthEast United FC will look to avoid any hiccups and strengthen their position in the top four when they host an unpredictable Delhi Dynamos FC in a Hero Indian Super League fixture on Thursday.

The Highlanders currently occupy the last play-off spot, having tallied 23 points from 14 games.

With just four more games left to be played and Jamshepur FC and ATK breathing down their neck, NorthEast United needs to make the most of their home games.

Eelco Schattorie's side has won just two of the seven matches they have played at home. Dropping points at this juncture could potentially endanger their bid to reach the ISL play-offs for the first time.

"It is difficult for them (Delhi) to qualify. They can play without any pressure. It is always a completely different mindset if you have to deliver something."

"We are in a position where we need to win and they are in a position where they will try to get a result. If you can score quickly against such a team, you can break them down because of less motivation," Schattorie said. Schattorie will be aware

that Delhi held FC Goa to a goalless draw in their last clash and will be out to play spoilsport, again.

The Dutchman will also be concerned with his own team's results, picking up only one win in their last five matches.

Delhi Dynamos, on the other hand, finally seem to have some wind in their sails. They have picked up seven points from a possible nine in their last three matches.

However, a disastrous initial half of the season has all but put paid to their play-off hopes. The Dynamos, however, will be confident of showing everyone that they can give any team a run for their reputation.

"If we win our remaining matches, the team will be more motivated. We know maybe we won't qualify for the play-offs but if we win the next games, we will get confidence."

"In our home match, we lost to NorthEast United 2-0. Now if we win tomorrow in the away game the team will get great confidence," said assistant manager Mridul Banerjee.

Delhi do have a couple of fitness concerns though. Midfielder Bikramjit Singh is injured while Adria Carmona is not expected to feature in the starting XI despite travelling with the squad.



French women's A team practising at Mohd Shahid Stadium in Lucknow. The French team is scheduled to play a Test series with India A team from February 8

Serve would be key on indoor courts: Bhambri

PTI ■ ASTANA

India Fed Cup coach Ankita Bhambri reckons a good serve will be the key on indoor courts when Ankita Raina and Karman Kaur Thandi fight it out with higher-ranked players in the Fed Cup.

India will begin their campaign at the Asia/Oceania Group I against Thailand on Thursday before clashing with formidable hosts Kazakhstan on Friday.

Getting past Thailand is not expected to be too hard for India with Ankita and fast-improving Karman in good form.

Thailand's best-ranked singles player is Peangtarn

Plipuech, who is placed at 297 while Punnin Kovapitukted is way lower at number 657.

"To be very honest, the girls are improving every year. Karman is stronger and fitter while Ankita is also strong and has more experience. They need to put it together," Bhambri said.

The matches will be played indoors due to the sub-zero temperature in the city.

"It is important to serve well (indoor) and reach out to the ball faster. If you start a point well, the chances of ending it well also get better," Bhambri said.

Kazakhstan's world number 43 Yulia Putintseva and Zarina Diyas, ranked 96, would

be the tough obstacles for India, if they are to top Pool A.

The winners of Pool A and B, which has four teams, will clash to determine which nation qualifies for the World Group II.

"It's always tough to play top-100 players. Ankita had played the match of her life against Yulia last year. That experience should help her," opined Bhambri.

Pool B features China, who has world number 40 Shuai Zhang and world number 42 Saisai Zheng, along with Korea, Indonesia, and Pacific Oceania.

In all likelihood, China will top Pool B and it will be between India and Kazakhstan in Pool A.

Superior NZ crush woeful India

Seifert tears apart Indian bowling to smash career-best 84 before Southee and spinners push visitors to humiliating defeat



Tim Seifert plays a shot during his 84-run innings in the 1st T20 on Wednesday. ICC



Shikhar Dhawan, left, walks, out for 21 bowled by a celebrating Lockie Ferguson, centre, during the 1st T20 in Wellington. AP

best delivery of the match was bowled by Lockie Ferguson, who yorked Dhawan.

They kept the batsmen under tight check and for some like World Cup aspirant Rishabh Pant (4, 10 balls), it was a frustrating little stay in the middle and he simply couldn't get going.

On a pitch where Indian spinners Yuzvendra Chahal (1/35 in 4 overs) and Krunal (1/37 in 4 overs) went for plenty, the Black Caps slow bowlers literally tightened the noose on the visitors.

While Pant didn't do his chances any good, Vijay Shankar (27 off 17 balls) impressed during his little cameo but would need to do more in order to book a place in that World Cup bound squad.

The Pandya bothers — Krunal and Hardik — endured a contrasting day.

While Krunal (he also scored 20 off 18 balls) had an okay outing, Hardik would quickly like to forget the nightmare (2/51 in 4 overs and 4 runs) before India play the second match of the series in Auckland on Friday.

Earlier, Seifert, whose previous best score in T20 Internationals happens to be 14, was promoted to open alongside Colin Munro (34 off 20 balls) and they added 86 runs in only 8.2 overs in a whirlwind start.

Margin	Opponent	Venue	Date
80 runs	New Zealand	Wellington	06-02-2019
49 runs	Australia	Bridgetown	07-05-2010
47 runs	New Zealand	Nagpur	15-03-2016
40 runs	New Zealand	Rajkot	04-11-2017
31 runs	Australia	Sydney	01-02-2012

IND BIGGEST DEFEAT IN T-20 (By Runs)

Seifert showed the intent straightaway as he gave Bhuvneshwar Kumar the charge, picking the knuckle ball early, dispatching it over mid-wicket for a six. The next shot was a four as he stood and hammered past the bowler.

With Munro hitting Khaleel Ahmed (1/48 in 4 overs) for two successive sixes, New Zealand was off to a blazing start scoring 44 off the first four overs.

Seifert was lucky to survive when Dhoni dropped a sharp chance after the batsman had edged one off Krunal.

But he promptly put the next delivery into the stands, moving across towards off and sweeping it over backward square leg.

There wasn't any sign of overt footwork but he shuffled enough inside the crease to make room for the big shots and in the process disturbed the line and length of the bowlers.

The elder Pandya finally got a breakthrough when Munro was caught in the deep off Vijay Shankar.

But Seifert never let the momentum drop and hit two more sixes off Krunal, who just kept on pushing the ball through a flatter trajectory.

Mandhana shines but India choke

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Smriti Mandhana remained an unstoppable juggernaut with a record-smashing half century but the Indian women's cricket team failed to make it count, going down by 23 runs in the opening T20 International against New Zealand on Wednesday.

Mandhana held the record for the fastest fifty by an Indian before the match and she bettered it by a ball during her 58-run knock at the WestPac Stadium. The 22-year-old faced 34 balls in all but reached the 50-mark off 24 deliveries.

However, New Zealand pacer Lea Tahuhu played a decisive role with three scalps off her four overs to derail India's pursuit of a 160-run target which was going smoothly till the time Mandhana was at the crease. India eventually folded for 136 in 19.1 overs.

Leg-spinner Amelia Kerr (2/28) clinched the crucial wickets of Mandhana and Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur to wreck the visitors' chances. Off-spinner Leigh Kasperek also picked up a couple of wickets.

"Obviously we didn't get the start we wanted but it was pretty good to come back and win. It's just about keeping calm," said Tahuhu, who was adjudged player of the match for her performance.

Harmanpreet, on the other hand, blamed India's loss on a poor batting effort, especially in the last 10 overs.

"I think bowlers did really well as we expected. We didn't bat well in the last 10 overs. That is only area where we are always struggling," she pointed out.

Veteran Mithali Raj, who captains the Indian ODI side, was dropped from the match.

"We are looking to give chance to young girls, that's the



Smriti Mandhana (33) shares a 69-run stand for the third wicket to steer New Zealand out of trouble after a stuttering start. Spinners Radha Yadav and Poonam Yadav dismissed Suzie Bates (7) and Caitlin Gurrey (15) cheaply to reduce the home side to 47 for 2 at the end of the seventh over. But the Indians failed to make further dents with Devine and Satterthwaite denying them any success for 8.3 overs.

only reason," said Harmanpreet when asked about Mithali's absence from the line-up and whether her experience would have come handy here.

Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues (39 off 33 balls) combined for a 102-run second-wicket stand that should have been a solid foundation for the rest of the line-up.

But India collapsed in the face of an inspired performance by Lahuhu. From 101/1, the visiting team was down to 117/6 in a matter of five overs that turned the match on its head.

Harmanpreet (17 off 15 balls) played out a small cameo, including a massive six off Kerr, but couldn't steer the team home, failing to find any support at the other end.

Mandhana was her usual aggressive self and played another strokeful knock, studded with seven hits to the fence and three sixes.

Earlier, opening batswoman Sophie Devine smashed a 48-ball 62 in an enterprising innings to take New Zealand women to a challenging 159 for 4 from 20

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

below-par India slumped to its worst ever defeat in T20 Internationals as New Zealand outclassed the visitors in all departments to win the first match of the series by a comprehensive 80-run margin at Westpac Stadium on Wednesday.

Batting first, unheralded keeper-batsman Tim Seifert took the Indian bowling apart blasting 84 off 43 balls as New Zealand posted a commanding 219 for six.

With the crack opening pair of skipper Rohit Sharma (1) and Shikhar Dhawan (29) departing within the Powerplay overs, the chase became a diffi-

cult one and India was all out for 139 in 19.2 overs.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (39 off 31 balls) did play his part but it was always an impossible chase with wickets falling at regular intervals at the other end. India had never lost a T20 International by 50 or more runs prior to this match. India's previous worst was a 49-run loss to Australia back in 2010.

New Zealand bowlers kept the pressure on Indian batsmen, especially the two spinners — left-arm orthodox Mitchell Santner (2/24 in 4 overs) and leg-spinner Ish Sodhi (2/26 in 3 overs).

Senior pacer Tim Southee (3/17 in 4 overs) had the best figures among the bowlers and the



Rohit blames poor batting for record defeat

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India skipper Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said that a line-up with eight specialist batsmen should have chased down the 220-run target set by New Zealand, however steep it might have looked for a T20 match.

India folded for 139 in 19.2 overs collapsing to their worst-ever defeat by 80 runs in the first T20 game.

"It was a tough game. We were outplayed in all three departments. We didn't start well and we knew that 200 was not going to be an easy chase," he said after the game.

"We have chased such (big) targets in the past and that is why we played with eight batsmen. But we didn't have (even) small partnerships and that made it tougher. New Zealand though played well, they had partnerships. We need to go to Auckland, have a look at the conditions and take it from there," he added.

Outplayed 1-4 by India in the ODI series, Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson was happy to finally see his team produce a "complete performance" in the first T20I.

"Fantastic performance all around, everyone rose and it was one of those complete performances that you search for. The top-order was superb and we built partnerships that helped us," Williamson said.

"But it has finished now, we move on in a day's time and we have another game. Hope we can keep the momentum through the series having set the tone."

Opening duo of Tim Seifert (84) and Colin Munro (34) lay the foundation for New Zealand's total before the bowlers returned to complete the job.

"Seifert and Munro were outstanding. It really was a good experience for the boys. Some of the short contributions were of great importance. Daryll bowled really well and played a good cameo down the order. We had the runs on the board, but the bowling and fielding too was of high standard," Williamson said.

Seifert, who was adjudged the 'Man of the Match' for his 43-ball 84, said he was happy to live up to the expectations after his selection in the team.

"It was a great way to start the series and the boys are really happy. It feels great to go up the order. I had a look at the first two overs and then took it from there and put pressure on the bowlers," he said.

"I have been selected for a reason and it feels nice to have backed my ability," he said when asked about his big-hitting prowess.

'We concede plenty of runs in middle overs'

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Fielding restrictions in the first six Powerplay overs is challenging for any bowler but according to Krunal Pandya it was the middle overs that proved costly during India's 80-run loss to New Zealand in the first T20 International.

"In the Powerplay as well as in the middle overs also, we gave away plenty of runs," Krunal said at the post-match media conference after India folded for 139 while chasing 220.

He maintained that the target wasn't easy to chase.

"Yes, obviously I guess, when you are chasing 218 (220), it's not that easy. Initially, we gave away (too many) runs and kept on leaking runs in the middle overs as well. So no matter how the pitch was, the scoreboard pressure was obviously there," the Baroda all-rounder said.

Krunal felt that India's defeat was "a combination of both poor bowling and some great batting by the Black Caps".

"They batted really well and we bowled a few loose deliveries as well. So it was a combination of both."

A couple of catches were dropped including one by wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, when Man of the match Tim Seifert hadn't scored much.

Seifert went on to smash 84 off 43 balls with seven fours and six sixes. Dinesh Karthik also dropped a sitter in the deep.

When asked if wind and cold conditions posed a problem while



fielding, Krunal replied: "No not that much. It was fine. In fact, it was good weather to play. As far as the wind is concerned, it wasn't difficult to catch the ball so I guess it was absolutely fine."

"Dropping catches is a part and parcel of the game. One day you might take a blinder like Siraj and then another day two catches (Dhoni and Karthik) get dropped as well. It's just that you have to learn from every game," he said.

New Zealand's Tim Southee was the pick of the bowlers with figures of 3 for 17 and Pandya lauded his efforts.

"I did play against him (recently) in an India A game when we came for the A tour. I always knew that he was a good player but today he proved why," he praised the senior pacer.

However Krunal seemed confident that the team will make a comeback in the next game at Auckland.

Have to bat 20 overs to avoid collapse: Smriti

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

The repeated failure of the middle-order to up the game when it matters has convinced Indian women's team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana that she has to "practically bat for 18 to 20 overs" for the side to stay in the hunt during stiff chases.

Mandhana smashed a 58-run knock off 34 balls but the Indian team failed to make it count and was dismissed for 136 while chasing a target of 160 in the opening T20 on Wednesday.

"My wicket along with Jemimah's turned out to be crucial. If you get out back-to-back in T20s, it proves costly. When you are chasing 160 and the run-rate is above 7 or 8, next time we have to plan and play better. It didn't work out today," Smriti said after the match.

"Practically, I would say I have to bat till 20 overs that is the best option. The more I bat till 18 overs, we won't collapse because if the top three or four batters can bat till the 18-20th overs then the rest can revolve around them. So tactically that is what I will try to do," Mandhana said, indicating the absence of a finisher in the line-up.

Mandhana bettered her record of fastest fifty by one delivery, fetching this one off 24 deliveries.

Asked if it was her best, she responded: "You never know what your best is. I can't limit myself to a 60 and say it is my best. If I can chase any total and if I win matches for India, then only it would be my best."

Mandhana said though India conceded a few runs in the end, the team should have been able to chase the target.

"We almost got our run-rate under 7, which was great but definitely we gave away 10-15 runs extra in the end while bowling. We had got (Suzie) Bates and (Sophie) Devine but the wicket was good and batters should have chased the target," she said.



Smriti and Jemimah compliments each other during 1st T20

"The way we played the ODI series, even today we were cruising till the 12th over but in T20s there is always a collapse. So, the next time we have to keep that in mind as a batting unit."

Down 0-1 in the three-T20I series, Mandhana said the team will be under pressure.

"Being 1-0 down, we will be under the pump, everyone will be aiming to be better than what we were today and win the next two matches for India, that is what we are thinking and not what happened today."

Wind came into play at the WestPac Stadium and Mandhana said she kept that factor in mind while taking on-field decisions.

"We were thinking of taking pacers and spinners from whichever way the wind was going. According to the wind, we were thinking of bowling at the stumps or outside the stumps," she said.

Keen to avoid WC qualifiers: Mithali

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

The Indian women's ODI team captain Mithali Raj feels the side's confidence has gone up following the 2-1 series win over New Zealand and it is now aiming to avoid qualifiers for the 2021 World Cup by staying in top four of the ICC table.

India is currently placed third in the table after winning the three-match away series against New Zealand 2-1 recently. They are scheduled to host England in the next assignment of the championship cycle later this month.

"The last time we played the Qualifiers, but this time we want to have direct qualification for 2021. With series against England and the Windies coming up, we will definitely look to get maximum points," Mithali was quoted as saying in a release from the International Cricket Council.

"...We did not have too many players who had the experience of the conditions with only Jhulan (Goswami) and me having toured here before. So winning two games here has given us a lot of confidence," she said.

"Losing the third game, we



have come down to number three in the rankings table but I am happy that India is in the top four," she added.

The coming month will see focus on the championship with two more series featuring teams in the upper tiers of the points table — Australia host New Zealand and India host England in series starting February 22.

These teams are the frontrunners to make the cut since New Zealand and four other top teams get direct entries to the premier event two years from now. New Zealand captain Amy

Satterthwaite said her side has learnt its lessons from the debacle against India.

"We have our first real winter at home in 3-4 years coming up which gives us a great opportunity to develop our skill sets, so playing a quality side like India helps highlight those areas both individually and as a team," she said.

"The points table is a hard one to read into much because some teams haven't played as many games as us. Sitting in second is a great place to be, but as other teams play more games, that may change," she added.