

OPINION 8
EMPEROR
IN PERIL

WORLD 12
NEW BREXIT TALKS IN
BRUSSELS NEXT WEEK

SPORT 15
SAINA, SINDHU SET UP
SUMMIT CLASH

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HUGE FAN
OF TEZAAB:
SHILPA SHETTY
14 VIVACITY

Firm to avenge Pulwama, Govt mulls options

Surgical, airstrike not easy choices for want of shock & awe, in wake of foul weather

RAHUL DUTTA ■ NEW DELHI

The security establishment in India is mulling over options to avenge the killing of 44 CRPF personnel in a suicide attack in Pulwama on Thursday. The Services Chiefs briefed the political leadership on Friday about their preparedness to carry out any punitive strikes. The options include cross-border raids or surgical strikes on terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), air strikes to destroy camps of well-known terror outfits, or something more "detering".

However, none of these options are easy for want of element of surprise, and inclement weather conditions.

Determined to punish the perpetrators, officials said the Government has also not ruled out opting for an unconventional response which may not entail using military option. These options could include intelligence-based action which may be covert in nature. Also, the retaliation by India may not come soon as the decision makers will weigh all consequences before launching any punitive action, officials said.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday took stock of the situation in the wake of the attack and options to be exercised, sources said. Modi later said in a public rally here that the security forces were given a free hand for the job at a place and timing of their choosing.

Elaborating upon various alternatives, sources in the security establishment said while surgical strikes by the elite Special Forces are on the table, it may be difficult at this point of time due to inclement weather along the Line of Control (LoC). Most of the mountain passes are snow-bound, making movement of commandoes to carry out any operation across the LoC difficult. If helicopters are used to drop the commandoes close to the LoC, the Pakistan Army will be immediately alerted, they said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays tribute to the martyred CRPF jawans, who lost their lives in Thursday's Pulwama terror attack, after their mortal remains were brought at AFS Palam in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

Officials also admitted that surprise element as regards surgical strikes this time unlike two years back is not there, and the Pakistan Army will be fully geared to thwart any such move. The Pakistan Army is now deployed in full strength along the LoC and swift raids by the Indians may not be productive, they added.

On using air power, be it helicopters or fighter jets, to take out terrorist camps of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) in Muridke in POK, officials said — India has the weapons and capability such an action across the border — may be construed as an act of war and also lead to escalation of hostilities between India and Pakistan. Taking these factors into consideration, the Government decided to move step by step and immediately try to isolate Pakistan diplomatically and withdrawing the Most Favoured Nation status on Friday. More diplomatic actions in the coming days were not ruled out, sources said.

■ Also see P4, P5, P10

Pak stripped of Most Favoured Nation status

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Talking tough after an unprecedented terror attack on security forces in Kashmir that killed 44 CRPF jawans on Thursday, the Government on Friday removed "Most Favoured Nation" (MNF) privilege accorded to Pakistan. All steps will be taken to ensure the neighbouring country's isolation globally, the Government said after the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met here to review the situation following the terror strike reportedly had a backing of the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad. After the CCS meeting at Prime Minister's residence, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said all efforts will be made to ensure that perpetrators of the attack are brought to book.

Continued on Page 6

Pak's Abdul Rasheed brains; 40 biker-fidayeen on prowl

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the deadly strike on a CRPF convoy that took lives of 44 paramilitary jawans, the security agencies have identified Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander Abdul Rasheed as the mastermind of the Pulwama terror attack. Pakistani national Rasheed is suspected to have been trained in Afghanistan. An IED expert, he is suspected to have planned the terror attack in December last year. He is suspected to have also acted as a handler of the slain Adil Ahmad Dar, alias Waqas Commando who rammed his explosive-laden Scorpio SUV into a bus of the CRPF convoy on Thursday. Intelligence estimates suggest 35-40 fidayeen of Jaish are

active in South Kashmir.

Inputs also suggest motorcycle-borne fidayeen could be on the prowl in the Valley, a reason why convoy movement was banned across Kashmir by the State police. "The chatter inputs reveal that Jaish-e-Mohammad has hinted to carry out IED attacks along the routes of security forces across Jammu & Kashmir. It is as such suggested that security forces need to put on alert to thwart any such attempt by terrorists," warned a Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) alert a day before the Pulwama attack, asking all the J&K-based units to remain on highest alert and maintain constant liaison with the State police. "...it is requested to issue necessary guidelines and instructions and to all unit commanders of J&K-based

units to be on highest alert to avoid any untoward incident. Constant liaison must be maintained with the local police and other intelligence agencies for sharing of information and coordinate action. Any significant information in this regard should be immediately intimated to all concerned," read the alert. The J&K Police had on February 8 issued an alert asking the CRPF to sanitise area of deployment. "Before occupying your place of deployment, please sanitise the area properly as there are inputs of use of IEDs. Matter most urgent, read the February 8 alert flashed through the police control room to the various formations of CRPF, Srinagar Sector, BSF, ITBP and police formations in the State," it said. Continued on Page 6

Blood boiling, will exact high price: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said those responsible for the Pulwama terror attack will pay "a very heavy price" and security forces will be given a free hand to deal with terrorists. In a hard-hitting speech, Modi said the "blood of the people is boiling" and forces behind the act of terrorism will definitely be punished. "I want to tell the terror outfits and those aiding and abetting them that they have made a big mistake. They will have to pay a very heavy price for their actions. Let me assure the nation that those behind this attack, the perpetrators of this attack will be punished," Modi said at a function to flag off the Vande Bharat Express, India's fastest train from Delhi to Varanasi. He was speaking just after the Cabinet meeting. "Security forces have been given complete freedom, the blood of the people is boiling...Our neighbouring country, which has been isolated

internationally, thinks such terror attacks can destabilise us, but their plans will not materialise," Modi said. "My condolences to families of those martyred in Pulwama attack; those behind the terror strike will pay a very heavy price," Modi said. "I am thankful to all nations which condemned the Pulwama attack and I urge them to come together to crush terrorism," he said. Appealing to his critics to not politicise the tragedy, Modi said the attacks have left the country emotional. "I understand the sentiments of those criticising us but I urge them that it is an emotional time, so stay away from political one-upmanship," he said. Addressing a public meeting in Jhansi later in the day, the PM again did not name Pakistan but said the attack was an outcome of the neighbour's desperation as it is in a bad shape and has been forced to go to different countries with a "begging bowl" to meet even its daily expenses.

Exclusive passage for force convoys, crackdown on ISI funding ordered

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Announcing a massive crackdown on those accepting funds from the Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to carry out nefarious activities in the Kashmir, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said strict action will be taken against them. Making another significant announcement in Srinagar, Rajnath said the civilian traffic would be stopped during the movement of convoys of Army and paramilitary. "In the wake of the suicide attack on a CRPF convoy on Thursday, it has been decided that the civilian movement will be stopped for some time when a large convoy of security forces passes through an area," Rajnath told at Press conference. He said that the civilians will face a little difficulty because of the restriction. "We apologise for it," he added. Earlier, on his arrival in Srinagar, the Home Minister attended a high-level security review meeting and also visited Command hospital where he interacted with the injured CRPF jawans. Rajnath also shouldered mortal remains of CRPF jawans along with senior police/Army and CRPF officers after attending a solemn wreath-laying ceremony. Continued on Page 6

INDIA BRIEFS 25 NATIONS ON PAK

In a major diplomatic offensive against Pakistan after the Pulwama terror attack, India on Friday held a briefing for envoys of 25 countries, including from P5 nations, to highlight Pakistan's role in using terrorism as an instrument of state policy.

ALL-PARTY MEET CALLED BY GOVT

An all-party meeting has been called by the Government on Saturday to discuss Thursday's terror attack against a convoy of CRPF. This meeting will be first of its kind called by the NDA Government led by Narendra Modi.

US to Pak: End safe haven for terrorists

The international community has strongly condemned the terror attack, with US President Donald Trump asking Pakistan to "end immediately" the support and safe haven provided to all terrorist groups operating on its soil. P4

CHINA TO BLOCK BID TO DECLARE AZHAR GLOBAL TERRORIST

China on Friday indicated it would continue to block India's bid to declare Masood Azhar as an international terrorist whose JeM has claimed responsibility for the Pulwama attack.



A clash between two communities started on the issue of a protest against Thursday's terror attack on a CRPF convoy, in Jammu on Friday. PTI

India outraged; curfew clamped on protest epicentre Jammu

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Protests broke out in several parts of the country on Friday against the terror attack in Pulwama district of South Kashmir. Jammu was the epicentre of the people's outburst as curfew had to be imposed there following massive violence during the day-long bandh call given by Chamber of Commerce and Industries. Protesters burned dozens of vehicles and shops and damaged properties. In Delhi, protesters gathered at India Gate on Friday afternoon raising anti-Pakistan slogans. A group of protesters

demonstrated outside Pakistan's embassy in Delhi. Spontaneous protest also broke out in Mumbai, Amritsar, Patna, Varanasi, Ranchi, Hyderabad and several other cities. But it was Jammu, which saw massive arson and violence through the day. The situation became explosive after scuffle broke between members of two groups during the bandh call. As police authorities deployed in the area failed to contain the situation, even after lobbing teargas shells, angry protesters resorted to violence and torched vehicles parked outside Jogi gate area. Continued on Page 6

CAPSULE

TRUMP DECLARES EMERGENCY FOR WALL
Washington: Battling with one branch of Government and opening a new confrontation with another, President Donald Trump announced on Friday he was declaring a national emergency to fulfill his pledge to construct a wall along the US-Mexico border.

AADHAAR-PAN LINK MUST BY MAR 31 FOR RETURNS
New Delhi: The CBDT has stressed that Aadhaar-PAN linking is "mandatory" by March 31 this year for those filing an Income Tax returns.

₹ 25L ex gratia for kin of those martyred

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government Friday announced an ex gratia of ₹25 lakh each to the families of the 12 CRPF jawans of the state killed in the terror attack in Pulwama. The government has also announced job to one member of each soldier's family. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath declared that the cremation of CRPF jawans martyred in the fidayeen attack in Kashmir on Thursday would be carried

out with full state honours and ministers and district officials would attend the cremation functions. "There are 12 jawans from the state, who were martyred in this dastardly act. At this hour of tragedy, the UP government stands closely with the martyrs' families," Yogi said in a statement issued in Lucknow on Friday. Ministers have been instructed to go to villages and attend the cremation. Jai Prakash Nishad will go to Chandauli, Ramapati Shastri to Maharajganj, Suresh Rana

to Shamli, Anupama Jaiswal to Deoria, Satyadeo Pachauri to Mainpuri, Ashutosh Tandon to Allahabad, Neelkanth Tiwari to Varanasi, SPS Baghel to Agra, Sandeep Singh to Kannauj, Mukut Bihari Verma to Kanpur Dehat and Brijesh Pathak to Unnao. The CM said that District Magistrates and SSPs would also attend the cremation. The state government has already announced compensation of Rs 25 lakh for martyrs' families besides assuring job to one family member each.

Twelve jawans belonging to the state were killed in the attack in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, including Avdhesh Kumar Yadav (Chandauli), Pankaj Kumar Tripathi (Maharajganj), Amit Kumar (Shamli), Pradip Kumar (Shamli), Vijay Kumar Maurya (Deoria), Ram Vajeel (Mainpuri), Mahesh Kumar (Allahabad), Ramesh Yadav (Varanasi), Kaushal Kumar Rawat (Agra), Pradip Singh (Kannauj), Shyam Babu (Kanpur Dehat) and Ajit Kumar Zehat (Unnao).



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of various development projects in Jhansi on Friday. Governor Ram Naik, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and others also seen. PTI

Assembly pays homage to martyrs, adjourns

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly was adjourned for the day after paying homage to 41 CRPF jawans who were martyred in a terror attack in Pulwama (Kashmir) on Thursday, with both Opposition and Treasury benches expressing solidarity with the government demanding stringent action against Pakistan.

Cutting across party lines, leaders said that the way USA eliminated Osama Bin Laden, India should also carry out a strike and kill the mastermind of this attack who was being harboured by Pakistan.

As soon as the House assembled on Friday, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna declared that of the 41 martyred in Pulwama on Thursday, 12 were from Uttar Pradesh. "The UP government has decided to pay Rs 25 lakh as compensation and provide a government job to a family member each," Khanna informed the House.

Leader of Opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary said that Thursday's incident was heart-breaking.

"The time has come for the Indian government to take stringent action against those who carried out the attack and snuffed out innocent Indian para-military jawans."



Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna

"The time has come for the Indian government to take stringent action against those who carried out the attack and snuffed out innocent Indian para-military jawans. The entire Opposition is with the Indian government"

The entire Opposition is with the Indian government," he said.

Leader of BSP Legislature Party Lalji Verma said that a real tribute to martyred soldiers would be when India struck back with vengeance against the coward perpetrators of the dastardly crime.

Congress Legislature Party leader Aay Kumar Laloo demanded a compensation of Rs 1 crore to family members of the martyrs.

Virendra Singh Sirohi (BJP) and Speaker Hriday Narain Dixit also spoke on this occasion. Members observed a two-minute silence after which the House was adjourned for the day.



BJP MLC Yashwant Singh paying floral tributes to martyred killed in Pulwama attack

Pioneer

Prime Minister to lay base of 300 projects in Kanpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ahead of the crucial Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation of nearly 300 industrial projects totalling Rs 65,000 crore in Kanpur later this month.

The state government is planning to host a mega 'ground-breaking' ceremony for projects in Kanpur on February 27. These projects are part of Rs 4.68 lakh crore worth of MoUs signed by the state government with different public and private sector companies at 'UP Investors' Summit' in Lucknow on February 21, 2018.

The maiden 'ground-breaking'

ceremony in Lucknow was attended by Modi on July 29, 2018, who laid the foundation of 80 projects worth Rs 60,000 crore and exhorted the state to compete with Maharashtra for becoming the first trillion dollar economy in India.

In fact, the government had earlier proposed to host the second foundation laying programme in January. However, it was later postponed due to various reasons, including the incomplete groundwork for the proposed projects, such as land acquisition and clearances.

Several hundred industrialists, investors and industry representatives are expected to participate in the February 27 event, which will seek to



put Kanpur back on the industrial map of not only UP, but India as well.

Earlier this week, Industrial Development Minister Satish Mahana reviewed preparations for the event. In view of the impending Lok Sabha polls, the state government is anxious to ensure that the mega event sends a positive message to the electorate.

After the first ground-breaking ceremony in July last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation of the flagship Bundelkhand Defence Corridor on Friday. The announcement for the corridor was made during UP Investors' Summit in February last year. The Defence Corridor will span six nodes at Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi,

Kanpur, Lucknow and Chitrakoot.

The state government is likely to allot land to Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) near Agra-Lucknow Expressway in the Defence Corridor. The BEL is engaged in advanced aerospace and defence production for Indian Armed forces.

The Centre had de-licensed 275 defence wares and encouraged private manufacturers to supply these to forces by competing with Public Sector Undertakings (PSU), which earlier enjoyed monopoly.

These items have been clubbed as 'non-core items' of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). The Army can float tenders, in which both private sector and OFB could participate.

Families, villagers shell-shocked

Varanasi (PNS): A pall of gloom descended on the native villages of both the martyrs who hailed from trans-Varuna and trans-Ganga areas here on Friday. Martyr Ramesh Yadav belonged to Tofapur village in Chobeypur area, about 20 kilometres from the district headquarters, while that of another martyred jawan, Avadhesh Yadav, was Bahadurpur across Ganga. The village of Awadesh Yadav is in Chandauli district, just about 10 to 12 kilometres from Varanasi district headquarters. His family members, including his father, Harikesh Lal Yadav, and brothers were shell-shocked on getting information. There was anger among the people in the trans-Ganga area of Parao where hundreds of people from Bahadurpur and its adjoining areas observed chhaka jam for nearly an hour in protest against the terrorist attack.

CLASSIFIEDS

सूचना

संस्थागत रूप से सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरा नाम मोहो तारिक कुकान है, परन्तु हाईस्कूल के अंकवर्ष में कबल मोहो तारिक दव है। मेरा नाम मोहो तारिक कुकान है। बचिय मे मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाएगा। मोहो तारिक कुकान।

सूचना

सूचित हो कि मेरी पुत्री Ahsen Zehra Rizvi के समस्त परदायों में मेरा नाम Ajaz Zehra Rizvi दर्ज है एवं पुत्री के शैक्षिक प्रमाण पत्रों में सुटिसर Asma Rizvi दर्ज हो गया है। Ajaz Zehra Rizvi व Asma Rizvi एक ही व्यक्ति के नाम हैं। वर्तमान में मेरा सही नाम Ajaz Zehra Rizvi W/o Syed Habib Akbar, प्लॉ-273, Nautaba, Amethiya Salempur, Kakori, Lucknow.

सूचना

सूचित हो कि मेरी पुत्री Ahsen Zehra Rizvi के समस्त परदायों में मेरा नाम Syed Habib Akbar दर्ज है एवं पुत्री के शैक्षिक प्रमाण पत्रों में सुटिसर Habib Akbar दर्ज हो गया है। Syed Habib Akbar व Habib Akbar एक ही व्यक्ति के नाम हैं। वर्तमान में मेरा सही नाम Syed Habib Akbar, प्लॉ-273, Nautaba, Amethiya Salempur, Kakori, Lucknow.

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NOTICE

This is to inform you that The Correct spelling of my son's name is Atharva Singh Bhadouria instead of Atharva Singh Bhadouria. Gajendra Singh Bhadouria, C-4969/8, Sector-13, Rajaji Puram, Lucknow.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Santosh Kumar Diwaker to Santosh Kumar. Santosh Kumar S/o Meval Lal Diwaker, R/o H.No. 153, Manas Nagar Colony, Jiyamau, Hazratganj, Lucknow.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that I have disowned my daughter Smriti Misra from my all moveable & immovable properties due to their bad behaviour. I & my family will not be responsible for their deeds. J.S. Misra, 88/3, Jurian Tola, Moqboolganj, Lucknow.

NOTICE

01.03.2019, 11:30 बजे कार्यालय आयुक्त एवं निबन्धक सहकारिता, उ०३० 14-विमानसभा मार्ग, लखनऊ निम्नलिखित अम्बेसडर कारे - कुपोषी 32-बी०जी०-1040, कुपोषी 32-बी०जी०-0369, कुपोषी 32-0740 की नीलामी सिक्कीटो रु० 5,000/- नगद प्रत्येक। गवर्नमेंट नीलामकर्ता आई०पी० सिंह एफ० एस०।

Priyanka directs leaders to bolster party base

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After holding marathon meetings with leaders from districts in the last three days, AICC general secretary and UP East incharge Priyanka Gandhi directed senior Congress leaders, including state chief Raj Babbar, to visit their respective constituencies and strengthen the party.

"Go and work in the field by strengthening relations with locals and learning about their core problems and get them resolved by the authorities," directed Priyanka to 20-odd senior Congress leaders.

Party sources said that expressing concern over inputs from local leaders that senior leaders were not to be found in the constituencies, Priyanka asked leaders to organise public welfare programmes in their respective areas and strengthen the party base.

To keep a tab on these leaders, Priyanka also directed senior leaders to update her on a weekly basis about the work carried out in the constituencies on her WhatsApp number. The 20 Congress leaders who were initially directed to work on the ground included state Congress chief Raj Babbar, Rajya Sabha MP Panna Lal Punia (seeking ticket for his son Tanuj Punia), former UP government ministers - Jitin Prasad, RPN Singh, Pardeep Jain 'Aditya', former MPs Rajaram Pal, Dr Vinay Kumar Pandey 'Vinnu', Praveen Aron, Annu Tandon, Nirmal Khatri, Harendra Malik and Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh, Pramod Tewari, along with Imran Masood, Harendra Agarwal, Virendra Singh, Congress legislative party leader Ajay Kumar 'Lallu', Rajeev Shukla, Naseemudeen Siddiqui and Ranjeet Singh 'Judev'.

Besides, another AICC general secretary and UP West incharge Jyotiraditya Scindia also gave similar directions to at least a dozen senior leaders asking them to work in their regions and update him on his WhatsApp number.

Meanwhile, Priyanka and Scindia will meet leaders of the remaining parliamentary seats including Kushinagar, two districts of Bundelkhand region and those in NCR region in the coming days. These districts could not be taken up in Lucknow.

Sources also confirmed that Priyanka was likely to return to Lucknow some time next week, and interact with leaders of all frontal outfits like Mahila Congress, Sewa Dal, Youth Congress, National Students' Union of India along with cells of the UCCP.

She will be taking feedback about the existing organisation, working of leaders and how they can fight with full strength and win the Lok Sabha elections.

Rousing repection to dream train Vande Bharat Express

ABHILASH NARAIN ■ ALLAHABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday who flagged off the inaugural run of the dream train Vande Bharat Express from platform No 1 of New Delhi station was given a rousing reception at Kanpur, Allahabad and Varanasi stations on its arrival.

This train will reach Allahabad in six hours and will take only eight hours to reach Varanasi from New Delhi.

Though this engineless train was tested at 180 km/hr, it's high-speed will be 130 km/hr in the normal run. The inaugural function had been planned to be a big event but in view of the Pulwama terrorist attack the train was flagged off after a simple ceremony. Modi entered its loco cabin before giving it a green signal.

Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, who took the journey in Vande Bharat Express from New Delhi to Varanasi, visited each coach and met every guest passenger.

People in large numbers had gathered on both sides of the track to have a look at this special train. The train was given a rousing reception at Kanpur, Allahabad and Varanasi stations on its arrival.

The loco pilots who occupied the cabin for this inaugural run were KK Chitkarai and Sanjay Singh, while the guard was Prem Kumar. The train captain on Friday was Anil Mohra. Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal was quite impressed on receiving an enthusiastic response from the people after the inaugural run of T-18 Vande Bharat Express. While talking to newsmen on

board said that 30 such trains were in the pipeline and he had planned 100 semi-high speed trains all over India. The Railway Minister said that the next would be T-20 with sleeper coaches. He lamented that very little had been done for railway infrastructural development in the past. He had proposed a budget of ₹1.5 lakh crore for it in order to ensure that the vision of Modi became true.

When asked about the concessions in Vande Bharat Express, he said he would consider it later when the cost would come down by increasing production. At present his concentration was on modernising railways.

The Bullet Train Project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad was in progress, he added. This five-day-a-week train will be on its regular run from February 17. It will leave New Delhi at 6 am and will reach Kanpur at 10.18 am, Allahabad by 12.23 pm and Varanasi at 14.00 hours. It will be back the same day from Varanasi at 15.00 hours to reach Delhi at 23.00 hours via Allahabad (16.35 hours) and Kanpur (18.30 hours).

Vande Bharat Express is an Indian semi-high speed intercity electric multiple unit. It was designed and built by Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai, under the Union government's Make in India Initiative over a span of 18 months. The unit cost of the first rake was given as ₹100 crore though it was expected to go down with subsequent production.

Rizvi demands closure of 'madarsas' run by Wahabis



Lucknow (PNS): UP Shia Central Waqf Board chairman Wasim Rizvi demanded immediate closure of Islamic religious schools known as 'madarsas' run by Wahabi sect of Sunni Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir. In the backdrop of the fideyean attack on a CRPF convoy in Kashmir on Thursday, Rizvi said that Wahabi madarsas were a huge threat to internal security and unity and integrity of the country as they were breeding ground of extremism and fanaticism.

Condemning the fideyean attack on the CRPF convoy that left 42 jawans dead, Rizvi said that the extremists were anti-nationals and their sole aim was to spread hatred and bloodletting in the country.

The Shia Waqf Board chairman said that many Wahabi madarsas were operating by concealing their identity. "The nation can never win the war against jihad spear-headed by Wahabis unless their madarsas are banned immediately," he said.

Lightning claims 9 lives in Hardoi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lightning snuffed out two dozen lives and left several others injured in the last 24 hours across Uttar Pradesh. The worst tragedy was reported from Hardoi where nine villagers going to attend a cremation were fatally struck by lightning on Friday morning.

As per reports, Saurabh, son of pradhan of Mansoorpur in Sandi (Hardoi) Susheel Awasthi died on Thursday night and the locals were going to Kusumkhor ghat in Arwal on Friday morning to perform the last rites when they were struck by lightning that left nine dead and scores with serious burns.

The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital. The deceased included Manni Awasthi (55), Madan Bihari (60), Ravindra

Katheriya (36), Siyaram (55), Shivam (26), Phool Banu and Rakesh. The identity of two others was yet to be ascertained.

In Jaunpur, a school girl was killed while two students were injured when lightning struck a primary school in Ajiya hamlet of Sujanganj on Friday morning. The students were standing under a tin shade near the school gate to save themselves from rains, when the tragedy struck, claiming the life of Prachi (9) and leaving two others, Rita and Shiva, injured. Both were shifted to a hospital.

In the third incident reported from Khudaganj area of Shahjahanpur, two brothers were killed while several others were injured after being struck by lightning on Friday morning.

Mahendra Singh of Kankauli hamlet of Khudaganj and his sons Sher Singh, Saurabh Singh and Puspendra Singh and some villagers were digging out potatoes from the fields on Friday morning when it started raining. As they took shelter under a tree, lightning struck killing Sher Singh and his brother Saurabh Singh. The other villagers were injured. They were rushed to a primary health centre where the condition of Mahendra Singh and two others — Shivam and Manoj — was stated to be critical.

An official communiqué of the government confirmed 11 deaths due to lightning on Thursday. As per official figures, two persons each were killed in Agra, Bulandshahr and Bareilly, while one person each lost their life in Hapur,

Firozabad, Sambhal, Bijnore and Meerut respectively.

Meanwhile, four persons going to immerse ashes were killed in an accident in Kasganj district on Friday morning.

The family members of Hari Singh of Nagloi hamlet of New Delhi were going in a car to immerse the ashes of Hari's mother Ghiya Devi in a river. As they were passing by Bilgram in Kasganj, the driver lost control over the vehicle and ploughed into the house of a scrap dealer. While four occupants of the car died, four others were critically injured. The injured were admitted to hospital by the police.

The deceased were identified as Bhagwati Devi, Radha Rani, Rajwati and Umesh while Vikky, Satyendra, Hari Singh and Kishen Lal of New Delhi were injured.

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NW) III
OVER HEAD TANK ASHOK VIHAR DELHI

PRESS NIT No. 71 (2018-19)

Item No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Date of release of tender in E-procurement solution	Last date/time receipt of tender through e-procurement
1	Providing laying 400 mm dia and 250 mm dia main peripheral sewer line in Block C-3 Keshav Puram in AC-17 Wazirpur Constituency under EE (NW)	Rs. 27,12,846/-		Tender ID No. 2019_DJB_168394_1 on 12.02.2019 at 03:24 PM	27.02.2019 Up to 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>.

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V 824/2018-19 Sd/- Ex. Engineer (NW)III

DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT OF N.C.T OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NORTH-I)
OVER HEAD TANK, MUKHERJI NAGAR, DELHI-110009.

NIT No 67 Item No I (North-I) (2018-19)

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Tender fee (Non refundable)	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Replacement of old and damaged Sewer line in Gali Dabbewali, Gali Shastr, Gali Ration wall and Gali Gautam in Kabir Basti (Malka Ganj Ward No. 09 under EE (N)-I (Re-invited) E-Tendering I.D.- 2019_DJB_168370_I	Rs. 25,55,040/-	51,100/-	12.02.2019 15:00 PM onward	500/-	Technical bid to be received on 27.02.2019 3:00 PM & opening of Financial bid after completion of technical bid & confirmation of EMD from Bank

Further details in the regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 821/2018-19 Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (North-I)

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Pulwama terror attack: Anger spills onto streets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Enraged by the terror attack on CRPF convoy in the Pulwama district of Kashmir on Thursday, protesters hit the streets and tributes poured in for the CRPF personnel on Friday. Residents expressed shock, disappointment, and anger. They extended their sympathies and support to the bereaved families.

Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia, along with corporators, paid tributes to the martyred soldiers at LMC headquarters while the officials observed 2-minute silence for them.

Condemning the terror attack, hundreds of students and members of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad burnt the effigy of Pakistan in front of Lucknow University.

Uttar Pradesh Karmachari Sanyukta Parishad paid tributes to the martyrs at a condolence meet at its Darulshafa office. Regional president RK Verma and other members



(Clockwise from top) People led by Maulana Kalbe Jawwad protesting against the Pulwama terror attack after Friday prayers at Asafi Imambara; advocates burning the effigy of terrorism; Congress leaders and workers paying tributes to martyred CRPF jawans; and cops observing 2-minute silence at Hazratganj police station

observed a two-minute silence and called upon the Central government to give a befitting reply to the perpetrators of the attack.

Central Bar Association organised a 'shok sabha' and condemned the terror attack. General secretary Sanjeev Pandey said a 'shanti march' was also taken out and advocates called upon the Centre to take strong action against terrorists and their supporters.

Unity PG and Law College paid tributes to the martyred CRPF soldiers. The college announced that it stood with the bereaved families of the martyrs and remained committed to their dignity and well-being.

Students of Abdul Kalam Technical University observed a 2-minute silence as a mark of respect to the martyrs along with the staff and Vice-Chancellor Vinay Kumar Pathak.

Students and staff of Bhartendu Natya Akademi, along with artistes and under chairman Ravi Shankar Khare, paid tributes to the martyrs and expressed grief. The students and staff of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti University, led by Vice-Chancellor Mahrukh Mirza, organised a 'shanti march' and condemned the terror attack.

Association of journalists also condemned the attack and held a protest at Gandhi

Statue. IFWJ national president K Praveen Rao said it was the time to take revenge.

Meanwhile, candle marches were taken out from several points, including Sahara Bazaar and Shaheed Smarak. A candle march led by KGMU Vice-Chancellor Dr MLB Bhatt and senior doctors was taken out in evening.

Chairperson of All-India Women Personal Law Board Shaista Amber said that the government must take strict action to rid the country of terrorists. TET teachers' candidates took out a peaceful protest while cancelling their pre-scheduled Vidhan Sabha

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POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)
(Under Rule- 8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Allahabad Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers / Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers / Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules.

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charges of the Allahabad Bank.

The Borrower's/Guarantor'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.

This Possession Notice is being served to the Borrower (s), Guarantor (s) & Mortgagor (s) to deposit the said dues. Details as under:

Name & Address of the Borrower/Guarantors	Description of the Immovable Property	Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Outstanding Amt.
Branch- Daliganj, Lucknow		
Borrowers & Mortgagors: (1) Sri Arshad Ali S/o Sri Ashraf Ali, (2) Smt. Firoza Farhat W/o Sri Arshad Ali Both R/o A-1, Hata Khuda Bux Colony, Lucknow.	All that is part & parcel of House No. A-1, Hata Khuda Bux Colony, Lucknow. Area: 29.85 sq.mt. in the name of Sri Arshad Ali S/o Ashraf Ali & Smt. Firoza Farhat W/o Sri Arshad Ali, Bounded as per deed: North- Road 9 mtr., South- Lane, East- Lane, West- H.No. A-2	13.11.2018 14.02.2019 Rs. 8,61,472/- + interest & other expenses w.e.f. 13.11.2018

Date : 16.02.2019 Place : Lucknow Authorised Officer, Allahabad Bank

1 held for threatening media firm's CEO, demanding cash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A person, identified as Amanish of Nagirpur village under Biswa police station in Sitapur, was arrested from his house late Thursday night for demanding Rs 5 lakh from the chief executive officer (CEO) of a media company, Pramil Dwivedi. Police said the accused rang up the CEO on his landline on January 22 last and demanded a sum of Rs 5 lakh. When Dwivedi sought to know why, Manish threatened to eliminate him or any of his family members if he did not cough up the money.

Dwivedi lodged a complaint with the UP Police on Twitter and also informed the

ASP (Crime). Taking prompt action, the police swung into action. The ASP, along with the help of the Gudamba inspector, devised a strategy to nab Manish and made Vijay Singh the investigating officer.

The number from which Manish made the call to Dwivedi was put on surveillance. On Thursday evening, Manish's location was traced in his native village. Sharma, along his team, conducted a raid at his house later in the night and nabbed him. Manish confessed to his crime.

Dwivedi is a social worker and runs his media company in Indira Nagar under Gudamba police station where he resides.

सिंडिकेट बैंक
Syndicate Bank

POSSESSION NOTICE
(for immovable property)
[Appendix IV under the Act-rule-8(1)]

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the Syndicate Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 and in exercise of power conferred under section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower/surety/owner of the property to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of the said notice. The borrower/surety/owner of the property having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/surety/owner of the property and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of power conferred on him/her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with rule 8 of the security (Enforcement) rules, 2002. The borrowers is invited to the provisions of sub-section(8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower/surety/owner of the property in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Syndicate Bank, for the amount mentioned here below and interest thereon, costs etc.

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the charged/mortgaged/hypothecated property (All the part and parcel of the property consisting of)	Date of Demand Notice Date of Possession Amt. O/s on Date of Demand Notice Amount O/s as on 31.01.2019
Branch : KALYANPUR, LUCKNOW			
1	Borrowers : (1) Smt. Suman Lata Sahu W/o Kanchan Lal Sahu, Part Khasra No. 137 Sa, Adil Nagar, Ward Shankar Purwa, Lucknow - 226022 (2) Kanchan Lata Sahu S/o Sri Parash Nath Sahu, Part Khasra No. 137 Sa, Adil Nagar, Ward Shankar Purwa, Lucknow - 226022. Guarantors : Sri Vivek Sahu S/o Sri Ghanshyam Sahu, N-2/270, Sector-N, Aliganj, Lucknow-226022	All that part and parcel of UREM of Land and building Khasra No. 137 Sa, situated at Adil Nagar, Lucknow, Admeasuring Area- 92.94 sq. meter, Owned by-Smt. Suman Lata Sahu, W/o Sri Kanchan Lal Sahu Boundaries : East : Property of Dharmendra Singh, West : Araj Seller, North : Araj Seller, South : 15 ft. wide road.	28.11.2018 15.02.2019 ₹ 7,69,222.00 ₹ 7,69,165.11 + future interest & other charges from 01.02.2019
Branch : ASHIYANA, LUCKNOW			
2	Borrowers : (1) Cooling Point, Prop. Sri Pramod Sharma, 1st Floor, Commercial Complex, Sector-G, LDA Colony, Kanpur Road, Lucknow-226012 (2) Sri Pramod Sharma S/o N. L. Mishra, Tapovan Nagar, Farrukhabad, Chillawan, Manasnagar, Lucknow-226012 Guarantors : Sri Vinay Kumar Sharma, Tapovan Nagar, Farrukhabad, Chillawan Manasnagar, Lucknow-226012	All that part and parcel of Commercial Hall situated at 1st Floor, Sector-G, Ashiana, Lucknow, Admeasuring Area- 260.12 sq. meter, Owend by-Sri Pramod Sharma Boundaries : East : Road, West : Road, North : Road, South : Hotel Function	07.12.2018 13.02.2019 ₹ 1,37,80,611.00 ₹ 1,37,82,283.24 + future interest & other charges from 01.02.2019

Date : 15.02.2019, Place : Lucknow Authorised Officer, Syndicate Bank

प्रादेशिक फल शाकभाजी एवं पुष्प प्रदर्शनी 2019

उद्घाटन
योगी आदित्यनाथ
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश
के कर-कमलों द्वारा
दिनांक : 16 फरवरी, 2019, अपराह्न 4.00 बजे

पारितोषिक वितरण एवं समापन
राम नाईक
राज्यपाल, उत्तर प्रदेश
के कर-कमलों द्वारा
दिनांक : 17 फरवरी, 2019, अपराह्न 4.00 बजे

दिनांक : 16 व 17 फरवरी, 2019
स्थान : राजभवन प्रांगण, लखनऊ

आयोजक :
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विशेष : स्कूली बच्चों का प्रवेश नि:शुल्क अन्य सभी के लिए रु 5/- शुल्क

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दस्त के मामले में, प्राथमिक उपचार के तौर पर बच्चे को बहुत सी तरल चीजों का सेवन कराना चाहिए।
स्वच्छता बनाए रखना, बच्चे को खिलाने से पहले व शौच के बाद साबुन से हाथ धोना, उबला हुआ पीने का पानी, शौचालय की उचित सफाई और मल का निपटान भी जरूरी है।

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उत्तम स्वास्थ्य हेतु अधिक जानकारी के लिए अपनी निकटतम आशा बहू / एएनएम / स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र से सम्पर्क करें.

विश्व स्वास्थ्य दिवस पर विश्व स्वास्थ्य दिनांक 7.4.2019 को 1800-180-5145 / राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य दिनांक 7.4.2019 को 1800-180-1900
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Diplomatic offensive launched against Pak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After vowing to avenge the killing of 44 CRPF jawans at Pulwama in Jammu & Kashmir, India on Friday launched a major diplomatic offensive against Pakistan to mobilise international opinion in favour of a possible punitive action. India briefed envoys of 25 countries, including from P5 nations — US, China, Russia, the UK and France — on Islamabad's hand behind the attack.

Ahead of the full-scale briefing to international community, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale summoned Pakistan High Commissioner to India Sohail Mahmood to his South Block office and issued a very strong demarche over the attack in which at least 40 CRPF personnel were killed in Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Pakistan must take "immediate and verifiable action" against the JeM and that it must immediately stop any groups or individuals associated with terrorism operating from its territories, Gokhale told the envoy. According to sources, Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria has also been called to Delhi for consultations in the wake of the horrific attack.

Hours after vowing to isolate Pakistan diplomatically in the wake of the attack, the Government undertook the exercise of reaching out to the international community, most of which has univocally condemned the attack by the UN-proscribed Pakistan-based JeM terrorist outfit.

China expressed deep "shock" over the Pulwama terror attack carried out by a Jaish suicide bomber, but did not give

an assurance to India that it will back New Delhi's appeal to list the UN-proscribed Pakistan-based terror group's chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.

Apart from the envoys of the P5, Gokhale met the envoys of key countries in Europe and Asia such as Germany, South Korea, Japan, as well as Australia, they said.

"All the Heads of Missions were left in no doubt about the role played by Pakistan based and supported JeM in the terrorist attack and our demand that Pakistan ceases forthwith all support and financing to terror groups operating from areas under their control. The foreign secretary also highlighted the role played by Pakistan in using terrorism as an instrument of its state policy," a source said.

The MEA will continue to take all steps to expose the com-



Policemen patrol after clashes broke out between communities in Jammu AP

licity of Pakistan in the Pulwama terrorist attack and demand immediate and verifiable action against JeM and its leader Masood Azhar, the source added.

Countries from across the globe condemned the terror attack with nations such as the US, UK, Russia and France

asserting that they stand with India in this hour of grief.

Condemning the attack, Russian President Vladimir Putin said perpetrators and sponsors of the attack should be brought to book and reiterated his country's support for further strengthening counterterrorist cooperation with India.

Govt calls all-party meet to discuss terror attack

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An all-party meeting has been called by the Government on Saturday to discuss Thursday's terror attack against a convoy of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Kashmir in which 40 soldiers were killed and many more are still battling for their lives.

This meeting will be the first of its kind called by the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the wake of a terror attack.

The agenda of the meeting, it is understood, is to seek a unanimous view of India's future course of action.

This meeting will be the first of its kind called by the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the wake of a terror attack

Invitations have been extended to all the parties.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh who visited Kashmir on Friday to oversee the situation there would convene the meeting to brief political parties on the incident so that the nation speaks in one

voice on the issue, said Union Finance Minister Aurn Jaitley said after the meeting of Cabinet Committee on Security.

With Lok Sabha elections close by, the Government would like to take a bipartisan view on the issue and to have the backing of all the parties to whatever action it proposes to take following the terror attack in Kashmir.

All the parties are expected to attend the important meet called by the Government.

Shiv Sena, an ally in the NDA has sought calling of a Joint-session of the Parliament to discuss the Pulwama attack.



Security personnel keep vigil outside High Commission of Pakistan as security was tightened following anti-Pakistan protests in the Capital after the Pulwama terror attack in New Delhi Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Rahul extends support to Govt

PAWAR TAKES JIBE AT MODI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Pulwama attack, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday said his party and the entire Opposition is fully supportive of the Government and the security forces.

No amount of hatred and anger can harm the love India is built on, Gandhi said at a Press conference along with former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other Congress leaders, including Ghulam Nabi Azad and AK Antony.

"This is a terrible attack, this type of violence is disgusting. Terrorism tries to divide the nation, we can't be divided by any power. The entire opposition is with secu-

riety forces and the Government," Gandhi said.

"Those who have done this should not feel that they can harm the country. It is a time of mourning and sadness," he added.

Singh said the nation can never compromise with terrorism.

"Terrorism is a scourge which we can never compromise..." the former Prime Minister said.

On Thursday, an explosives laden truck rammed into a CRPF convoy in Pulwama outside Srinagar, killing 37 soldiers in one of the biggest terror attacks in recent years.

Meanwhile, Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Friday said the Pulwama terror attack was an attack on the nation and there should be no attempts to politicise the issue. The former Union minister also took a swipe at Prime Minister

"Those who have done this should not feel that they can harm the country. It is a time of mourning and sadness"

Narendra Modi over some of the latter's statements after such attacks during the Congress-led UPA regime.

Speaking to reporters on home turf Baramati in Pune district, Pawar called Thursday's attack on the CRPF convoy in Jammu and Kashmir as an attack on the nation.

"I can remember, Prime Minister Modi, before coming to power, used to say in his election rallies that (then PM) Manmohan Singh's government had failed to teach Pakistan a lesson (after such attacks).

"He (Modi) used to say the Manmohan Singh government did not have ability to teach a lesson (to Pakistan). He also

used to remark that only those with a 56-inch chest could administer a tough lesson to Pakistan," Pawar said.

Modi, in his rallies, used to exhort people to replace the UPA government with that of the BJP so that Pakistan could be given a befitting reply for such terror attacks, Pawar told reporters.

"But everyone has seen what has happened now. But today I will not repeat that same demand which he (Modi) had made (at that time)," Pawar said.

The kind of image that Modi created of himself in the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls had now become a "100 per cent failure", he said.

The hand of state players in Pakistan cannot be ruled out in the Pulwama attack looking at its magnitude and explosives used, Pawar said. Having such capabilities was not possible for common persons or outfits, he added.

INSHORT

MORE SHOULD VISIT ARUNACHAL: SPEAKER

New Delhi: Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India and more people should visit the State as several initiatives have been taken lately to improve the connectivity, LS Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said recently after she was presented a copy of *Arunachal Pradesh-Rediscovering Hinduism in the Himalayas*. Penned by Dr Jagdish Kaur, Regional Adviser, (Tobacco Free Initiative) with the WHO, the book traces culture and religion in the State.

3-DAY BREAST CANCER AWARENESS EVENT BEGINS

New Delhi: A three-day national level "Training of Trainers" programme for spreading the awareness about early detection and prevention of cervical and breast cancer was kicked off Friday at "Om Shanti Retreat Center" in Manesar in Haryana.

Yoga reduces severity of RA symptoms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eight weeks of intensive yoga practice significantly decreases the severity of physical and psychological symptoms in patients with active rheumatoid arthritis (RA), a debilitating chronic autoimmune inflammatory disease, according to doctors from Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

In their study published in *Restorative Neurology and Neuroscience*, the doctors said that marked improvements were noticed in the levels of certain inflammatory biomarkers and assessments of functional status and disease activity in patients studied, demonstrating yoga's promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative potential for achieving optimal health.

"Our findings show measurable improvements for the

patients in the test group, suggesting an immune-regulatory role of yoga practice in the treatment of RA.

"An intensive yoga regimen concurrent with routine drug therapy induced molecular remission and re-established immunological tolerance. In addition, it reduced the severity of depression by promoting neuroplasticity," explained lead investigator, Rima Dada, MD, Professor, Department of Anatomy, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here. She noted that high disease activity and underlying depression are associated with increased disability, reduced quality of life, and minimized rates of clinical remission and treatment response. Other researchers included Dr Surabhi Gautam, Dr Madhuri Tolahunase and Dr Uma Kumar.

The study was a mind-

body intervention (MBI) randomized trial (with parallel active and control groups) to analyze the effects of practicing 120 minutes of yoga, five days a week for eight weeks on 72 patients with RA. Both the test and control groups were simultaneously undergoing routine drug therapies (DMARDs).

The findings showed significant improvement in systemic biomarkers of neuroplasticity, inflammation, immune-modulation, cellular health integrity, and aging in association with the positive clinical outcome of reduction in depression severity, disease activity, and disability quotient in RA patients following the intensive yoga based MBI. The study was supported by funding provided by the Department of Science & Technology, Union Ministry of Science & Technology.

Existing research has eval-

uated the role of yoga as an effective intervention to assist the management of RA with respect to clinical symptoms, quality of life, psychosocial outcomes, and functional ability.

This study is one of the first to look at how yoga practice affects the systemic biomarkers of inflammation, cellular aging, and oxidative stress, especially in RA. "Our results provide evidence that yoga positively modifies the pathobiology of autoimmunity at cellular and molecular levels by targeting mind-body communications. Further research is needed for the exploration of possible mechanisms underlying the cumulative effect of yoga on multiple pathways at a cellular level," added Dr. Dada. "Yoga facilitates the mind's capacity to affect bodily function and symptoms mediated through a variety of downstream path-

ways and bring about natural immunological tolerance."

RA is a heterogeneous autoimmune disease that results from the interplay of genetic and environmental factors and causes extensive systemic inflammation, cartilage damage, and synovial hyperplasia that cause physical disability and psychiatric comorbidity. The co-existence of depression and RA in individuals poses a significant healthcare burden on the patients, their caregivers, healthcare systems, and society as a whole.

Existing medical therapies have a limited scope and fail to cure the psychological component of the disease and have numerous side effects. Depression seems to decrease patients' compliance and adherence to medical treatment and results in worse health outcomes and increases disease severity.

SC to hear plea against 1993 Central law on land acquisition near disputed site in Ayodhya

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday decided to hear a fresh plea challenging the constitutional validity of a 1993 Central law by which the government acquired 67.703 acres of land, including the disputed premises of Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid, in Ayodhya.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi tagged the matter with the main petition on title dispute pending before a constitution bench.

"List the matter before the bench already seized with the issue," the bench of Chief Justice Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna said.

The plea, challenging leg-

islative competence of Parliament to acquire religious land, was filed a week after the Centre had moved the apex court seeking modification in its 2003 order and allow it to return to original owners the 67 acres "non-disputed" land around the disputed structure in Ayodhya.

The petition, filed by seven individuals, including two Lucknow-based lawyers claiming to be devotees of Ram Lalla, has contended that Parliament had no legislative competence to acquire land belonging to the state.

Moreover, it said, the state legislature has the exclusive power to make provisions relating to the management of affairs of religious institutions inside its territory.

ED attaches Vadra's assets worth ₹4.62 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has attached assets worth ₹4.62 crore of SkyLight Hospitality (P) Ltd, a firm owned by Robert Vadra, Congress president Rahul Gandhi's brother-in-law, in connection with the Bikaner land scam case.

"The attached assets include movable assets amounting to ₹18,59,500 pertaining to four individuals and one immovable property situated at 268, Sukhdev Vihar in New Delhi to the extent of ₹4,43,36,550 owned by Robert Vadra's company Ms Sky Light Hospitality (P) Ltd (now LLP)," the agency said.

The ED had registered a criminal case in connection with the deal in 2015, taking cognisance of a clutch of FIRs and charge sheets filed by Rajasthan Police after the tehsildar of Bikaner complained about alleged forgery in the allotment of land in the area. The area is considered sensitive due to its proximity to the Indo-Pak border.

"In furtherance of sale/purchase, these impugned fraudulent lands were further sold by subsequent purchasers to individuals and companies and all these subsequent sellers of the impugned land generated a considerable amount of profit. The fraudulently generated profit by these entities is nothing but proceeds of crime as defined under PMLA," the ED said in a statement.

Sky Light Hospitality (P) Ltd had purchased 275 Bigha (69.55 Hectare) land fraudulently for ₹72 lakh and sold the same for ₹5.15 crores to Alagey Finance (P) Ltd and illegally generated profit of ₹4.43 Crores. Four other individuals had also generated profit of ₹18.59 lakhs in sale of fraudulent acquired land, the agency said.

On Tuesday, Vadra and his mother Maureen had appeared before the ED in Jaipur. Congress general secretary and Vadra's wife Priyanka Gandhi had accompanied them to the probe agency's office. Last week, the ED had quizzed Vadra in Delhi for three days in connection with a money laundering probe against him for allegedly procuring assets abroad in an illegal manner.

All-India Flamingo census from next week

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

If you are a bird lover or/and avian expert, you have an opportunity to be the part of this first ever all-India Flamingo census to be carried out in two phases—first one on February 23-24, and then in April at several sites across 12 States including the national Capital and neighbouring Haryana.

The all India count is expected to help in assessing the current population trend of Greater Flamingo

Flamingo Phoenicopterus rosae and Lesser Flamingo Phoenicopterus minor and their habitats in India to help prepare the species action plan for their long term conservation, said an official from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) which is conducting the mega census. Greater Flamingos, which are taller and whiter, have a mixed feeding pattern. It feeds on insects, small fishes and algae. The Lesser Flamingos are comparatively smaller and more pink and only feed on algae.

These two birds are also included in the India's National Action Plan (NAP) for Conservation of Migratory Birds and their habitats along Central Asian Flyway (CAF) prepared by the Union Environment Ministry. "This is the first initiative



Greater Flamingo



Lesser Flamingo

for a coordinated PAN-India flamingo count. We have in the past undertaken several studies including colour tagging, satellite tracking of Greater Flamingo and conservation actions in the past decades.

"Currently, we are monitoring both migratory birds population in some locations including the Mumbai seascape," said the official adding that as this work is initiated through the citizens science, this also fulfil another activity of the NAP to promote migratory bird conservation initiatives through raising public awareness and local peoples' participation, including citizen science groups.

The Central Asian Flyway (CAF), one among the nine flyways in the world, encompasses overlapping migration routes over 30 countries for different waterbirds linking their northern most breeding grounds in Russia (Siberia) to

the southernmost non-breeding (wintering) grounds in the Maldives and the British Indian Ocean Territory.

The BNHS has short-listed major Flamingo congregation sites by referring available literature, past and present BNHS studies, Asian Waterbird Counts (AWC) and e-bird India database. Majority of these wetland sites are in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Telangana. In Delhi, these birds are sighted at Najafgarh jheel area while in Haryana the hotspots are Sultanpur National Park and Dighal wetlands.

"The government institutions, Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) members, birdwatchers, NGOs, ornithologists, researchers, academicians and nature lovers across India are being encouraged to visit any of the short-listed sites or any site of their choosing where Flamingos are seen," said the official.

Govt amends norms for setting up EVs charging stations

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to make it easy for people to switch to electric vehicles (EV) and to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has made amendments to the Model Building Byelaws (MBBL) 2016 and Urban Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation (URDPFI) guidelines 2014 making provisions for setting up EVs charging stations in residential and commercial buildings, bus terminals and service stations and multi-level parking lots.

The amendments include offering round-the-clock charging infrastructure facility to all electric vehicles in residential buildings, increasing electricity load for all buildings, setting up charging bays at 20% capacity of all vehicles and on-spot metering and payment services in both commercial and residential buildings.

If successful, this will make EVs more attractive and cost-effective to people - changing the way they have been driving till now. This will make easy for people to switch to EVs. The amendments in the guidelines have been circulated to all the State Governments and Union Territories with the request to amend their Building



Byelaws and Master Plan Regulations. Additionally, the building premise will have to have an additional power load, equivalent to the power required for all charging points (in a Public Charging System (PCS)) to be operated. There should be sufficient space for charging and entry/exit for vehicles. Any PCS installed at Public/Private areas or building premises of any category that caters to commercial mode of charging of EVs shall be deemed as a Public Charging Station and shall have to install the minimum requirements of chargers as specified in the guidelines.

The amendment allows one public charging system to be set up at every 25 kms on both sides of highways and inter-city corridors. Similarly, one fast charging station is to be set up at every 100 kms on both sides of highways and roads. In industrial parks or

Mumbai highway, Agra-Lucknow highway, Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressway, Delhi-Agra NH 2 and Hyderabad Outer Ring Road expressway.

According to data, India's per capita emissions are still considered low at 1.9 tonnes (2013), but its total emissions are next only to China and the US and is likely to overtake those of the European Union by 2019. Delhi is on top as the biggest emitter at over 38.38 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent overall emissions, followed by Greater Mumbai at 22.7 million tonnes and Chennai at 22.1 million tonnes, Kolkata at 14.8 million tonnes, Bangalore at 19.8 million tonnes, Hyderabad at 13.7 million tonnes and Ahmedabad at 9 million tonnes were the other cities whose emissions for the year were calculated sector wise.

As per the statistics of Delhi government, total number of vehicles in Delhi is more than the combined total vehicles in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. Delhi has 85 private cars per 1000 population against the national average of 8 cars per 1000 population. In terms of CO2 emissions due to motor vehicles, Delhi emits about 12.4 million tonnes while the city of Bengaluru emits about 8.6 million tonnes.

World leaders condemn attack, back India's fight against terror

PTI ■ WASHINGTON/MOSCOW

Countries from across the globe, including the US, Russia, Australia, France, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, have condemned the brutal Pulwama terror attack carried out by Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and extended support to India in the fight against terrorism.

At least 40 CRPF personnel were killed and many injured on Thursday in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir when a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide bomber rammed a vehicle carrying over 100 kg of explosives into their bus in Pulwama district. Condemning the attack, Russian President Vladimir Putin Friday said perpetrators and sponsors of the attack should be brought to book and reiterated his country's support for further strengthening counterterrorist cooperation with India.

In a message to President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Putin said, "Please accept the most sincere condolences in connection with the loss of Indian law enforcement officers in the terrorist act in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. We strongly condemn this brutal crime. The perpetrators and sponsors of this attack, undoubtedly, should be duly punished."

"I would like to reiterate the readiness for further strengthening counterterrorist cooperation with Indian partners. In Russia, we share the grief of friendly people of India and hope for speedy recovery of the injured," he said. The US specifically singled



out Pakistan in its statement condemning the attack.

In a stern message to Pakistan, the White House has asked Islamabad to "immediately end" its "support" to all terror groups and not to provide "safe haven" to them.

"The US calls on Pakistan to end immediately the support and safe haven provided to all terrorist groups operating on its soil, whose only goal is to sow chaos, violence, and terror in the region," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement.

"This attack only strengthens our resolve to bolster counterterrorism cooperation and coordination between the US and India," she said in the statement issued by the White House. Australia's political leaders also condemned the "heinous" terror attack. "We convey our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, and all those injured. Our thoughts are with my friend Prime Minister @narendramodi and the Indian people," Prime Minister Scott Morrison tweeted on Friday.

Opposition leader Bill Shorten said it was an atrocious attack. "To the family and friends of the soldiers killed and injured — we send our

deepest condolences, support, and hope for a timely recovery for the injured," he said in a statement. Saudi Arabia said it stood with India's fight against terrorism and extremism and denounced as "cowardly" the suicide attack. The strong condemnation came days ahead of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud's state visit to India next week for talks with the top Indian leadership. The UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said in a statement that the country "condemns this terrorist act", and reiterated the country's "principled and unequivocal position rejecting all forms of violence and terrorism".

French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian extended support to India, saying France has always been and always will be by India's side in the fight against terrorism in all its forms.

"I most firmly condemn the heinous attack just perpetrated in India. My thoughts go out to the families of the fallen soldiers and my deepest solidarity to the Indian government and people. France has always been and always will be by India's side in the fight

against terrorism in all its forms." "I call on every State to fight effectively against terrorist networks and their financing channels and to prevent cross-border movements of terrorist groups, such as the Jaish-e-Mohammed, which has claimed responsibility for this attack," Drian said. Nepal said its unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and believes that such heinous acts of terrorism cannot be justified on any ground. Condemning the attack, Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih tweeted that the Maldives will continue to work with India and the international community to combat terrorism in our region and the world at large. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "Bangladesh remains steadfast in its commitment against terrorism of all forms and maintains a zero-tolerance policy against any kind of terrorist activities. We would continue to work and cooperate with international community including India to eradicate menace of terrorism," Hasina added. Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering, tweeted, "Bhutan is deeply saddened by the news of the horrific terrorist attack in Kashmir. Bhutan strongly condemns terrorist attack of any nature. Our prayers are with the grieving family and we are following the situation closely." Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and leader of the Opposition Mahinda Rajapaksa condemned the terrorist attack and offered their condolences to Prime Minister Modi. China also expressed deep "shock" over the terror attack carried out by the Jaish suicide bomber.

US asks Pak to end support and safe haven to all terror groups

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a stern message to Pakistan, the White House has asked Islamabad to "immediately end" its "support" to all terror groups and not to provide "safe haven" to them, as the US condemned the brutal Pulwama terror attack claimed the lives of at least 40 CRPF soldiers. Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) has claimed responsibility for the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Thursday that left at least 40 CRPF soldiers dead and five others critically wounded.

"The United States calls on Pakistan to end immediately the support and safe haven provided to all terrorist groups operating on its soil, whose only goal is to sow chaos, violence, and terror in the region," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a late night statement on Thursday. "This attack only strengthens our resolve to bolster counterterrorism cooperation and coordination between the United States and India," she said in a strongly-worded statement issued by the White House. Sanders said the United States condemns in the strongest terms the heinous terrorist attack in Pulwama by a Pakistan-based terrorist group. "We express our deep condolences to the victims' families, the Indian government, and the Indian people for the loss of life in this brutal attack," said the Press Secretary of President Donald

Trump. Earlier, the US State Department said in a statement that it was "resolutely committed" to working with the Indian government to combat terrorism in all its forms.

"The US condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attack today on an Indian Central Reserve Police Force convoy in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir," State Department Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino said. "The UN designated, Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Muhammad has claimed responsibility for this heinous act. We call on all countries to uphold their responsibilities pursuant to UN Security Council resolutions to deny safe haven and support for terrorists," Palladino said.

Several US lawmakers also expressed solidarity with India in the wake of a dastardly terror attack and said the two countries stand united in condemning and defeating terror.

Cutting across party lines, over 50 Congressmen and Senators took to social media to express their solidarity with the people of India and called for strict action against the JeM terror outfit and its state sponsors. "I strongly condemn the terror attack in Kashmir. The United States stands with our friends in India, and I send heartfelt condolences to the families that lost loved ones," top Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer tweeted.

Democratic Senator Robert Menendez said he was

outraged by the terror attack, "one of the deadliest in the region since 1989". Republican Senator Johnny Isakson strongly criticised the terror strike and pledged the US' support to India in defeating terrorism.

"Today, more than 40 Indian military police were killed by a radical Islamist terrorist group in the deadliest attack in 30 years on Indian forces in Kashmir. I send my deepest condolences to the soldiers injured and killed in this senseless attack, to their families, and to India, a critical ally in the global war on terror," said Republican Senator John Cornyn, Co-Chair of Senate India caucus.

"My heart is with the victims of the Kashmir Terror Attack. The United States stands with our Indian allies against those behind this heinous act of terrorism," Democratic Senator Mark Warner, who is co-chair of the Senate India Caucus and Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, posted on Twitter.

Congresswoman and Democratic presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard said, "We stand with the people of India in condemning the terrorist attack in Jammu & Kashmir, and send our condolences and prayers to the victims families. We must all stand up against these jihadists and their ideology." "Heartbreaking. My thoughts are with the families of the victims of heinous terrorist attacks in Jammu and

Kashmir today. We must confront terror and defeat it, wherever it occurs," Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal said.

Democratic Congressman Eliot Engel, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said countries must not allow terrorist groups like JeM to operate with impunity.

Congressmen Brian Fitzpatrick, Dan Crenshaw, Al Green, Don Bacon, George Holding, Joe Wilson, Jeff Van Drew, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Frank Pallone, Michael McCaul, Joe Morelle, Will Hurd, Brad Sherman, Ted Yoho and Congresswomen Elissa Slotkin, Paul Gosar also expressed outrage at the attack and sympathised with the affected families.

At least 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed and five injured in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir when a Jaish suicide bomber rammed a vehicle carrying over 100 kg of explosives into their bus in Pulwama district.

India slammed Pakistan over the attack carried out by JeM and asked the neighbouring country to stop supporting terrorists and dismantle terror infrastructure operating from its soil. Meanwhile, Pakistan said the terrorist attack in Pulwama district is "a matter of grave concern" even as it strongly rejected Indian media and government's allegations of the country's link to the strike "without" probe.

Cong feels Ambedkar not keen on being part of grand alliance

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Congress, which has been trying to persuade Bharip Bahujan Mahasangh (BBM) leader Prakash Ambedkar to join the anti-BJP coalition, says it was disappointed with his approach as he was not showing any flexibility and keenness for a tie-up.

The Congress said Ambedkar was adamant that the party should give an action plan in writing on bringing the RSS in the constitutional framework. The Congress and NCP have earlier said they were ready to give four seats to Ambedkar. However, the latter has announced candidates for 12 Lok Sabha seats.

Interestingly, the Dalit leader, grandson of Dr BR Ambedkar, has not announced his own candidature from Akola, a Lok Sabha seat he had earlier represented. The Congress Friday expressed surprise that he was yet to announce the candidate from Akola. "We agree there has to be a common minimum programme. But Ambedkar's insistence that the Congress give an action plan in writing on how to curb parallel administration run by the RSS in the government is laughable," a Congress source said on Friday.

"Congress will be in a position to give an action plan or take steps in that direction only if we are in the government. Now, focus has to be on how to win the election by ensuring



Prakash Ambedkar

there is no division of votes. Ambedkar's stand is a sign that he is not keen on alliance. We are disappointed with his approach," the source added. The state leadership has become cautious about Ambedkar's moves and feels that his tactic of not announcing a candidate in Akola so far, is due to his uncertainty of his prospects in Akola. "There are speculations that he may not contest the Akola seat, where he had finished third last time," the source said. "Since the Congress has become cautious, the party is preparing to field a new face in Akola, who will give a tough fight to sitting BJP MP Sanjay Dhotre and Ambedkar if he decides to contest on his own or field his nominee. As far as the Congress is concerned, it will wait for Ambedkar to make his next move. We don't want a message to go that we were not accommodating," the Congress insider said.

Congress and NCP have said they were ready to give four

seats to Ambedkar in order to avoid division of votes.

Talking to PTI, Ambedkar said he has announced candidates in 12 constituencies — Buldhana, Nanded, Yavatmal, Madha, Amravati, Latur, Satara, Sangli, Baramati, Pune, Hatkanagale and Nashik.

"We had sought 12 seats where Congress didn't have candidates to field or where they have been consistently losing. The number of seats was immaterial. We wanted an action plan from the Congress regarding bringing the RSS within the constitutional framework. If there is no discussion on this, we are not going with the Congress," Ambedkar said. State Congress chief Ashok Chavan said Ambedkar was offered four seats against his demand for 12 seats. "As far as his other demand of restricting the RSS is concerned, Congress is supportive of it. We too are against that ideology. Now, it is up to Ambedkar to respond," he said.

Meanwhile, the Congress is expected to begin the process of finalising its first list of candidates for the Lok Sabha elections next week. The list will be announced later. The first list will include constituencies where there is no dispute over choice of candidates, the party insiders said. Party sources told PTI that Wednesday's meeting between NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Congress president Rahul Gandhi was aimed at discussing the issue of joint campaigning.

TMC leadership seeks report on security threat to MLAs, leaders

PTI ■ KOLKATA

In the backdrop of the killing of ruling TMC MLA Satyajit Biswas, the party leadership has sought reports from all district presidents about the threat perception of its MLAs and important leaders. Trinamool Congress functionaries said.

Apart from enhancing the security of MLAs, TMC district leaders also want official security for key people in the party organization ahead of the elections. "We are preparing a report on the security status of MLAs in the district. We are preparing a separate report on our key organizational leaders who may not be MLAs or elected representatives but need to be provided security cover," a senior minister and district president of TMC told PTI, wishing not to be named. The party leadership will finally submit a report to the state administration and police, and they will take a call on it.

TMC chief whip in the state assembly Nirmal Ghosh said most party MLAs have voiced concern about their security and either appealed for enhanced cover or made their own arrangements. "I am more cautious now and have taken steps to strengthen my security. I have also asked MLAs to be more careful," Ghosh said. Biswas, the TMC MLA of Krishnaganj, was shot dead by unidentified assailants inside a Saraswati puja marquee in Nadia district on Saturday evening.

Arun Jaitley back as Finance Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Arun Jaitley on Friday resumed charge as the finance minister after a gap of over a month, which was the second break within a year that he had to take to undergo medical treatment. The President of India, as advised by the prime minister, has directed to assign the portfolios of the Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs to Arun Jaitley, an official statement said on Friday.

Jaitley tweeted on Friday: "Resumed work at the Ministry of Finance today (Friday). Thankful to Shri Piyush Goyal who discharged the responsibility at the MoF diligently & competently." Jaitley, 66, who last week returned from the US after undergoing medical treatment, first attended the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called to discuss the terror attack in south Kashmir's Pulwama district that killed around 40 CRPF personnel, and then came to North Block - the seat of the Finance Ministry. Sources said he underwent a surgery in the US on January 22 for a reported soft tissue cancer in his left leg. He

returned to India on February 9 after undergoing skin grafting. Jaitley, they said, is recovering well but needs a stick for support to stand or sit down and walks with a slight limp. After attending the CCS meeting at the prime minister's residence, he drove to North Block after the noon sitting in the front seat of Mercedes sedan, instead of his usual Tata Safari SUV. Jaitley had left for the US on January 13 and returned on February 9.

During his absence, Railways and Coal Minister Piyush Goyal was given charge of the finance ministry on January 23. Goyal also presented the sixth and final Budget of the NDA government on February 1. Even during this absence from the ministry, Jaitley has been active on social media writing Facebook posts and tweeting about current issues. Jaitley had undergone a kidney transplant surgery on May 14, 2018, at AIMS here and had not travelled abroad since then. He had stopped attending office at the beginning of April last year due to his kidney ailment and was back in North Block on August 23, 2018. Even then, Goyal had manned the ministry for about 100 days.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

EXCLUSIVE PASSAGE...

Sharing his anger, the Union Home Minister later tweeted, "The nation will not forget the supreme sacrifice of our brave jawans. Paid my last respects to the martyrs of Pulwama in Srinagar today. Their sacrifice will not go in vain," he added. Meanwhile, toll in the deadly strike on Friday reached 44. A Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist had rammed his explosives-laden car into a force convoy on the Srinagar-Jammu highway in Lethpora area and lifted samples to carry out further investigation in the case.

PAK STRIPPED... "The Most Favoured Nation status to Pakistan stands revoked," he said. He said those aiding and abating the perpetrators will have to pay a heavy price. The MNF status ensures non-discriminatory trade between two countries. India granted MFN status to Pakistan in 1996. There has been an outrage nationally and internation-

ally against the terror attack which is suspected to have received a helping hand from the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). "Ministry of External Affairs will initiate all possible diplomatic steps which are to be taken to ensure complete isolation of Pakistan in the international community," he said, adding "incontrovertible evidence" is available of Pakistan's direct hand in this gruesome terrorist attack.

INDIA OUTRAGED... Over two dozen different vehicles were set on fire in Gujjar Nagar, Residency Road, and other parts of Jammu. Several protesters received injuries during stone pelting between the two groups in Gujjar Nagar area. Mobile Internet services, however, remained suspended in Jammu as a precautionary measure to avoid law and order situation. As the angry protesters spread to different parts of Jammu city and raised roadblocks by burning tyres and other materials,

the district authorities, moving swiftly, requisitioned services of army personnel to restore order in the area. Security was beefed up across sensitive areas of Jammu city to prevent clashes. Defence Spokesman in Jammu, Lt Col Devendra Anand in a statement said, "after violence broke out in major parts of Jammu city curfew was imposed and Army was requisitioned by civil authorities of Jammu to bring the situation under control. He said, the Army reacted promptly and in a swift action, nine Internal Security Columns of Army from Tiger Division along with air support from White Knight Corps were deployed in Gujjar Nagar, Janipur, Shahidi Chowk, Talab Khatika and other areas." "Flag marches were also conducted by the IS columns. Helicopters and UAVs of Army were also put into operation to monitor the situation". Lt-Col Anand said, "The proactive approach jointly taken by J&K Police, Civil administration

(Divisional Commissioner and District Collector's office) and Indian Army has ensured that the situation remains in control and peaceful" Before the arrival of army columns, protesters, particularly in the old city, refused to disperse even after loudspeakers announced that curfew was imposed. Meanwhile, Jammu witnessed complete shutdown on Friday while its adjoining areas and neighboring districts witnessed protest demonstrations during the day. Samba, Kathua, Udhampur and Reasi areas also witnessed protest demonstrations. Before the situation took violent turn Jammu city was rocked by massive anti-Pakistan protests with people taking to the streets in dozens of places, including Jewel Chowk, Purani Mundi, Rehari, Shaktinagar, Pacca Danga, Janipur, Gandhinagar and Bakshinagar. Bar Association Jammu had also supported the strike call issued against the killing of CRPF troopers in a major attack in Lethpora area

of Awantipora in south Kashmir. Activists of different political organisations also demanded stern action against Pakistan and appealed to the Prime Minister to give a befitting reply to Pakistan.

PAK'S ABDUL RASHEED...

Amid inputs of the bike-borne fideayen who could hit security forces, the movement of convoy of forces in Kashmir Valley was suspended on Friday. Apprehension of law and order situation was also cited as a reason for suspension of convoys. Even movement of administrative vehicles and isolated vehicles were advised to be restricted. "There will be no convoy movement today (Friday)" as there are apprehensions of law and order problem in the Valley," the alert by J&K Police said. Movement of isolated vehicle is strictly prohibited while movement of Army and CRPF vehicles in the interior, inter-district and intra-district in the Valley is also banned on Friday, it said.

कार्यालय उप निदेशक (विद्यौ)
राज्य कृषि उत्पादन मण्डी परिषद, उ.प्र.
किसान मण्डी भवन, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ

पत्रांक: वि०/या०(325)/2019-1945 दिनांक: 15.02.2019

शुद्धि-पत्र

कार्यालय पत्रांक: वि./या०(325)/2018-1911 दिनांक 12.02.2019 द्वारा दिनांक 28.02.2019 को अर्मात्रित ई-निविदाओं के क्रमांक-13 पर अंकित ई-निविदा "नवीन मण्डी स्थल लहरपुर" के स्थान नवीन मण्डी स्थल सीतापुर पढ़ी जायें। शेष नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी।

उप निदेशक (वि०/या०)

U.P. Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd, Obra Thermal Power Station, OBRA-Sonebhadra-231219 SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

Name of Work : Daily routine / preventive and breakdown maintenance of WDS-6/WDM-2 Locomotives of Coal Handling Plant, BTSP, Obra. **Tender No.:** T-42/SE-II/BTSP/CHPOD/2018-19, **Estimated Cost of Work :** Rs. 15,44,204.00 (Rs. Fifteen Lac Forty Four Thousand Two Hundred Four Only). **Last Date and Time for Submission of e-Bids (Technical and Financial) at e-procurement website https://etender.up.nic.in** 25.02.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. **Last Date and Time for Submission of Tender Fee and EMD** 26.02.2019 up to 12:00 hrs. **Date And Time of Opening of e-Bids:** 26.02.2019 Up to 16:00 hrs. **Place of Opening of e-Bids:** Office of Superintending Engineer-II, BTSP, Obra, Sonebhadra **Address for Communication:** Office of Superintending Engineer-II, BTSP, Obra, Sonebhadra, E-Mail Address : sameerhatnagar16@gmail.com **Bid Document Cost :** Rs. 1180.00 (WITH GST) (Rs. One Thousand One Hundred Eighty Only). **Earnest Money:** Rs. 32,000/- (Rs. Thirty Two Thousand Only). **Note :** Tender specification is available on e-tender website <https://etender.up.nic.in> Tender will be accepted online only.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
Obra, Thermal Power Station, Obra, Sonebhadra, UP-231219

NOTICE INVITING E-BID E-Open Tender No. CT-1364 (MMC-II)/CPD-I/ATPS/19

Online e-Bids are invited for the "Supply of Multipurpose Foam Tender" for Obra Thermal Power Station Obra. E-Tender has been uploaded on 31.01.19 at 18:00 Hrs. on UP Govt., e-tender portal <http://etender.up.nic.in> Technical Bid (Part-I) (Commercial and Terms & conditions) will be opened on 08-03-19 at 16:00 Hours or later. Estimated Cost of material is approximately Rs. 44.00 Lac only. Tender Cost Rs. 2360.00 and E.M.D. for e-bid submission is Rs. 88,000.00. Total Quantity of supply, tender specification and other terms & condition is as tender document available on the e-tender portal. It may please be noted that this is online bid and shall be accepted online only on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> information related to extension in due dates and corrigendum if any if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves update. Last date of submission bid up to 02.03.19 up to 18.00 Hrs. **UPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MMC-II)**

E-TENDER NOTICE 1. Name of Work : Work services for Operation & Maintenance of Central Air Conditioning Plant for UCBS and MCB and other related works of 5x200MM, BTSP, Obra. 2. Tender No. 35/O&MMC-V/TMD/BTSP/2018-19 3. Estd cost of Work : Rs. 14.20 Lakh (Rs. Foutine Lakh Twenty Thousand Only). 4. Last Date and Time for Submission of e-Bids (Technical and Financial) at E-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> 11.03.2019 up to 18:00 Hrs. 5. Last Date and Time for Submission of Hardcopy of Requisite Documents in the Office of Undersigned. 12.03.2019 Up to 16:00 Hrs. 6. Date and Time of opening of e-Bids: 14.03.2019 Up to 16:00 Hrs.. 7. Place of Opening of e-Bids : Office of Superintending Engineer, O&MMC-V, OTPS Obra 8. Address for Communication: Superintending Engineer O&MMC-V, BTSP, Obra, Sonebhadra, UP-231219, E-Mail Address : rajkrupat66@gmail.com. 9. Bid Document Cost (Tender Cost) Rs. 1180.00 (Rs. One Thousand One Hundred Eighty Only). 10. Earnest Money : Rs. 21,000.00 (Rs. Twenty One Thousand Only) **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER O&MMC-V, BTSP, Obra, Sonebhadra, No. 32, Date 11-02-19, SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTREST OF NATION**

PULWAMA TERROR ATTACK Thousands protest in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Thousands of Muslims from south Mumbai joined the wide-spread protests staged by several groups and political parties across the metropolis against Thursday's Pulwama terror attacks which left 44 CRPF personnel dead, even as the Maharashtra Government announced an ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh each to the next of kin of two jawans from the state killed in the attack.

Muslims, carrying the Indian Tricolour, banners, placards and raising anti-Pakistan slogans, took out a massive procession along the busy Mohammed Ali Road in downtown south Mumbai.

The slogans like "Pakistan Murdabad, LeT Murdabad, "Down with Masood Azhar and Hafiz Saeed" and "JeM Murdabad" rent the air, as



Protesters stamp over pictures of Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar during a protest in Mumbai on Friday

the Muslims staged protest marches in localities of Saifee Jubilee Street, Handiwala Mosque, Sunni Bilal Mosque. Most of these areas observed a spontaneous bandh.

In a related development, the BJP-led by Ram Kadam, Raj Purohit and others — staged protests against the Pakistani-sponsored terror strike in different parts of the metropolis.

The Maharashtra and Mumbai Congress units organised special condolence meetings at the state, city and district party headqua

"We are all one who mourned the death of life under and all are sons of BharatMata! We should not think of caste, a ligion or faith. We are the followers of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam," Fadnavis said, while describing the Pulwama terror strikes as an "absolute cowardly and con-

Maha Govt announces ₹50L aid to martyrs' families

demnable act". Ruling Shiv Sena, MNS and the NCP organised similar protests and demonstrations at various parts of the city other parts of the state, while the MNS activists burnt the Pakistan flags in Mumbai and Thane.

The Bharat Diamond Bourse, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council and Mumbai Diamond Merchants Association also held a joint condolence meeting for the martyred troopers at the BDB Complex in Bandra Kurla in north-central Mumba.

The city also witnessed protests outside major suburban railway stations where lakh home-bound commuters raised slogans against Pakistan and the perpetrators behind the Pulwama attacks

Meanwhile, Maharashtra mourned the death of two Army jawans — identified as

Uddhav: Time to strike inside Pak

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray on Friday attributed the Pulwama attacks to the "intelligence failure" and said it was time to "strike inside Pakistan".

Talking to media persons, Uddhav said that those in charge of the intelligence machinery in the valley state should be removed.

"The issues of alliances, elections will be there. But Pakistan must not be allowed to go scot-free. It should be taught a befitting lesson," the Sena president said, while replying to a question about his meeting with Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday.

Maintaining that Thursday's terror attack should be condemned in the strongest possible terms, Uddhav said: "This is not just a terror attack. It has exposed the chinks in the country's intelligence system."

"You (the BJP-led Union government) conducted surgical strike in Pak-occupied-Kashmir. Now the time has come to strike inside Pakistan. The entire country supports the government on this issue," the Sena president said.

"Instead of making tall claims, Pakistan needs to be taught a lesson once and for all. If intelligence inputs were not available, one wonders what do the people who are holding the reins were doing. They should be removed," Uddhav said.

AIADMK-BJP poll alliance gets going

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The process of forming an electoral alliance between the AIADMK and the BJP for the upcoming Lok Sabha poll began in earnest late Thursday evening. Union Minister for Railways Piyush Goyal who is in charge of the Lok Sabha election for Tamil Nadu reached Chennai late Thursday evening and drove down to the residence of late industrialist from south-west Tamil Nadu and had a discussion with the AIADMK representatives — P Thangamani (Power Minister) and SP Velumani (local administration minister).

This is the first official meeting between the AIADMK and the BJP though backroom discussions were on for quite some time about the poll alliance, according to sources in both the parties. "We do not see any reason why there should not be any alliance between the AIADMK and the BJP. A formal announcement about the alliance would be made soon," said Narayanan Thirupathi, spokesman of the BJP.

Another BJP leader told The Pioneer that discussions were on with leaders of the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), the DMDK (led by film actor Vijayakanth) and Dr Krishnasamy's Puthiya Tamilakam. "There is a possibility that Tamil Manila Congress led by GK Vasan too would join the AIADMK-BJP alliance though it may take some more time for an announcement," said the BJP leader.

Since Stalin is not enthusiastic in including the TMC in his front, Vasani is left with two options, either to pitch his tent in the AIADMK-BJP front or to sail with TTV Dhinakaran's AMMK. But Anbazhagan, political commentator who is close confidante of Dhinakaran said Vasani

would not join the BJP alliance and would join hands with the AMMK.

Goyal returned to New Delhi early Friday morning and is expected back in Chennai for further talks sometime next week. Meanwhile, the DMK-led front has started its campaign for the election buoyed by the opinion poll results by some of the leading private agencies which forecast a total sweep in Tamil Nadu by the DMK.

Though Stalin has not announced the constituents of the rainbow alliance, it is certain that the Congress, the Islamist parties, the Lefts, the VCK and the MDMK led by Vaiko would figure in the DMK-led front. "On paper, the DMK front may look formidable but one cannot totally rule out the AIADMK. It has nearly 28 per cent of vote share in Tamil Nadu," said T Ramakrishnan, political commentator and author.

The Edappadi Palaniswamy government has launched a massive publicity drive as part of its third anniversary. All newspapers in the State had carried two full-page advertisements issued by the Tamil Nadu government listing the achievements made by the Edappadi Palaniswamy government during the last two years. But if the rush for application for contesting the Lok Sabha polls under the AIADMK symbol is any indication, the party launched by MGR and strengthened by Jayalalithaa is in for disappointment.

"We have received 1740 applications from prospective candidates who paid Rs 25,000 each. But this is 60 per cent less than what we received in 2014," said O Panneerselvam, Deputy chief minister.

This means that there is a dip in the popularity enjoyed by the party compared to its 2014 performance when it swept 37 of the 39 seats from the State.

Kejriwal pays glowing tribute to CRPF martyrs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal paid tribute to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel killed in Pulwama terror attack at the Palam airport where their mortal remains were brought from Srinagar on Friday evening.

"On my way to airport to pay respects to martyrs..." Kejriwal tweeted.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal extended full support to the Central Government and armed forces if they take appropriate action in response to the terror attack.

Delhi Government also cancelled all official programmes as a mark of respect for martyred CRPF personnel in cowardly attack.

Termining the attack a highly despicable and craven, the AAP convener Kejriwal also paid homage at the party office on DDU Marg.



"Delhi Government and people of Delhi are in full support of the Central Government at this critical hour and we support whatever action the Central Government and our armed forces deem fit to take," he said.

In one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu & Kashmir's three decades of militancy, a Jaish suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a CRPF bus in Pulwama district, killing around 40 personnel and leaving many critically wounded

on Thursday.

The Delhi Chief Minister said the entire country is in grief and there is tremendous anger among the people on this "highly condemnable and cowardly" act, he said.

"We are ready for any cooperation to deal with this dastardly attack," he said.

Delhi Government cancelled all its public programmes, including inaugurations of various developmental works and festivals, said a government statement.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and other ministers of AAP Government also cancelled their events and public engagements of the day.

More than 2,500 CRPF, many of them returning from leave to rejoin duty in the Valley, were travelling in the convoy of 78 vehicles when they were ambushed on the Srinagar-Jammu highway at Latoomode in Awantipora in south Kashmir around 3.15 pm.

Delhi political circle united in paying tribute

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Termining Pulwama terror attack "cowardly", political parties in Delhi expressed their grief and anguish, and at the same time support to family member of the brave jawans. Delhi BJP president, Manoj Tiwari, on Friday said the central Government will give a befitting reply to the terrorists involved in the incident. "I am shocked. I can't understand how should I stop my anger and tears? I pay my heartfelt homage to the mar-

tyrs," said Tiwari.

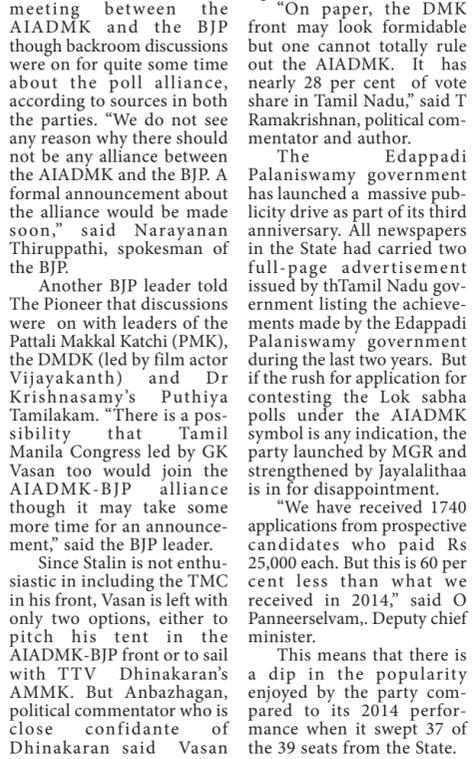
Observing that the cowardly attack is very painful, he said his party expresses full sympathy with the family members of the brave jawans.

"I fully believe that our government will give a befitting reply to the terrorists responsible for it and eliminate them," Tiwari said.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) President and former Chief Minister of Delhi, Shiela Dikshit also expressed her condolences to the to the families of the 44 security

personnel, who died in a terrorist attack on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy by a Pakistani terrorist outfit in Pulwama, near Kashmir on Thursday.

In a message to Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik, Dikshit said, "We in the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee are deeply hurt and disturbed at the terrorist attack on a CRPF convoy by a Pakistani terrorist outfit in Pulwama near Kashmir, which resulted in the loss of precious life of 44 security personnel".



Prime Minister Narendra Modi flags off Vande Bharat Express, India's first semi-high speed train, at New Delhi Railway Station on Friday

PM inaugurates Vande Bharat Express

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's first semi-high speed train on Friday. The express, initially called Train 18, which was rechristened to Vande Bharat Express will run between Delhi and Varanasi. Along with the finest amenities, Vande Bharat

Express has also partnered with restaurant chain Pind Balluchi and The Landmark Hotel for onboard meals. The Varanasi-bound Delhi train tickets are priced at ₹1,760 for the chair car and to ₹3,310 for the executive class, an order by the Railways said. As for the return journey, a CC ticket would cost ₹1,700 and ₹3,260 for EC, as per the order.

Delhiites hold candlelight marches

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hundreds of people from all walks of life on Friday gathered at India Gate and Jantar Mantar to hold candle light marches to express solidarity with the families of the CRPF jawans killed in Pulwama attack.

Some members of the Youth Congress were detained as they attempted to march towards the Pakistan High Commission to protest against the audacious attack in south Kashmir that left at least 40 jawans dead.

From students to politicians, members of social organisations to the common folks, the crowd gathered at the two venues demanded adequate compensation for the families of the dead soldiers and that Pakistan be given a "befitting reply".

"Pakistan has to be given a strong reply," said Om Prakash,



Indian Youth Congress workers detained by the police during a protest against the killing of CRPF personnel in the Pulwama terror attack in New Delhi on Friday

Delhi chief of the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party as he participated in the candle light march at India Gate. "We also demand that the Government announce ₹1 crore (as compensation) for the martyrs families," he added.

Amit Shukla, who too participated in the march at India Gate, said the sacrifice of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans must not go in vain as he urged the Union government to take urgent steps

against Pakistan. "Delhi Police facilitated the movement of people who gathered at India Gate in large numbers to express solidarity and pay homage to the martyrs who were killed in the attack," Madhur Verma, Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) said. Around 100 Indian Youth Congress (IYC) members assembled at Teen Murti Marg and raised slogans against Pakistan. IYC vice president Srinivas B V alleged that there were lapses on the part of the Union Government which led to the attack. The IYC volunteers, who planned to protest outside the Pakistan High Commission, were detained by police near Chanakyaपुरi Police Station at Teen Murti Marg. At least 15 people who protested outside the Pakistan High Commission here courted arrested but were let off later, Verma said.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION-1, PWD RAEBARELI

No. 235/8Lekha/2019 E-Tender Notice (1st Call) Dated: 11-02-2019

The E.E., C.D.-1, U.P.P.W.D., Raebareli on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP PWD, class 'A, B, C, D'. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

Sl. No.	DIST. RICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. In Lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs. In Lakhs)	Tender Cost	Address of Executive Engineer of the Executing work	Time of Completion	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
FY 2019-20 : Pot Holes/Patch Repair work of SH/MDR/ODR/VR Roads with Deptt. H.M.P.									
1	Rae Bareli	Pot holes filling & Patch repair work for All Category of Roads in Tehsil Salon.	26.00	2.60	850.00	CD-1, PWD RaeBareli	03 Month	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow
2	Rae Bareli	Pot holes filling & Patch repair work for All Category of Roads in Tehsil Unchahar.	24.00	2.40	850.00	CD-1, PWD RaeBareli	03 Month	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow
3	Rae Bareli	Pot holes filling & Patch repair work for All Category of Roads in Tehsil Sadar.	11.00	1.10	850.00	CD-1, PWD RaeBareli	03 Month	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow
4	Rae Bareli	Pot holes filling & Patch repair work for All Category of Roads in Tehsil Dalmau.	14.00	1.40	850.00	CD-1, PWD RaeBareli	03 Month	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow
FY 2018-19 : Construction of Road Under Critical Gaps									
5	Rae Bareli	Construction of Adarsh Saheed Gram Jagdishpur Junior High School Link Road.	3.20	0.32	850.00	CD-1, PWD RaeBareli	03 Month	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow
FY 2018-19 : Construction of Barrack									
6	Rae Bareli	Construction of Barrack in Thana Jagatpur, Block Jagatpur, Distt. Raebareli	6.00	0.60	850.00	CD-1, PWD RaeBareli	03 Month	Lucknow Circle P.W.D. Lucknow	Central Zone P.W.D. Lucknow

> The Rate adopted in the BOQ are excluding GST Taxes, Bids can be downloaded online from date 18.02.2019 at 9:00 AM to 23.02.2019 at 12:00 Noon and bid can be submitted online on or before 23.02.2019 at 12:00 Noon. The technical bids will be opened online on date 25.02.2019 at 12:30 PM. According to the provisions of Government Order no. 1/2018/3070/78-2-2018/42 IT/2017 (22) Date 03-01-2018 after opening of the technical and financial bids, the bidder has to submit original documents personally in department/office. In the event of non submission of original documents by the bidder, the appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of G.O.

All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://etender.up.nic.co.in>

(Subhash Chandra) Executive Engineer Construction Division-1 PWD, Raebareli For on behalf of Governor of UP

UP: 138228, Date: 13.02.19, विज्ञान वेबसाइट www.upgpn.in पर उपलब्ध है।

Hit Pakistan back hard

While the Government must retaliate, it must be pro-active and not reactive and use its strategic chips



Beyond all the condemnation and blood-curdling fury of the dastardly Pulwama attack, the worst offensive by terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir, and the candlelight vigils for the young martyrs, the only big takeaway is that we can no longer be seen as a soft state and notch up a timeline of *fidayeen* honours; we need to take demonstrable muscular action. So even if the world, US and Russia included, have condemned the attack and we have withdrawn our MFN status to Pakistan to choke it economically, there has to be a strong message to the Jaish-e-Mohammad. India must junk strategic delicacies and robustly insist its chief Masood Azhar be named a UN-designated terrorist, global action be taken against him and Pakistan be isolated diplomatically if it does not hand him over. The message should be that Jammu & Kashmir can no longer be milked politically as years of talks have yielded nothing and backdoor engagement has only meant that one or the other group and local politicians have wangled some relevance and power in the process. The only winner here has been the Pakistani deep state, which is using terror to maintain its hold over the strategic backyard, especially in relation to Afghanistan and China. And now that the Taliban, to whom Pakistan has provided safe havens all these years, is reclaiming its hold in Afghanistan following the US plans to pull out troops, it is chuckling *vis-a-vis* India. We have to be proactive, not reactive, considering the size of our economy and consequent relevance in South Asian geopolitics.

The attack is disturbing not only for the unprecedented scale of human devastation but for other reasons. Coming as it does after attempts on a series of defence establishments, it shows that our standard operating procedures are no good for protecting Army bases and the militants have somehow not only innovated but penetrated deep layers of our security systems with the ease of a sly fox. There has been talk of armoured vehicles for convoys but the proposal has hardly got off the ground. Second, though the Army and our intelligence claim to have penetrated local networks, they have not picked up the radicalised mutation of terrorist modules. What else could explain that though the security forces have smashed the Jaish and Lashkar camps and taken out their top commanders, the propaganda machine from across the border has managed to nurture and proselytize local teenagers into believing that *shahadat* for the liberation of Kashmir is greater than life itself. True, Jaish has been worried about its receding pockets of influence as November and December 2018 have been the deadliest months with 39 terrorists killed in Jammu and Kashmir. One of the major kills was of Lashkar-e-Toiba commander Naveed Jatt. The Army is in fact now focussing on terrorist leadership in the hubs of Shopian, Anantnag, Budgam, Kulgam and Srinagar. Significantly, credible local intelligence also came from the local population, who are tired and exhausted after losing family members and want to be stakeholders in their own lives. Without local cooperation, security forces could not have neutralised about 18 terrorists, including top commanders, in South Kashmir over four days! So Jaish was indirectly sending a message to the local Kashmiris as well by roping in one of them as a suicide bomber. Third, the tactics employed by the assailants, ramming in an explosive-laden vehicle into the intended target, were painfully similar to those of the ISIS in Syria and Afghanistan and seems Kashmir will be their new hunting ground for nihilistic attacks against the Indian state. Most importantly, any hitback, which will be expectedly brutal and punishing, can polarise society further and worse drive modern Kashmiris, some of whom have just begun the process of mainstreaming themselves economically and socially in our metro cities, back into ghettos of suspicion. If the communal riots in Jammu are any indication, then we have set back that process by decades. As for the government, which has mouthed "josh" far too many times, it is time to show one and end Pakistan's adventurism once and for all.

End of the runway

Production of Airbus A380 is coming to a close by 2021 and we should not forget this engineering marvel



In May 2007, Vijay Mallya and his Kingfisher Airlines were both still flying high. A year earlier, the flamboyant businessman and the then Member of Parliament had ordered five of Airbus' massive A380 superjumbo aircraft at the Paris Air Show and got the European manufacturer to fly in the aircraft into India to show off. In flights over Delhi and Mumbai, Mallya regaled the high and mighty of both cities and those, who were not lucky enough to enjoy a flight on-board, were mesmerised by the sheer sight of something so large, so massive even being able to take to the skies. The A380 defied, it would appear to someone on the street, the fundamental laws of physics. The huge plane could fly close to 900 people over 12,000 km and it was meant to revolutionise air travel across the world by not just providing extreme luxury but also propelling prices down for budget travel.

Twelve years on, Kingfisher Airlines collapsed in a heap, exacerbating India's bad loan crisis and Mallya is currently a fugitive in London fighting extradition. And Airbus just announced that they would deliver the last Airbus A380 in 2021. The Airbus A380, an aircraft that cost over \$25 billion to develop, could not even recoup its developmental costs. While Airbus basically prints money on every narrow body A320 aircraft it sells to low-cost airlines, the failure of the A380 will be a huge hit to its pride. Not least because the plane it was meant to replace, the Boeing 747, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of its first flight, will possibly outlive the Airbus A380 on the production line. A lot of things went wrong for the Airbus A380 starting with production delays and the fact that the plane entered an aviation market that was transforming rapidly thanks to low-cost short-range and long-haul travel. Extremely efficient aircraft such as the Boeing 787 and Airbus' own A350, that used new manufacturing technologies and engines, sipped fuel at ridiculously low rates. But analysing why the aircraft failed to be the sales success that Airbus executives thought it would be is a story for a different time. The fact is that the world is losing an engineering marvel from the production line. However, it is likely that this Leviathan of the skies will keep flying for at least another decade or two, and those who must experience this aircraft still have a few years left to do so. Residents of Delhi and Mumbai can still marvel at the sight of this plane filling their skies on a daily basis for a few more years.

Emperor in peril

The Royal Bengal Tiger is not only at the top of the food chain in the wild but constitutes a vital link in maintaining nature's rich diversity and ecosystems. Will it become extinct?



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

A recent PTI report cites researchers as saying that rising sea levels, caused by climate change, could destroy the world's biggest mangrove forest — Sunderbans — spanning more than 10,000 square kilometres in India and Bangladesh, in the next 50 years. It quotes Sharif Mukul, an assistant professor at the Independent University, Bangladesh, as saying that analyses by researchers indicate that the Sunderbans tiger habitats would vanish by 2070. The area being perhaps the most important habitat of the majestic animal, the development has serious implications for the Royal Bengal Tiger's survival. The report further quotes Bill Lawrence, a professor at Australia's James Cook University, as stating that the animal, now "mainly confined to small areas of India and Bangladesh", is "facing a double whammy" — the increasing unavailability of the Sunderbans area for themselves and their prey as well as encroachment by industry, construction of roads and poaching.

All of this warrants concern on two counts — the future of the Royal Bengal Tiger as a species, the consequences of the extinction of tigers and the developments leading to both. As to the first, around 97 per cent of the world's tiger population perished in the last 100 years and, according to the latest statistics, only 3,890 tigers are left in the world. The developments leading to the extinction of tigers include the destruction of their forest habitats for human settlements, industry and infrastructure, the consequent increase in human-tiger conflict and the extensive use of tiger parts in Chinese medicines.

Encroachments on tiger habitats are liable to grow given the continuing increase in human population, the rising demands for housing settlements and industrial and agricultural products arising therefrom. The incidence of conflict between people and tigers is also set to rise as the decline in the availability of prey, who share tigers' shrinking habitats, compels the latter to target domesticated animals like cattle. Finally, there is no sign of any fall in the demand for tiger parts in Chinese medicines despite it being medically established that they have no medicinal value at all.

China has postponed the implementation of its decision to lift the ban on the use of tiger bones and rhino horns — from both animals bred in captivity — by hospitals, and domestic trade in antique tiger and rhino products, which would have given a cover of legitimacy to the sale of parts from poached animals. The decision, though most welcome, needs to be made permanent and Beijing has to further step up its efforts to stanch illegal trade in animal parts.

The fate of the Royal Bengal Tiger will be determined by the interplay of these factors and the measures taken to conserve and increase their number. Significant measures



have been taken towards the latter. The international ban on the trade in tigers, instituted in 1993, has vastly reduced the mass slaughter of the species by poaching and trade. Nevertheless, poaching and illegal trade continue not only to provide the manufacturers of traditional Chinese medicines but fuel a demand for tiger heads and skins as status symbols and decorative items.

At the national level, China has done much to increase its tiger population in the country's North-eastern region by recently establishing the Tiger and Leopard National Park — 1.6 times larger than Yellowstone National Park in the United States. India, home to 70 per cent of tigers in the world, launched Project Tiger in April 1973 when Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister. It aims at ensuring viable population of Royal Bengal Tigers in their natural habitats, protecting them from extinction and setting up reserves for the purpose. There are now 50 of the latter. In September, 2006, it set up the National Tiger Conservation Authority to extend statutory authority to Project Tiger to provide legal sanction to its directives, foster accountability on the part of the Centre and the States in the management of tiger reserves by providing a basis for MoUs among them, providing parliamentary over-

POACHING, PARTICULARLY IN THE FORM OF POISONING WHICH CAUSES PROLONGED AND PAINFUL DEATH, CONTINUES. ENCROACHMENTS INTO TIGER HABITATS CONTINUE

sight and address the interest of local people in areas around tiger reserves.

In June, 2007, it constituted a multi-disciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau), to combat organised illegal trading in wildlife and their derivatives. In May, 2012, the Centre advised the States to each create, arm and deploy a Special Tiger Protection Force around the habitats of the big cats. A number of States, including Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra, have already done so.

The results have been gratifying. The number of tigers has risen from 1,411 in 2006 to 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014. The current census, which began in 2018, is expected to produce a higher figure. Yet complacency would be disastrous. Poaching, particularly in the form of poisoning, which causes prolonged and painful death, continues. Encroachments into tiger habitats continue. It would be illustrative to cite a few examples from Maharashtra which has a very poor record in this respect. Last year, it sanctioned the diversion of 467.5 hectares of forest land in Yavatmal district for a cement plant. Also, its recommendation has led to the clearance, in principle, of 87.98 hectares of land in Kondhali and Kalmeshwar ranges — barely

160 km from Yavatmal — to an explosives company in Chakdoh for manufacturing defence products. Worse, the land earmarked being reportedly in the tiger corridor between Bor and Melghat tiger reserves, the factory would prevent the movement of tigers between the two. Also, the proposal to widen, from meter to broad gauge, the 176-km Akola-Khandawa railway, a 39 kilometre stretch of which passes through the Melghat reserve, threatens to cause more accidents, wildlife mortality and fragmentation of habitat.

Much of what has been achieved in protecting the tiger would be lost if the trend continues. The results would be disastrous. The Royal Bengal Tiger is not only at the top of the food chain in the wild but constitutes a vital link in maintaining nature's rich diversity and ecosystems that sustain both nature and people. And it is not just the tiger. Over 3,000 species are becoming extinct every year. Indeed, the world is now in the midst of its sixth mass extinction of plants and animals in the last half-a-billion years, and the worst since the extinction of dinosaurs 65 million years ago. At this rate, as many as 30 to 50 per cent of all species would be moving toward extinction by the middle of this century.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, The Pioneer, and an

SOUNDBITE

The US calls on Pakistan to end immediately the support and safe haven provided to all terrorist groups operating on its soil.



White House Press Secretary —Sarah Sanders

We have given the full authority to security forces to decide the time, place and nature of any further operations to retaliate.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi

The aim of terrorism is to divide the country and we are not going to be divided. We will support the Government in its actions.



Congress chief —Rahul Gandhi

He (Modi) had said the Congress did not have ability to teach a lesson (to Pakistan). Everyone has seen what happened.



NC chief —Sharad Pawar

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Exposing fake peddlers

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Comptroller revived" (February 15). Indeed, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's (CAG) job is very tough considering the low strength of its employees and the amount of scrutiny it always faces. Since the auditing body has made some gross miscalculations in the past so as to deliver its report fast, it became all the more pressing for it to be impartial and accurate in its findings.

As far as Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's obsession with the Rafale deal is concerned, it is but yet another ploy to find faults with the Prime Minister and his Government. Now that the CAG has given clean chit to Modi and the BJP, Rahul Gandhi's criticism sounds hollow. Having said that, the Government should have reacted to all these false allegations smartly and not allowed it to snowball into a controversy. What a shame that a genuine need and demand of the Indian Air force has turned into a bizarre drama.

Bal Govind Noida

Address systematic deficiencies to end terrorism

This refers to the report, "42 CRPF jawans martyred in *fidayeen* crash" (February 15). The dastardly attack on a Central Reserve Police Force convoy on the Srinagar-Jammu highway in Pulwama district is a cowardly attempt on the part of extremist forces to perpetrate terror on Indian soil from across the border. It is unfortunate that even after being admonished publicly and warned of surgical strikes against any form of outrageous aggression or violation of the ceasefire agreement, the Pakistani leadership has not mended its ways or differentiated itself from non-state actors. At the same time, the gruesome incident has once again brought to light the vulnerabilities in India's counter-terrorism policy.

In an attempt to radicalise the anaemic internal security mechanism, the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) was envisaged by the Government in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. The NCTC, it was proposed, would have access to counter-terrorism intelligence generated by India's covert services as well as have authority over the National Security Guard and the National Intelligence Agency. Newly-created electronic databases would make up the NCTC's backbone, pro-



viding it with vast access to real-time information. It is time our lawmakers wriggle out of political quagmire and address the lack of institutional arrangement for the management of India's counter-terrorism response. While procurement and indigenous manufacturing of arms are welcome, it is imperative to remove system-wide deficiencies in skills and capabilities. The country can ill-afford repeated embarrassments and loss of precious lives at the hands of a few extremist forces.

Shreyans Jain Delhi

Face the test

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Comptroller revived" (February 15). When it comes to public spending, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), like any

other internal auditor, earned the high reputation of being 'nosy'. This time, it seems, in the nation's interest, they closed their nose while preparing the report of the Rafale deal. Selective reading makes it clear that the Government wants to say that they have got another

clean chit. Earlier, the Supreme Court, too, had found no irregularities in the deal. If both the Constitutional bodies have given the Modi Government a clean chit over the Rafale deal, why not close the issue and place the records before a Joint Parliamentary Committee unless

the Government wants use the CAG's report — which claimed that NDA's Rafale deal was 2.86 per cent cheaper than the UPA's — to safeguard their political interests?

N Nagarajan Via email

Payback time

Sir — It is heartening that the Supreme Court thinks that Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati should return the 'hundreds of crores' of public money she spent on statues of herself and the BSP's party symbol to the exchequer.

The apex court should look into similar misuse of funds — there are numerous such instances — by both the Central as well as State Governments and hold them accountable. This will not only boost India's failing economy but also come to the aid of the thousands who still live below the poverty line in our country.

Jaime Ahmad Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

How e-cigarettes can save lives

They are better than smoking the real thing as they can wean smokers from bad habits and reduce tobacco-related diseases



KONSTANTINOS E FARSALINOS

Electronic cigarettes are recently developed products that have created intense controversy among the scientific and public health community. The uproar was expected considering the fact that e-cigarettes contain nicotine and their use resembles smoking. However, both these characteristics are crucial for the role of e-cigarettes in tobacco harm reduction. But what is tobacco harm reduction? It is a strategy to reduce harm from risky behaviours through the use of less harmful alternatives. It is an approach as we use in our every day lives. The use of seatbelts and helmets are typical cases of harm reduction — in this case the aim is to reduce risks of injury and death in accidents. And while the use of cars and motorcycles is essential (going to work and transferring goods), no one ever suggested that the use of cars for recreation, as when we go for a trip on weekends with our family, should be banned because of the risks associated with accidents.

The same concept applies to tobacco harm reduction, considering the difficulty in quitting smoking and the use of other harmful tobacco products. Tobacco harm reduction is based on the absence of combustion, which is a process that creates almost all of the toxins that a smoker inhales, resulting in high risk for disease and death. E-cigarettes have no combustion and do not contain tobacco. Available scientific evidence provides that e-cigarettes are by far less harmful than smoking. In fact, they fit perfectly to the definition of tobacco harm reduction.

But why is it hard for people to realise the potential of these products? The key answer to this lies in the demonisation of nicotine. That was understandable in a period when the only source for nicotine intake was the harmful tobacco cigarette. But the use of nicotine through a non-combustible less harmful source has been proven to be of little harm. In the US and the UK, health authorities have approved the long-term (even life-long) use of nicotine in the form of pharmaceutical nicotine replacement therapies as smoking and tobacco substitutes, acknowledging that there is no circumstance in which nicotine intake through a clean product would be more harmful than smoking. In that respect, tobacco harm reduction with the use of products such as e-cigarettes can offer tremendous opportunities.

For start, this is an intervention that costs nothing to tax payers and the Government. These products are self-funded by users, do not require expertise and organised smoking cessation clinics and are not subsidised by the healthcare system. In fact, trying to provide access through prescription would be disastrous; e-cigarettes are chosen based on the smokers' self-preference, making it impossible for any healthcare professional to understand which product would fit the needs and preferences of every smoker. Thus, in countries with limited availability and accessibility to organised smoking cessation clinics, e-cigarettes represent an amazing opportunity for smokers to quit. Additionally, these products represent a new business challenge. Local development and production of e-cigarettes can open up new business opportunities, develop a new flourishing industry while serving public health and creating products that fit better to the needs of the local community.

Of course, all products, including e-cigarettes, need to be regulated. This is not a complex task. The European Union has created a simplified and easy-to-comply regulation that has been implemented since 2016. While not perfect, it can form the basis for regulatory decisions in any country. According to the regulation, e-cigarettes are not medicinal products and they are clearly distinguished from combustible or other harmful tobacco products. The latter is a key factor — any framework should be based on a clear differentiation between tobacco cigarettes (or other harmful forms of tobacco) and e-cigarettes so that smokers have a clear understanding about the risk difference between products. Quality standards should be set, which should be reasonable and not make the products unnecessarily expensive. Marketing should be regulated so that only smokers and users of other harmful tobacco products are targeted. Finally, taxation should be avoided because of the role of these products as smoking substitutes; in that respect, any taxation would favour use of cheaper but very harmful tobacco products.

E-cigarettes have a strong potential for a positive public health impact. Such an impact has already been documented in countries where they have been available for years, such as the UK. As for India, where access to smoking cessation services is difficult and tobacco use has a deep cultural background, there is an even stronger potential to reduce tobacco-related disease and death. Banning e-cigarettes would be a perfect 'gift' for tobacco and would strongly (though unintentionally) protect tobacco cigarette sales.

(The writer is a research fellow, Onassis Cardiac Surgery Center and at the Department of Pharmacy, University of Patras, Greece)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

JUST CHECK OUT THE STATEMENTS MADE BY POLITICAL LEADERS. THEY ARE ACCUSING US OF COMMUNALISM, AND PLAYING WITH FIRE.
 —JAMMU & KASHMIR GOVERNOR
 SATYA PAL MALIK



THE GOVERNOR SHOULD STOP GIVING MEDIA INTERVIEWS AND TAKE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND.
 —FORMER CHIEF MINISTER
 OMAR ABDULLAH

Rise to the jihadi challenge

The Pulwama terror attack is a rude call to the nation to accept the fact that militancy in Kashmir has been overtaken by radicals who now want absolute Talibanisation



ANIL GUPTA

The deadly suicide car bomb attack on a convoy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at Awantipora in Jammu & Kashmir's Pulwama district, which claimed the lives of more than 40 troopers and left many injured, is a rude call to the nation to smell the coffee and accept the fact that militancy in Kashmir has been overtaken by radical jihadists, who want the Talibanisation of Kashmir. The latest attack was the most severe of all and led to the highest number of 'deaths'. Kashmir witnessed the last such attack in 2001, when three terrorists belonging to the Jaish-e-Mohammed carried out an attack on the Jammu & Kashmir State Assembly complex in Srinagar using a Tata Sumo loaded with explosives that rammed into the main gate. Around 38 civilians and three suicide bombers were killed. The next spate of such car bomb attacks was witnessed in 2005 when between June and November, three attacks on different targets killed 23 civilian and security forces personnel. Car bomb attacks bear the signature of Taliban and Al Qaeda style of fighting, both of whom are radical jihadist terror groups.

The preferred mode of suicide attacks by terrorists in Kashmir was the attack on the security forces camps termed as "Jidayeen hits" and ambushes close to the Line of Control (LoC) referred to as "BAT attack" till the killing of dreaded terrorist Burhan Wani. The reason was obvious. Terrorists and their akas in Pakistan were reluctant to cross the "threshold" fearing loss of popular public support. Till this period, Kashmir was being radicalised. The aftermath of Burhan Wani's killing indicated that the enemy had succeeded in radicalising the Kashmiri society. Large-scale public support to the terrorists, rise in stone-throwing attacks on security forces and senseless killings of Army men, policemen and civilians not receiving the type of condemnation they deserved were indicators enough to assess that jihadists had overtaken the reins of the ongoing movement in Kashmir. Subsequent statements made by Zakir Musa, one-time accomplice of Burhan Wani, and the present self-styled commander of Al Qaeda-affiliate terrorist organisation, Ansar Ghazwatul Hind, ridiculing the Hurriyat leadership and the so-called azadi movement were clear and loud enough to be ignored but did lead to the present state.

Despite the reverses suffered by various tanzeems due to the successful intelligence based operations launched by the security forces, the resolve of the jihadists did not waver. Their attacks became more deadly, barbaric and daring. There was a clear divide in the Kashmiri society between the peace-seekers and pro-jihad radicals. While the peace-seekers provided intelligence to the security forces for launching surgical operations against the terrorists, the radicalised supporters of jihadists provided them shelter, food and cover from the security forces by resorting to stone-pelting on those involved in anti-terror operations. The *modus operandi* of the jihadists bore more and more resemblance to the Islamic State (IS), Al Qaeda and Taliban style of operations.



The Kashmiri youth has been lured into jihad on the understanding that azaadi-related activism would lead them to "heaven." As veteran Kashmiri politician Muzaffar Hussain Beig said, "It is an IS-sponsored religious war in Kashmir. It is not a fight for political freedom or choice between India and Pakistan but between heaven and hell." It is the race to heaven that has brain-washed the Kashmiri youth and the likes of alleged car bomber, Aadil Ahmad alias Waqas Commando of Gundi Bagh, Pulwama. This also explains the fact as to how the Jaish has been able to carry out this dastardly attack despite the claim by security forces of virtually eliminating the JeM leadership in the Valley, including two close relatives of Jaish supremo Masood Azhar. A spurt of sniper attacks on the security forces camps also indicated the aggressive posture adopted by the jihadists but was soon neutralised by the Army through its counter-strategy.

Ironically, the mainstream political leadership of Kashmir, which has of late become pro-jihadist, is refusing to accept the obvious and continues to harp the same old story of a 'political problem' and 'misled innocent boys' who need to be dealt with sympathy rather than an iron hand. This attitude of theirs has only emboldened the jihadists. The latest attempt of to set up a communal and religious divide is evident from the politicking over the grant of divisional status to Ladakh by raising similar demands for Kargil and Muslim-majority districts south of Pir Panjal, mischievously referring to them as Chenab Valley and Panjal regions.

The Governor's administration will have to act firm and quick to douse the fire lit by these forces. It may well become the *alibi* for spreading the wings of jihadists to these hitherto peaceful areas. The timing of the attack

is also worth noting. It not only coincides with the renewed efforts of peace talks with the Taliban but also with the heat building up within India in view of the 2019 elections.

The security forces will have to remain alive to the growing jihadist challenge and act swiftly and firmly to counter their new strategy. It is important to note the claim made by JeM that Adil Ahmad was inspired to become a suicide bomber after the Taliban claimed "victory" due to the announcement by US President Trump to reduce the American boot strength in Afghanistan. Any decline in resolute and integrated response by the security forces in Kashmir may lead them to harbour such ideas of presumed "victory" and embolden the jihadists further.

Though it is too early to get involved with fact-finding, many inputs lead to believe that there has been "negligence." In an active conflict zone where jihadists are purportedly fighting for the fulfilment of divine will — *Ghazwa-e-Hind* — there is no scope for negligence. Despite the warning issued by the Jammu & Kashmir Police through their signal dated February 8, and circulation of a video captured from terrorists showing car bomb attack in Afghanistan, there are many questions to be answered about the sanitisation of the area and the efficacy of Road Opening Parties. There once again arises the need to review the higher command system of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). The present system of deputing Indian Police Service (IPS) officers to occupy higher ranks has been found wanting on numerous occasions in the past as well. There is a strong case for higher command posts to be occupied by cadre officers who have gone through the rigours of ground-level functioning of their respective forces instead of general cadre IPS officers who lack combat experience.

Since JeM has claimed the attack, involvement of Pakistan is obvious. Another fact that is obvious and unambiguous is that in Pakistan, the reins of the Government are firmly in the hands of the notorious triad of Mullah-Military-Militants with the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and terrorists ruling the roost and calling the shots. The so-called peace gestures of their Prime Minister and the Army Chief are only a smoke-screen to their real intents. India should not fall prey to the trap laid by the triad in the form of opening the Kartarpur Corridor by using their puppet Imran Khan.

There is no doubt that Pakistan continues with its policy of state sponsorship of terrorism and abetting and aiding cross-border adventurism fully embedded with jihadi terror. The reduction of American boots will provide ISI the additional strength of the Taliban and other Afghan-specific jihadist terrorists to be employed against India. Pakistan has been temporarily able to tide over the economic crisis due to the hidden Chinese support and magnanimity of its Muslim friends. This has further emboldened the country to support jihadists and use them to implement their anti-India policy. How much effect the Government's decision to withdraw 'most favoured nation' status to Pakistan will have, only time will tell. Nevertheless, its immediate response will be of playing the 'victim hood' card and further generating anti-India hysteria. The Government of India will have to use its diplomatic strength and international good will to designate Pakistan as a "terror state." The nation needs to unite to counter the jihadist challenge.

(The writer is a Jammu-based political commentator, columnist and security and strategic analyst. The views expressed are entirely personal)

Democracy not real test in Catalonia trial

Even as elections loom large in Spain, the 'Catalan problem' will not go away. Neither will the 'Basque problem', which involves almost identical dilemmas on the other side of the country. There is no 'fair' solution, just endless unsatisfactory compromises



GWYNNE DYER

It's been a busy week in Spain. On Tuesday, Twelve Catalan leaders of the attempted secession from Spain in 2017 went on trial in Madrid, charged with rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds. And on Wednesday the Spanish Government fell when two small Catalan nationalist parties voted against its budget, essentially to punish it for not stopping the trial.

But Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Government couldn't have stopped the trial at this point: Spanish courts are independent. And the 'Catalan Twelve' are certainly guilty of something, although it isn't 'rebellion', which in Spanish law involves a violent uprising. They are guilty of cheating but there isn't any law against that. Sanchez's now defunct

Government would almost certainly not have brought such extreme charges against the Catalan would-be martyrs. (Oriol Junqueras, former Vice President of the separatist regional Government of Catalonia, faces a possible 25 years in prison.) But the charges were brought under the previous Right-wing Government of Mariano Rajoy and Sanchez couldn't just cancel them.

Sanchez's Socialist Party, which took power last June, depended on two small Catalan separatist parties for its majority. It has fallen because the Catalans felt he had done too little to prevent the trial of the 'Catalan twelve'. The trial will continue and the snap election that must now follow will be held in an atmosphere of super-heated nationalism. The separatists probably don't mind.

We are already being treated to a feast of nationalist rhetoric cloaked in the idiom of democratic rights over this trial. Former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, who declared Catalonia's independence but chose to go into exile rather than face trial when the gambit failed, declared that the trial is "a stress test for the Spanish democracy."



As the trial began, Jordi Sanchez, one of the twelve, tweeted: "I am going in with my head held high, convinced that self-determination is not a crime." The trial is really about "the right to self-determination and the democratic principle," said defence lawyer Andreu van den Eyde. But all this talk of high principle is quite beside the point.

What actually happened in Catalonia in 2017 was that Catalan nationalists, unable to win a convincing majority for their project of independence, decided to skip the bit about a convincing majority. They did control the regional Government, so they declared a referendum on inde-

pendence in which only those in favour of separation would vote.

Such a referendum was illegal under the Spanish Constitution, which forbids secession, so the pro-Spanish parties would boycott the referendum. They would have to boycott it in order to stay within the law. Whereas all those who wanted independence — almost half the population — would defy the law and cast their votes.

That's exactly how it worked. Every opinion poll for years had shown that Catalonia was split right down the middle, with around 45 per cent for independence, 45 per cent against it and 10 per cent undecided. Just

45 per cent of the population voted in the referendum and 90 per cent of them voted for independence. Those who didn't vote could now be dragged out of Spain without further ado. Hurrah for democracy!

For the secessionist leaders, it was a two-way bet. Just possibly, the rest of the world would fail to notice how the vote was rigged, except it as a democratic exercise and recognise their claim. Just possibly, too, the Spanish state would be so weak that it would fail to defend the rights of the half of Catalonia's population who wanted to stay in Spain. Or, more likely, the Spanish Government would intervene to stop this attempted kidnapping and arrest those who had led it. They could then be portrayed as pro-democracy martyrs. That would be almost as helpful to the nationalist cause and it's what is happening right now.

To be fair to Catalan nationalists, most of their fellow-citizens in the region who oppose independence are Spanish-speakers, descended from people who immigrated from other regions to share in Catalonia's industrial prosperity. A majority of Catalan-

speakers do back independence. How can you choose to disregard the views of the Spanish-speaking half of the region's current population in order to sneak your independence project through? By believing that they are not entitled to a view because they are not real Catalans. Of course, you never say it quite like this in public.

These views persist and the 'Catalan problem' will not go away. Neither will the 'Basque problem', which involves almost identical dilemmas on the other side of Spain. It's the classic problem facing long-established ethnic and linguistic groups that have become minorities, or just barely majorities, in their own lands. There is no 'fair' solution, just endless unsatisfactory compromises.

The new Spanish Government that emerges from the forthcoming snap election, whatever it is (nobody knows), won't be able to solve the problem either. The most it can do, if it's sensible, is to commute any prison sentences imposed on the 'Catalan Twelve' and deny them martyrdom.

(The writer is an independent journalist)



DRUG WAR: PROTECT THE INNOCENT

The war on drugs must be fought, but like most wars it causes most casualties among non-combatants. The strategic objective is not so much the capture of occasional kingpins, but minimising the harm they, and their products, do to their customers, whether by addiction or incarceration. The jailing of a notorious cocaine smuggler will not end the drug wars. We must fight them with more regard for the victims. (The Guardian editorial)

PULWAMA TERROR ATTACK

Communal violence in Jammu, Poonch

SIANS ■ JAMMU

Shops, vehicles and other property belonging to a particular community came under attack in Poonch and Jammu, forcing authorities to clamp curfew in Jammu, during a shutdown to denounce a suicide bombing that killed 44 CRPF troopers in the Kashmir Valley.

Authorities first imposed curfew and sought the Army's help to restore order in the winter capital of Jammu & Kashmir where scores of youths protesting against the suicide attack torched some vehicles and smashed many more believed to be from the Valley.

Jammu District Magistrate Ramesh Kumar said curfew had been imposed in the entire Jammu city to maintain peace.

Police used tear smoke and batons to disperse the mobs. The curfew was imposed initially in Jammu's Gujjar Nagar, Talab Khatikan, Janipur, Bakshi Nagar, Chennai Heemat, Bus Stand and some other places in old city area and later extended to the entire city.

Violence also erupted in Poonch district, where too

shops and vehicles belonging to a particular community were attacked in Aala Peer area, forcing police to use tear smoke and batons.

"People are advised to maintain calm and not play into the hands of anti-social elements who want to exploit the situation for their nefarious objectives," a police officer said.

The Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI), an influential body of traders and industrialists, had earlier called a shutdown in Jammu city against the terror strike in the Valley's Pulwama district on Thursday on a CRPF convoy.

Rakesh Gupta, President of JCCI, an influential body of local traders and industrialists, told IANS, "I appeal to the people belonging to different sections of the society to maintain the traditional harmony and brotherhood for which Jammu has been known ever since the fires of violence spread in the (Kashmir) Valley."

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh attended the wreath laying ceremony of the troopers at the Humhama Regimental Training Centre of the CRPF



A protester shouts slogans against Thursday's attack on a paramilitary convoy, in Jammu, on Friday

AP

in Badgam district.

Rajnath Singh co-chaired a meeting of the Unified Headquarters with Governor Satya Pal Malik here.

The Unified Headquarters in the State comprising top officials of the Army, Central Armed forces, local police and State and Central Intelligence Agencies.

Rajnath among pallbearers

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

With the bugler playing the 'last post', Home Minister Rajnath Singh turned a pallbearer on Friday as the bodies of 44 paramilitary personnel killed in an audacious terror strike in South Kashmir's Pulwama district were sent on their last journey home.

Singh, accompanied by a high-level team comprising officials from the CRPF, NIA and Home Ministry, arrived here on Friday afternoon and drove straight to the adjacent CRPF campus where a wreath laying ceremony was held for the slain jawans.

As the bugler played the 'last post' and guard called for 'shok salami shastra' (reversing of arms in honour of fallen soldiers), a two-minute silence was observed after which the Union Home Minister gave a shoulder to the coffin of a jawan which was being taken to his native place in a special aircraft. The Home Minister, Governor Satya Pal Malik, Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba, CRPF Director General RR Bhatnagar, Jammu & Kashmir DGP Dilbagh Singh besides others attended the wreath laying ceremony.



Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, along with Director General of Jammu & Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh, shoulders a coffin of a slain CRPF jawan during a wreath-laying ceremony for the martyrs at the CRPF camp in Budgam on Friday

Aadhaar cards, force IDs help identify martyrs

New Delhi: Aadhaar cards, ID cards, leave applications and certain other articles were the only things left of most of the 44 CRPF personnel killed in the Pulwama terror attack that helped their colleagues identify them, officials said on Friday.

Officials said as the bodies of the troops were badly mutilated and charred due on the impact of the RDX-triggered blast, it became very difficult to ascertain their identities. Most of the slain jawans were either identified by their Aadhaar cards, force IDs, PAN cards or leave applications kept in their pockets and bags.



Security forces personnel stand guard near charred vehicles after a violent protest over the killing of CRPF personnel in the Pulwama terror attack, in Jammu, on Friday

Families recall martyrs' passion, love for country

PTI ■ JAIPUR/DHOLPUR/KOTA

When Rohitash Lamba, Bhagirath Singh and Hemraj Meena left their homes in Rajasthan earlier this week with the promise that they would return to their families soon, few imagined that it would turn out to be their last visit.

Lamba, Singh and Meena were among the 44 CRPF personnel killed in a terrorist attack in Pulwama in Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday.

Their families on Friday recalled their passion and love for the country as they grieved the demise of their loved

ones. Barely two months ago, Lamba had expressed his joy on becoming a father on the social media. He rejoined duty on February 12 after spending several days with his family, including his two-month-old son. A pall of gloom descended at Govindpura Basadi village near Shahpura, around 65 km from Jaipur, as the news of Lamba's death reached. Former Deputy Speaker of Rajasthan Assembly and former Shahpura legislator Rao Rajendra Singh met Lamba's family members on Friday and expressed his condolences.

He said Lamba's wife fell unconscious on hearing the

tragic news and had to be hospitalised.

The family of 27-year-old Bhagirath Singh, a resident of Jaipur village in Dholpur district, was struggling to come to terms with the loss. On Friday, the entire village of Jaipur mourned the death of the young man.

"We never knew that he would leave us so early. He had promised his father and family to return soon two days ago but they had never imagined that it would be his last visit home," Jaipur sarpanch Kapur Chand Gurjar said.

He said Singh's mother had passed away when he was

a kid. His father Parshuram, a farmer, brought up his two sons alone. Singh joined CRPF four years ago, whereas his younger brother Balveer joined Uttar Pradesh Police.

Singh got married Ranjana four years ago and has three-year-old son Vinay and a year-and-a-half-old daughter Shivangi. Hemraj Meena's wife Madhu received a call from the CRPF camp in Jammu around 10 pm Thursday, informing her about his demise.

Soon after the news reached the area, villagers came out their homes and gathered outside Meena's home to pay their tributes.

ATTACK KILLS DREAMS OF SLAIN JAWANS

Patna/Bhagalpur: One was planning wedding of his daughter, the other eagerly awaiting arrival of his second child.

The dreams of Sanjay Kumar Sinha and Ratan Kumar Thakur went up in smoke in a trice. They were among the 44 CRPF jawans who lost their lives. Family and friends of Sinha received the earth-shattering news of his death with sorrow, anger and disbelief. His father Mahendra Prasad is proud of his son but equally concerned about what would happen to his family. "He has two grown-up, unmarried daughters. While leaving for duty, he had said that on his next visit to the village he will finalise marriage of elder one. We are distraught," grief-stricken father said.

The atmosphere is sombre at Thakur's home in Bhagalpur. He has left behind a four-year-old son and a wife who is expecting their second child. "We were expecting a call from Ratan by the evening as he had told us he would speak to us after joining duty in Srinagar. Instead, we received a call from one of his superiors who broke to us the terrible news," Niranjan Thakur, the slain CRPF constable's father, said.

CRPF jawan's brother recalls last talk hours before attack

Nagpur: Rajesh Rajput spoke to his younger brother Sanjay, a CRPF jawan, on phone on Thursday morning. Little did he know that it would be their last conversation.

Sanjay Rajput (45) was among the 44 jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force killed when a terrorist rammed a bomb-laden vehicle into their bus in Pulwama on Thursday.

A pall of gloom descended over the CRPF Group Centre Colony here, as the news came. Rajesh told PTI that his brother was attached to the CRPF's 213th battalion, based in Nagpur, for the last four years. He lived in the CRPF colony with his two sons, 13 and 11, and wife Sushma Rajput.

"He left Nagpur on February 11 for his new posting with the 115th battalion in Srinagar. I called him yesterday morning, around 9.30 am, when he told me he had left Jammu at 3.30 am to join his new posting," said Rajesh.



Family members mourn the death of CRPF jawan Kaushal Kumar Rawat, at his residence in Agra, on Friday



Punish perpetrators: Bereaved daughter

Kalabari/Guwahati: "The perpetrators must be punished for killing my father, our jawans, even if it means carrying out surgical strikes across the border," demanded the daughter of CRPF Head Constable Maneswar Basumatari, who was martyred in Thursday's terror attack in Jammu & Kashmir.

Basumatari, the head constable CRPF 98 Battalion was among the 40 soldiers who were killed in the Pulwama attack. He is survived by his daughter, Didmaswari, wife, Sunmati, and son. "We want justice. Give a befitting reply to the cowards responsible for the Pulwama attack," said an inconsolable Didmaswari on Friday. Talking to reporters at the family's residence in Kalabari village in Assam's Baksa district, she also

demanding that the Government should look after the family now.

Basumatari had recently visited home, said the slain head constable's wife with tears running down her face. She was unable to talk further.

After the attack, there were rumours circulating on social media that three more soldiers from Assam had been killed in the attack. The CRPF jawans rumoured to have been killed in the blast took to Facebook on Friday to refute the rumours. One of the soldiers, Mizing Basumatari of Udalguri district said in a Facebook post, "This is fake news. I am doing fine and nothing has happened to me. Please don't share the fake post."

CRPF jawan, Pabitra Barman, a native of Bongaigaon, said, "Hi

friends...I am fully safe & sound. I'm deployed in other district of Kashmir, which is far away from Pulwama where the mischief happened. Jai Hind."

Family of the third CRPF jawan, Ananta Saiki of Nagaon district's Gorubandha, also stated that he was safe. His sister, Purnima, told reporters, "By God's grace, Ananta is safe. He called us today. He was on a bus which was ahead of the convoy of 78 vehicles, carrying 2,547 CRPF jawans, that was attacked."

Meanwhile, various organisations held protests across Assam. Protesters burnt effigies of Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad, which claimed responsibility for the attack, and flags of the neighbouring country.

AMU suspends student from Kashmir over controversial post on Pulwama attack

Aligarh: The AMU on Friday suspended an undergraduate Student under Kashmir for allegedly lauding a terrorist outfit in a social media post after the terror strike in Pulwama in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) spokesperson Omar Peerzada told PTI that the matter is being further probed and "strong deterrent action" will be taken once the investigation is complete. "AMU has zero tolerance for any such pernicious activity and anyone indulging in such an act will not be spared," Peerzada said.

Ajmer Sharif chief asks Govt to not allow Pak devotees to visit shrine

PTI ■ AJMER

Condemning the terror attack on a CRPF convoy in Jammu & Kashmir's Pulwama, Ajmer Sharif Dargah dewan Syed Zainul Abedin Ali Khan on Friday urged the government to not allow devotees from Pakistan to visit the shrine.

Ali Khan, the descendant of Sufi saint Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Hassan Chishti, paid tribute to the personnel killed in the attack.

He urged the Government to not allow 'jatha' or group of devotees from Pakistan to visit the famous shrine in Rajasthan's Ajmer during festivals, including Urs,

which commemorates the death anniversary of the Sufi saint.

Describing the attack as "non-Islamic," he said harming lives of innocent people by attacking them cowardly is against the fundamental principles of the religion.

Several devotees from Pakistan visit the Ajmer Sharif Dargah every year. On Thursday, an explosives laden truck rammed into a CRPF convoy in Pulwama outside Srinagar, killing 44 soldiers in one of the biggest terror attacks in recent years.

Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) has claimed responsibility for the attack.

As anger flares, Pune shop sells Pak flags with free lighters

Pune: As protests erupted in the city over the attack on CRPF convoy at Pulwama, a flag-seller here did a brisk business — in Pakistani flags. Murudkar Zendevala, a famous flag-seller, sold over 100 national flags of Pakistan on Friday and gave a lighter free with every flag.

Pakistani flags were burnt at many places in the city in the wake of the terror attack at Pulwama in Jammu & Kashmir Thursday in which at least 44 CRPF personnel were killed. People expressed anger about the neighbouring country, which is accused of harbouring Jaish-e-Mohammad, the terror outfit which has claimed the responsibility for the ghastly attack, by burning Pakistani flags.

Assam announces ₹20 lakh aid

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal announced Rs 20 lakh to the family of Maneswar Basumatari, a CRPF soldier from the state, who was martyred in the terrorist attack in Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday. Condoling the death of Basumatari, Sonowal Friday said his sacrifice would be remembered by the whole nation.

Pulwama attack due to Intelligence failure: Mamata

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday said the terror attack in J&K on a CRPF was due to "intelligence failure" and demanded that there be three-day nationwide mourning to show respect to the martyrs.

She questioned why the Centre was not declaring national mourning for the CRPF jawans and said "Will mourning take place only when political leaders die?" "I demand 72 hours mourning for the ultimate sacrifice of the soldiers. At least for national respect. Only one flag is not enough for it," she told reporters after returning from New Delhi.

Banerjee said that the Government as well as all the political parties should put a stop to all scheduled programme in view of the terror attack.



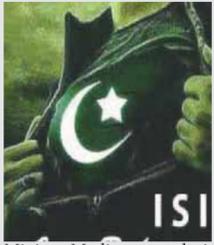
Police personnel deployed on Aligarh Muslim University campus in the view of protests after some students were booked on alleged sedition charges on Friday

Tripura to give ₹2 lakh aid

Agartala: Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Friday announced Rs 2-lakh compensation for each family. "People of Tripura and the State Government would remain behind the families of 45 martyred CRPF personnel," the Chief Minister told the media after announcing the compensation.

US experts suspect role of Pak's ISI

Washington (PTI): American experts suspect the role of Pakistani intelligence agency ISI in "supporting the masterminds" of the Pulwama terrorist attack in which at least 37 CRPF personnel were killed. Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) has claimed responsibility for one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.



The experts on South Asia said the terror strike shows the United States has failed to persuade Pakistan to act against Jaish-e-Mohammad and other terrorist groups. "The self-proclaimed involvement of JeM in the attack raises serious questions about the role of the ISI in supporting the masterminds of this operation," Bruce Riedel, a former CIA analyst, told PTI. The terrorist attack, which has direct fingerprints inside Pakistan, poses the first major challenges to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, said Riedel, who is now a scholar at the Brookings Institute think-tank. "This will be a real challenge for Imran Khan, the first serious challenge of his administration," he said.

Anish Goel, a former National Security Council official in the previous Obama administration, said the horrific attack highlights just how actively Pakistan-based terrorist groups still operate in Kashmir. "By claiming such quick credit for the attack, Jaish-e-Mohammed is clearly indicating that they will continue to cause trouble in the region and stoke tensions between Pakistan and India," he said.

"In the wake of this attack, there will likely be increased pressure on Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi to take action against all militant groups still active in Kashmir," said Goel.

Alyssa Ayres from the Council on Foreign Relations said, "Unfortunately, the attack also shows the limits of US and international policy efforts to date to persuade Pakistan to take serious action against these groups. The urgent question is what else the international community can do."

"According to Moeed Yusuf from the US Institute of Peace, the current situation has all the making of an India-Pakistan crisis," Prime

Minister Modi cannot take it lying down but Pakistan isn't going to be able to absorb any Indian action either. Things are simply too tense between India and Pakistan," he said.

Ironically, the biggest deterrent to any escalation is the presence of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman in the region, he said. "Salman arrives in Pakistan Friday and is coming to India too. His visit will be seriously overshadowed. The Saudi relationship is too important for either side to want that to happen," he noted.

"I think the damage to India-Pakistan relations is going to be immense - even if the situation doesn't escalate. The hope was that India and Pakistan will get back to talking after the Indian elections later this year. I think the hawks on both sides are going to make it very difficult for that to happen now," Yusuf said.

"Terrorist attacks as in Kashmir are not possible without an ideology or theology that justifies terrorism and brainwashes its followers that massaging others leads a person to paradise. The terrorist mindset must be removed along with the terrorist infrastructure on the ground," said noted Hindu scholar David Frawley.

The latest attack by Jaish-e-Mohammed is another example of how Pakistan's intelligence services continue to sponsor terrorist incursions into India, Washington-based Hindu American Foundation said.

"While it's heartening to see that a wide swath of the international community is unequivocally condemning the attack, such statements of solidarity must be backed up by actions which help bring to an end the ability of such terrorist groups to kill with impunity and destabilize the region," the foundation said.

China again refuses to list JeM chief Azhar as global terrorist

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Friday expressed deep "shock" over the Pulwama terror attack carried out by a Jaish suicide bomber but did not give an assurance to India that it will back New Delhi's appeal to list the UN-proscribed Pakistan-based terror group's chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. At least 40 CRPF personnel were killed and many injured on Thursday in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir when a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) suicide bomber rammed a vehicle carrying over 100 kg of explosives into their bus in Pulwama district.



"China has noted the reports of suicide terrorist attack. We are deeply shocked by this attack. We express deep condolences and sympathy to the injured and bereaved families," spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Geng Shuang told a media briefing here when asked about the incident.

In a carefully worded response to a number of questions on the Pulwama incident, Geng said China condemned the incident as part of its overall stand on terrorism. "We firmly oppose and strongly condemn all forms of terrorism. We hope relevant regional countries will cooperate to cope with the threat of terrorism and jointly uphold regional peace

and stability," Geng said.

Without directly referring to India's persistent demand to declare Azhar as a global terrorist, Geng said JeM has already been included in the sanctions list of the UN committee but he was not forthcoming on why China is opposed to extend the ban on the leader of the group. When asked about China's stand on the listing of Azhar as a global terrorist by the UN Security Council, he said: "As for the issue of listing, I could tell you that the 1267 Committee of Security Council has a clear stipulation on the listing and procedure of the terrorist organisations".

"JeM has been included in the Security Council terrorism sanctions list. China will continue to handle the relevant sanctions issue in a constructive and responsible manner," Geng said in an apparent reference to

External Affairs Ministry's appeal to all members of the UN Security Council to list Azhar as a global terrorist.

If Azhar is listed as terrorist by the UN Security Council, he would face a global travel ban and assets freeze. China, a veto-wielding member of the UNSC and a close ally of Pakistan, has consistently blocked moves first by India and later by the US, the UK and France to designate Azhar as a global terrorist by the 1267 Committee by putting technical holds.

Asked whether China would be re-looking at the issue in view of the positive momentum in bilateral relations generated by last year's Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, Geng reiterated that: "JeM as an organisation has been included in the

sanctions list of the Security Council. "As to the listing of an individual, we have always upheld an earnest, responsible and professional manner. We always acted in accordance with the requirement of the situation. We will continue to maintain close communication with India and relevant parties on this issue".

Replying to a question on India not permitting UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), Geng said: "Both India and Pakistan are important countries in this region. We hope the two countries can properly resolve (differences) through consultations. We also hope the regional countries can cooperate to uphold stability and peace in this region to curb terrorism".

India on Thursday slammed Pakistan over the Pulwama terror attack carried out by JeM and asked the neighbouring country to stop supporting terrorists and dismantle terror infrastructure operating from its soil. India also strongly reiterated its appeal to all members of the international community to support the proposal to list terrorists, including JeM chief Azhar, as a designated terrorist under the 1267 Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council, and to ban terrorist organisations operating from territories controlled by Pakistan.

Trump to declare national emergency to build border wall

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump will sign an executive order declaring a national emergency, which will empower him to fund the construction of a massive wall along the US-Mexico border to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the country and curb drug smuggling.

The move would help Trump get USD 5.6 billion for the construction of the wall that, he has asserted, is essential for national security. "President Trump will sign the government funding bill, and as he has stated before, he will also take other executive action - including a national emergency - to ensure we stop the national security and humanitarian crisis at the border," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement. "The President is once again delivering on his promise to build the wall, protect the border, and secure our great country," she said.

The White House statement came soon after Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell made the move public. "I had an opportunity to speak with President Trump and he, I would say to all my colleagues, has indicated he's prepared to sign the bill.

He also (will) be issuing a national emergency declaration at the same time. I indicated I'm going to support the national emergency declaration," McConnell said. On the Democrats saying they will challenge the move in the Supreme

Court, Sanders said, "We're very prepared, but there shouldn't be (legal challenges). The president's doing his job. The Congress should do theirs." Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that declaring a national emergency would be "a lawless act, a gross abuse of the power of the presidency and a desperate attempt to distract from the fact that Trump broke his core promise to have Mexico pay for his wall." "It is yet another demonstration of President Trump's naked contempt for the rule of law. This is not an emergency, and the president's fearmongering doesn't make it one," they said in a joint statement.

"He couldn't convince Mexico, the American people or their elected representatives to pay for his ineffective and expensive wall, so now he's trying an end-run around Congress in a desperate attempt to put taxpayers on the hook for it. The Congress will defend our constitutional authorities," they said. Opposing the proposed move, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said that Trump's hankering for a wall at the southern border cannot be justified by calling a national emergency.

"This would be a clear abuse of presidential power - one that sidesteps the role of Congress in the appropriation of funds. Shame on any member of Congress who doesn't clearly and vigorously speak out on this illegitimate invocation of emergency authorities," ACLU said.

ICE halts force-feeding of immigrants

El Paso (US)(AP): The US government has suddenly stopped force-feeding a group of men on a hunger strike inside an El Paso immigration detention center, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement said Thursday.

The dramatic reversal comes as public pressure was mounting on ICE to halt the practice, which involves feeding detainees through nasal tubes against their will.

Last week, the United Nations human rights office said the force-feeding of Indian hunger strikers at the facility could violate the UN Convention Against Torture. On Wednesday,

a US district judge said the government had to stop force-feeding two of the detained Indian immigrants, but warned that if their health started to decline he would consider ordering force-feeding again, their attorney said. On Thursday, all force-feeding at the detention center near the El Paso airport had stopped, according to ICE spokeswoman Leticia Zamarripa.

"This is a win for us," said Louis Lopez, who is representing Malkheet Singh and Jasvir Singh in the case heard Wednesday in El Paso. Both men are Punjabi Sikhs in their early 20s. "They have a First Amendment right to

protest." Detained immigrants have sporadically staged hunger strikes around the country for years, protesting conditions they face while seeking asylum. But force-feeding, which began under court order earlier this year, has not previously been reported, and advocates involved said they weren't aware it had happened before.

In federal courtroom Wednesday in El Paso, U.S. District Judge David Guaderrama heard from Dr. Michelle Iglesias about how men detained in the El Paso facility are restrained and have feeding tubes pushed through their noses.

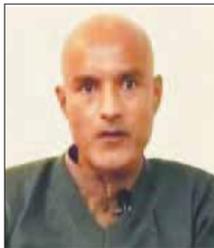


House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., joins supporters of President Donald Trump and family members of Americans killed by undocumented immigrants as they gather to promote their support for a border wall with Mexico, at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019. AP/File photo

Pak committed to implementing ICJ's decision in Jadhav case

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is committed to implementing the decision of the International Court of Justice in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case, a senior Pakistani official said as the country's delegation left for the Hague on Friday for the oral proceedings in the case that will commence at the world court from February 18.



Indian national Jadhav, 48, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017. India moved the ICJ in May the same year against the verdict. A 10-member bench of the ICJ on May 18, 2017, had restrained Pakistan from executing Jadhav till adjudication of the case.

Pakistan's Attorney General Anwar Man-soor would lead the Pakistani delegation at the ICJ while Director General South Asia Mohammad Faisal would lead the Foreign Office side, a senior official told Dawn. The ICJ has set a timetable for the public hearing in the case from February 18 to 21 in The Hague and Harish Salve, who represents India in the case, is expected to argue first on February 18. The

English Queen's Counsel Khawar Qureshi will make submissions on February 19 from Islamabad's side. Then India will reply on February 20 while Islamabad will make its closing submissions on February 21, the daily said.

It is expected that the ICJ's decision may be delivered by the summer of 2019. "We are fully prepared with our strongest evidence being the valid Indian passport recovered from Commander Jadhav with a Muslim name," the official told the Dawn, adding that Pakistan was committed to implementing the decision, irrespective of what decision came from the ICJ.

In reply to a question about Iran, the official said the Pakistan government was con-

vinced that Iran had no role in Jadhav's episode though he remained there for some time. "India wants to drag Iran into this dispute but we will not let it happen," he said. In New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar on Thursday declined to go into the details of the case.

The oral proceedings on the International Court of Justice are commencing on February 18. India will present its case before the court. Since the matter is subjudice it is not appropriate for me to state our position in public. Whatever we have to do, we will do at the court," he said in response to a question. Pakistan claims that its security forces arrested Jadhav from restive Balochistan province on March 3, 2016 after he reportedly entered from Iran. However, India maintains that Jadhav was kidnapped from Iran where he had business interests after retiring from the Navy. Jadhav's sentencing had evoked a sharp reaction in India.

India had approached the ICJ for "egregious" violation of the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963, by Pakistan in Jadhav's case.

B'desh PM wants to retire to make way for young leaders

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who won a historic fourth term, becoming the country's longest-serving leader, has indicated that she will retire after the current term to promote young leaders, according to a media report.

In an interview with the German broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) 71-year-old Hasina, who assumed office just a month ago, for the fourth time as the prime minister, said she wanted to retire after the



five-year term, the Bangladesh daily Dhaka Tribune reported. "It's the third consecutive term and before that I was prime minister (1996-2001), so

it's my fourth term. I don't want to continue for more (time). I think that everybody should take a break so we can accommodate the younger generation," she said. On Tuesday, at a cultural event in Gazipur, the prime minister said she would like to go back to her ancestral village of Tungipara in Gopalganj to spend her retirement, the daily said.

Hasina, the daughter of Bangladesh's founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won the 11th parlia-

mentary elections in December last year with a landslide victory even as Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party rejected the polls marred with violence that claimed 18 lives, making it one of the deadliest polls in the country.

The Awami League chief was pitted against a united opposition Jatiya Oikya Front (United National Front) led by octogenarian Kamal Hossain, an Oxford-educated jurist and former foreign minister. Her arch-rival ex-premier and BNP

chief Khalida Zia, who has been serving a 17-year sentence for corruption, was barred from contesting the polls.

Asked about her plans about the rest of her tenure, Hasina said the fight against poverty will continue to be her first priority.

"Food security, housing, education, healthcare, job opportunities; these are basic needs," she said. "Definitely, every human being wants a better life... We have to ensure that."

Children with multiple siblings more susceptible to bullying

London (PTI): Having more than one brother or sister may put a child at the risk of sibling bullying, with firstborn kids and older brothers more likely to be the perpetrators, according to a study.



"Sibling bullying is the most frequent form of family violence and it is often seen as a normal part of growing up by parents and health professionals, but there is increasing evi-

dence that it can have long-term consequences, like

increased loneliness, delinquency and mental health

problems," said Dieter Wolke from the University of Warwick in the UK.

The study, published in the journal Developmental Psychology, analysed data from 6,838 British children born in either 1991 or 1992 and their mothers. The kids were put into four categories: victims, bully victims - defined as being both a perpetrator and victim of bullying - bullies or

uninvolved. When the children were five years old, their mothers reported how often the children were victims or perpetrators of bullying in the household. Sibling relations were analysed two years later when the mothers were asked how much time the children spent engaging with their siblings on various activities, such as crafts or drawing. Several years later, at age 12, the chil-

dren reported if they had been bullied by a sibling or if they had bullied a sibling within the previous six months. The boys and girls were also asked their ages when they first experienced sibling bullying and when they first bullied a sibling.

About 28 per cent of the children in the study were involved in sibling bullying and psychological abuse was the most common form.

Taliban confront fake news and social media in propaganda war

Islamabad (AFP): Fighting "fake" news, wrestling with social media, and deploying an intern army - the Taliban's sprawling propaganda machine embraces modernity even as the group vows to enforce Islamist controls on journalists if it returns to power.

Notorious for banning TV and radio under its iron-fisted 1996-2001 regime, the militants have proven surprisingly deft at adapting to the ever-changing nature of modern media. The Taliban's official spokesman now tweets real-time updates about battlefield operations and its media arm stays in direct contact with journalists on a range of messaging apps.

"Media is considered one side of the struggle," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP via Whatsapp. "We are not against modern technology," a senior Taliban source with links to the insurgents' media wing told AFP. "This is the need of the hour and using it is not against Islamic shariah." But the source admits his team struggles at times to control their own narrative. High-profile

interviews have taken place without the media wing's knowledge, sparking hurried denials along with confusion over the identity of the interviewee and whether he can really claim to speak for the Taliban.

Unverified leaks to media outlets from alleged Taliban sources are frequent. Fake or unauthorised accounts sprout often on social media, while their official Facebook pages and Twitter handles are regularly banned only to be restarted under another name.

Even the official spokesman, Mujahid, is widely believed to be not one man but a moniker used by the information wing to issue statements. The operation can be dizzying, admits the Taliban source.

The increasingly refined production has not gone unnoticed, with NATO regularly briefing top officials on Taliban content. "It gives us an idea of what that group is thinking about that day," said Colonel Khat Peters, spokesman for NATO's Resolute Support mission in Kabul.

China: Trade talks to continue in Washington next week

AP ■ BEIJING

With a March 2 deadline looming, US and Chinese negotiators will meet in Washington next week for more talks on a tariff war over Beijing's technology ambitions, China's government announced Friday.

The announcement came after US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer told Chinese President Xi Jinping that negotiators had "made headway" on important issues in two days of talks that wrapped up Friday in Beijing.

Officials expressed optimism but gave no details of this week's negotiations, which had been the last scheduled before a planned American tariff hike on USD 200 billion of Chinese imports on March 2.

Economists said the talks were too brief to resolve the tariff fight that is dragging on global economic growth.

"I hope you will continue to work hard to promote a mutually beneficial and win-win agreement," Xi told Lighthizer in a meeting after the negotiations ended, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

The announcement of fur-



ther talks suggested both sides believe they are making progress. But there was no indication of movement on the thorniest dispute: US pressure on Beijing to scale back plans for government-led creation of Chinese global leaders in robotics and other technologies.

"We feel we have made headway on very, very important and difficult issues," Lighthizer told Xi. "We have additional work we have to do but we are hopeful." Xi said Beijing and Washington "share broad mutual interests" in promoting global economic prosperity and stability.

"We shoulder important responsibilities," the Chinese leader said.

Trump had made "no decision" on the tariff hike, his top economic adviser Larry Kudlow told reporters Thursday in Washington. The president said Tuesday he might let the March 2 deadline "slide for a little while" if the talks went well. Washington, Europe, Japan and other governments say Beijing's industry plans violate its market-opening obligations. Some American officials worry they might erode U.S. industrial leadership. Trump raised tariffs in July over complaints Beijing

steals or pressures companies to hand over technology. The dispute has spread to cover cyber-spying traced to China, the country's multibillion-dollar trade surplus with the United States and support for state industry.

Beijing has offered to narrow its trade surplus by purchasing more American soybeans, natural gas and other exports. But the government has resisted pressure to cut back development plans it sees as a path to prosperity and global influence.

"From politics to economy to ideology, the United States hopes to intervene in China's affairs," said the newspaper Global Times, published by the ruling Communist Party. Chinese officials also have balked at U.S. pressure to accept an enforcement mechanism to monitor whether Beijing carries out its promises.

Beijing has tried to deflect pressure by emphasizing China's growth as an export market. It has announced changes over the past year to open finance and other fields, including allowing full foreign ownership in its auto industry for the first time.

New Brexit talks in Brussels next week 'Brexit defeat in Parl 'a hiccup'

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

Both Britain's minister for Brexit Stephen Barclay and opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn will visit Brussels next week for talks with EU negotiator Michel Barnier.

"Mr Barnier's door is always open," an EU spokesman said, confirming that Barclay was expected to visit EU headquarters on Monday and Corbyn on Thursday. Prime Minister Theresa May is also expected in Brussels next week, but he visit has not been confirmed.

Britain is due to leave the EU on March 29, but Prime Minister Theresa May is struggling to persuade parliament to back a divorce deal. EU leaders fear severe economic disruption if London leaves the bloc without a follow on agreement providing for a transition period to negotiate a trade deal.

Corbyn has suggested Labour MPs would rescue the withdrawal plan if EU leaders promise to allow Britain to remain in the EU customs union. May and many of her Conservative MPs reject that idea, but Barnier and EU Council President Donald Tusk have described it as "interesting".

AFP ■ LONDON

The British government on Friday dismissed as a "hiccup" its latest parliamentary defeat over Brexit, saying it would keep trying to renegotiate its EU divorce deal just six weeks before exit day. But senior minister Andrea Leadsom, the leader of the House of Commons, conceded that the setback might affect the ongoing talks with the European Union. "Yesterday was more of a hiccup than the disaster," she told BBC radio.

She added: "The one problem with last night's vote is that it allows the EU to continue with this pretence that they don't know what we want. And they do know what we want." MPs on Thursday night rejected by 303 votes to 258 a motion expressing support for Prime Minister Theresa May as she seeks changes to the Irish "backstop" in her Brexit deal.

It was intended to repeat the mandate given to May on January 29, when MPs voted to find "alternative arrangements" to keeping the border with Ireland free-flowing after Brexit. But it also took into account another vote on January 29, saying Britain should not leave the EU with-



out a deal.

Hardline Brexit supporters in May's Conservative party believe this "no deal" scenario should remain an option, and so they abstained on Thursday evening. One of those Conservative MPs, Steve Baker, said the defeat was a "storm in a teacup", adding: "We'd like to agree a deal."

But it comes at a time of mounting frustration in both Brussels and London at May's approach, with the clock ticking down to March 29 when Britain is set to leave the EU.

On January 15, MPs overwhelmingly rejected the withdrawal deal May had spent

almost two years negotiating with the bloc.

She now says she wants to reopen the text to change the backstop, but has yet to come up with concrete proposals to put to the EU.

Brussels has repeatedly said it will not change the backstop, although it is open to amending a separate text on future ties. Leadsom said: "I hope anyone in the EU negotiating team listening this morning will be absolutely clear that the core requirement of parliament that we resolve the issue of the backstop remains the government's negotiating position."

Sharif shifted to hospital for cardiac treatment

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who is serving a seven-year sentence in a corruption case, was on Friday shifted to a leading hospital here for cardiac treatment. Sharif, 69, was brought to the Jinnah Hospital from the high security the Kot Lakhpat jail. The Punjab home department has declared the private ward of the hospital a "sub-jail" for the duration of Sharif's stay there, officials said.

The ousted premier was shifted back to jail on February 7 after undergoing treatment for six days at the Services Hospital where a multi-disciplinary medical board examined him and unanimously opined that he needs some kind of cardiac intervention.

Subsequently, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party supremo's personal physician Adnan Khan had requested the Punjab government to provide round-the-clock expert cardiac care to Sharif at a facility where cardiology intervention and multidisciplinary backup would be available.

Accepting the request, the Punjab Home Department accorded sanction for "shifting of high-profile National Accountability Bureau convicted prisoner Sharif from central jail to Jinnah Hospital, Lahore, for medical treatment for minimum required period." The PML-N has been demanding shifting of Sharif to London for his treatment. The PML-N has also submitted a resolution in the Punjab Assembly demanding that Sharif should be shifted to London as he always had undergone cardiac treatment there and the doctors knew his medical history.

But a medical board here declared that Sharif could be treated in any specialised cardiac health facility in Pakistan.



"After examining all results of his tests, the medical board has reached a unanimous decision that Sharif needs some kind of cardiac intervention. For the purpose he should be shifted to a cardiac institute," the head of the medical board at the Services Hospital, Professor Dr Mahmood Ayaz, had said.

He said Sharif had heart issues because of his previous history of some diseases, including high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney problem. Dr Ayaz further said: "According to the findings of the board, 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 Sharif's medicines."

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.

On Thursday Sharif's younger brother and PML-N president Shahbaz Sharif got bail from high court in two corruption cases.

Mallya files for permission to appeal against extradition

PTI ■ LONDON

Embattled liquor baron Vijay Mallya, wanted in India on alleged fraud and money laundering charges amounting to an estimated Rs 9,000 crores, has filed his application in the UK High Court, seeking permission to appeal against an extradition order signed by the British Home Secretary.

The 63-year-old businessman, who remains on bail on an extradition warrant in the UK, made the application in the Administrative Court division of the High Court on Thursday, 10 days after Home Secretary Sajid Javid signed off on the order triggering a 14-day window for his appeal application.

"The application has been sent for a judge on papers decision, which is expected any time between two to four weeks," a UK court representative said.

A "judge on papers" decision will involve a High Court judge determining the merits of the application and if it is accepted, the case will proceed to a "substantive hearing" in



the next few months' time. In the event that Mallya's application is rejected at this stage, he will have the option to submit a "renewal form".

The renewal process will lead to a 30-minute oral hearing during which Mallya's legal team and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) - on behalf of the Indian government - will renew their respective claims for and against an appeal for a judge to determine if it can proceed to a full hearing.

The process, to be heard in the Royal Courts of Justice in London, could take months as the listing of a hearing will depend on the availability of

Magistrates' Court order in favour of extradition on February 4, the businessman had taken to social media to confirm his plans to seek an appeal.

"After the decision was handed down on December 10, 2018 by the Westminster Magistrates Court, I stated my intention to appeal. I could not initiate the appeal process before a decision by the Home Secretary. Now I will initiate the appeal process," he said in a Twitter statement earlier this month.

The former boss of the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines took to Twitter again this week to call on Prime Minister Modi to accept his settlement offer in relation to the airline's loan default.

"I respectfully ask why the Prime Minister is not instructing his Banks to take the money I have put on the table so he can at least claim credit for full recovery of public funds lent to Kingfisher," he said, adding that his offer to the Karnataka High Court should not be dismissed as "frivolous" because it is a "perfectly tangible, sin-

cere, honest and readily achievable offer".

Mallya has been based in the UK since March 2016 and remains on bail on an extradition warrant executed by Scotland Yard in April 2017. In her verdict at the end of a year-long extradition trial in December last year, Judge Emma Arbuthnot had ruled that the "flashy" billionaire had a "case to answer" in the Indian courts.

The court had also dismissed any bars to extradition on the grounds of the prison conditions under which the businessman would be held, as the judge accepted the Indian government's assurances that he would receive all necessary medical care at Barrack 12 in Mumbai's Arthur Road Jail.

India and the UK have an Extradition Treaty signed in 1992 and in force since November 1993. So far only one successful extradition has taken place from the UK to India under the treaty - that of Samirbhai Vinubhai Patel, who was sent back to India in 2016 to face trial in connection with his involvement in the post-Godhra riots of 2002.

War kills over 100,000 babies a year

AFP ■ MUNICH

At least 100,000 babies die every year because of armed conflict and its impact, from hunger to denial of aid, Save the Children International said on Friday. In the 10 worst-hit countries, a conservative estimate of 550,000 infants died as a result of fighting between 2013 and 2017.

They succumbed to war and its effects, among them hunger, damage to hospitals and infrastructure, a lack of access to health care and sanitation and the denial of aid.

It said children face the threat of being killed or maimed, recruited by armed groups, abducted or falling victim to sexual violence.

"Almost one in five children are living in areas impacted by conflict - more than at any time in the past two decades," said the charity's CEO Helle



Thorning-Schmidt in a statement. "The number of children being killed or maimed has more than tripled, and we are seeing an alarming increase in the use of aid as a weapon of war," she said on releasing the report at the Munich Security Conference.

Save the Children said a

study it had commissioned from the Peace Research Institute Oslo had found that 420 million children were living in conflict-affected areas in 2017.

This represents 18 per cent of all children worldwide and was up by 30 million from the previous year. The worst-hit countries

were Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

The total number of deaths from indirect effects over the five-year period jumped to 870,000 when all children under the age of five were included, the charity said.

It also issued a list of recommendations to help protect children, from steps such as committing to a minimum age of 18 for military recruitment to the avoidance of using explosive weapons in populated areas. Thorning-Schmidt said the rising number of child casualties was very worrying. "It is shocking that in the 21st century we are going backwards on principles and moral standards that are so simple - children and civilians should never be targeted."



United States Vice President Mike Pence kneels beside his wife Karen, right, at a historic freight car during their visit to the former Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oswiecim, Poland, Friday. The freight car was used to transport Jews to the death camp. AP

FB taps user data to defend workers from threat

San Francisco (AFP): Facebook gathers intelligence from its platform to identify people who threaten the firm or its workers, the social network said Thursday in response to media reports of the security tactic. CNBC reported that it interviewed more than a dozen former Facebook security employees, some of whom questioned the ethics of what was portrayed as an unclearly defined practice at the leading social network.

Facebook spokesman Anthony Harrison told AFP that the company's physical security team exists to keep workers safe and that strict processes are in place to protect people's privacy. "Any suggestion our on-site physical security team has overstepped is absolutely false," Harrison said. "They use industry-standard measures to assess and address credible threats of violence against our employees and our company, and refer these threats to law enforcement when necessary."

Facebook keeps a routinely updated list of people that members of its security team should "be on lookout" for due to threatening state-



ments, according to CNBC. The so-called "BOLO" list purportedly includes former employees whose actions at the social network came under scrutiny. Facebook mines the social network for threats against the company or its workers, and its watch list can even feature photos of people, CNBC reported.

For cases in which threats against Facebook or its workers seem credible, the security team was said to be capable of tracking those behind them using location data from the social network's apps or websites.

Facebook is adamant that its security processes are designed to protect people's privacy and adhere to data privacy laws, as well as the social network's terms of service. In cases of credible threats of violence against an employee, Facebook uses publicly available data and industry practices to determine how close someone behind a threat is to the worker or company offices, according to the social network.

RAZZLE-DAZZLE 30 MINUTES

LIGHTS WILL GUIDE YOU HOME

Retro-inspired candlesticks, ring-like fixtures, asymmetrically-armed finishing or jewellery-like chandeliers are brought under one roof at the India Design Fair. By lensman PANKAJ KUMAR



OPULENCE 10 MINUTES



Metallica

Designer K RAJESH combines a historic aura with contemporary interiors at ITC Maurya

It was a range of experimentation and analysis of various media like glass, wood and other metals that went before finalising copper to create the artwork that gave the interiors of ITC Maurya a new luxurious touch.

Designer-artist and founder of East Craft Designs, K Rajesh finally

chose copper as he believes that it brings "a sense of richness" without looking gaudy or loud.

The project, that began in March 2018, finally got into shape recently. Rajesh shares that the idea behind *Prive* was to have an entrance that looks elegant and graceful with a touch of luxury and also

portrays Delhi's rich architecture. "The hotel uses a signature 'East meets West' style of Mauryan diplomacy that combines a historic aura with contemporary interiors," he said.

He revealed that the team decided to recreate the iconic Rashtrapati Bhawan's architecture designed by Lutyen. The design was inspired by Edwardian Baroque of the colonial British era.

The team accounted for four sculptors. The entire mural is made in ceramic. It was given a shape through sand-casting technique. Well, the entire artwork that weighs 350 kgs, was indeed a challenge, including installing the artwork on the wall.

◆ Roma is a beautiful film. How did you not go crazy planning every detail?

I did go crazy (laughs). Even the crew had gone crazy. Nobody knew what was there in the screenplay. I wrote a very precise script but no one had it. We shot the film in a chronological order so that the crew could learn it day-by-day about the film's story.

◆ So the actress who played Cleo had no idea what was going to happen? Not to give spoilers for anyone but that scene is so heartbreaking.

No, she didn't know. Without ruining it for anyone, she doesn't know how to swim.

◆ The movie is stunning and moving at the same time but at the crux of it, it's such a traditional story. What made you want to do this?

Everything comes out of my memory of Libo. She is one of the women who raised me. I decided to shoot at the places where it happened. I made people dress in the same way how they used to dress. The same cars were kept which used to be in our streets. Every extra looks like

DIALOGUE 20 MINUTES

An unknown script

Roma's story is a reflection of director ALFONSO CUARÓN's childhood memories. By TEAM VIVA



the neighbours. If the places didn't exist anymore, we recreated them.

◆ The lead character, Yalitza Aparicio apparently didn't even think she was going to audition for this role. Is that true? Is she an actor?

No, she had just finished her school to become a teacher. She was not really interested. Her sister made her

give the audition for the film. She came to Mexico to meet me but she didn't know who I was so she had browse the web to know about me. She didn't believe it was me because apparently I was healthier in the photographs. She was amazing in the film and when I offered her the role. She said, 'I don't have anything better to do so let's

do it' (laughs).

◆ How personal is this project to you?

I had the story in my mind for a very long time but in 2006, I seriously considered doing it and I am happy that I did. I don't think I had the tools at that point. I am not just talking about the technical aspect but also the emotional sensibility to do it. But it is very personal. In a way, 90 per cent of the scenes come out of my memory.

◆ Considering Mexico city doesn't look the same anymore, how difficult was it to recreate that period?

It was very difficult. That's our testament to Eugenio Caballero, our production designer. It was a real challenge. The important thing was to make the memory work. We had references and photographs but more than anything it is the memory that

brings all the details like the little cracks in the walls, the objects that were used. The challenge for Eugenio was to bring real occasions back to period. We shot in most of the original places and transforming some of them. Mexico is a big city but it also has a third world which has no urban setup. For one scene, we had to produce around five blocks of the city, where Eugenio Caballero had reproduced the same kind of avenue, wedding dress shop, cinema, and even pharmacy. Everything was identical.

◆ Why did you choose to do it in black and white?

It was a part of the DNA of the film. When I decided to make the film, I didn't want a nostalgic black and white. I didn't want a period film.

We shot 65 mm in digital so it was in black and white at that time. It's a very pristine grainless black and white. It's a very contemporary photography to look into the past. (Oscars will air on February 25 at 6.30 am on Star Movies and Star Movies Select HD.)

SHORT CIRCUITS

TAAPSEE PANNU

Indian homemakers have been strong torch bearers for bringing about progressive changes in their family lives and the society at large. I strongly believe that it is imperative to celebrate this progressive thinking amongst women that has kept them motivated to break barriers and pursue passions.

SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRA

I love watching Madhuri (Dixit) ji. I've been a big fan of her since *Tezaab*. Shamita (sister) and I had bought the film's cassette and watched *Ek Do Teen* dance over and over to learn the steps. I always felt that if I became an actor and people remembered me as a dancer like her, it would be a great compliment.

MANOJ BAJPAYEE

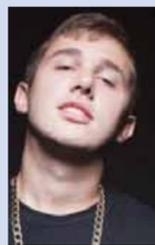
One needs to have thick skin to survive in the film industry. During my initial time, I went for a film's premiere where the media saw me and said that he is not important to be clicked. I didn't let vanity affect me. I thought that when my films will be successful, people will come back to click my photographs.

MARSHMELLO

India is special to me. This is my third time in the country and I love it even more each time I come back. I wanted to make this trip even more special and give my fans here their own anthem. It was great to work with (composer) Pritam over the last few months and give the Mellolog my new release, *Biba*.

BEN AFFLECK

I tried to direct a version of it (*Batman*) and worked with a really good screenwriter, but just couldn't come up with a version, I couldn't crack it. Hence, I thought it was time to let someone else take a shot at it. They got some really good people now, so I'm excited. I guess, I am not Batman.



IMMERSIVE 50 MINUTES

There is an insatiable desire in every jewellery designer to better his/her last piece. A similar kind of zeal runs through Smriti Sangal's veins while working to create the most intricate design. Each time she picks up her iron stand, heating it up in a furnace, she fashions yet another beautiful piece of Meenakari earring.

As the workshop commenced at the Jaypore store, Sangal, founder of Culture Chauraha was ready with her array of tools and equipment to help art connoisseurs learn about the Persian craft. It began with choosing the right kind of shape one wants to give to their earrings. It's then cut on a copper sheet, flattened by a hammer and nail, pierced through a drill machine, moving on to cleansing the black coat and turning it into a shiny pink. The base coat is prepared through white crystal powder before starting its painting with powdered glass colours.

When Sangal started learning it from her mother, Ritu Sangal, who is a master of this art since the last 33 years, she felt the need to make it accessible for more people. "I saw that people were fascinated and were eager to learn about the entire process of jewellery making. Even if they don't join the extensive course, they could come to these workshops and learn the basics. This would also in turn make them connect more to the art," she says. She calls the melting of glass crystal colours as "surreal."

Her three-hour workshops that also recently took place in Bengaluru teach two basic techniques of enameling — sgraffito (decoration done by scratching through a surface before firing) and paint-on. They are aimed at creating an enameled jeweller who is able to "notice and appreciate the effort and time it takes to produce one piece of jewellery."

Sangal lists a number of processes that go through in the making of one piece of Meenakari jewellery. She says, "People through these workshops could notice the technicalities as well. For instance, how much temperature is it fired at, what kind of colours are being used, how the shape is given, what are the do's and don'ts, etc."

Well, the motive of Culture Chauraha was in itself to create a space for people and teaching them mural painting, enameling, paper crafts, fine-art sketching, drawing, porcelain painting, woodcut printing, and helping kids to prepare for art colleges. She says that this was also founded "to make people go back to their art space that ends after school when a busy hectic schedule hits life and



A SURREAL CRAFT

Artist SMRITI SANGAL draws her inspiration from all things vintage including her mother's 33-year-old practice of Meenakari and ancient cultural extravaganzas, says CHAHAK MITTAL



you find yourself away from such a therapeutic practice."

Why Chauraha? Well, she says that it was inspired from the central place of the city where people from all corners of the town came together in olden days and

had a cultural extravaganza, doing a number of activities.

Among an array of her handmade earrings and designer jewellery are an infusion of colours — green, yellow and shades of red — amalgamated with contemporary



architecture and traditional Persian flower motifs. There are shapes like diamonds, hearts, butterflies, circles, and even pyramids.

She ends with telling us that even though the teaching has been a slow journey but "it has

been picking up very well. At the end of the workshop, what matters is that people are very happy with what they have created. As a mentor, you feel blissful that you made them learn something new."

STUDIO CHAT 30 MINUTES



'Home is where family is'

Actress SOAIRSE RONAN says it took her about a year to get into the skin of the character in *Lady Bird*. By TEAM VIVA

Creating the character of *Lady Bird* was a time consuming one. How did you prepare for the same?

Lady Bird had intricate characteristics, creating that or becoming her needed time so as to ace the perfection. I was in New York for another project and our director Greta Gerwig gave us both the opportunity to work on the character and its emotions. We used to plan and meet for a few weeks where we were just hanging out with each other and we would go down the sweet memory lane of our teenage days and how that time flew so fast. Teenage is all about the moments we wished we had, decisions we regret, not having the experience to navigate and so much more, all of this discussion with Greta really helped me to know *Lady Bird* and be that character. It is not easy to bring in the complexity of this character on screen but Greta was of great help to make me achieve it. This whole process was quite interesting and inspiring. It took about a year for me to get in the role before shoot schedule started.

How much do you relate to the character of *Lady Bird*?

The character and I share a lot of similarities. I am very assertive and outspoken like the lady bird. Infact, I admire her. It's not very often that we find a teenager with stern principles. A person can have flaws and not be perfect, and still be really special and have something to offer. Everyone is dealing with their own stuff, they have their own issues, and their sadness. Even if you don't see that directly, it doesn't mean it's not there or it doesn't exist for someone. My character is content with herself and things around her doesn't really matter. So, it is an empowering thing in a way.

The movie has a lot of themes and things to explore. What do you think is the heart of this film?

In this movie, the heart of it is the relationship of lady bird with her mother where it is quite evident that the two of them are close and really love each other but there is just something off or not working right between them. Some incidents in life take you to the rough road and that's what they have been going through in this film. That infact is so relatable for any teenager, as there has always been some turbulence between the guardian and the teenager because of that generation gap and understanding it which gets difficult. But this doesn't really mean that you abandon each other and move on. That's even shown in the movie that no matter the fights or arguments, the bond between the mother and the daughter is beyond breakable.



You have been nominated for the second time for Oscars?

I feel obliged to be nominated once again and also have a better understanding about it now, as during my first one, I was a kid. It really makes huge impact with the second nomination but both of them were equally fantastic. With every film there is a different equation and every film gives you a different experience which makes each and every work we do as important and as appreciative as it could be. With this one, I really think it is completely a group effort. With Timothee Chalamet, Laurie Metcalf too being nominated, it's a full house.

So, it is a great job done by the whole cast and crew. Also, it is a really great feeling to see Greta nominated as she is the fifth women director to be nominated in Oscars.

We heard that you used to visit open houses? Is that true?

Yes, I have had some great memories about the same. I used to visit open houses with my parents just for fun as that time we really couldn't afford those houses. We used to live in a 1970s designed bungalow and whenever we would get a wind of new house on the market in the vicinity, we would go visit them. We would have the attitude that we might just buy it, thinking what if we can, one day? This is actually one such part of my real life that really connected with my character in the *Lady Bird* as she sees her home and on the other hand, a beautiful house marking it as success ratio which most of us do. But like the saying goes... Home is where the family is.

(Watch *Lady Bird* only on Sony PIX.)

CHALLENGE TO THE GULLY BOY



The kids from forthcoming film *Mere Pyare Prime Minister* have challenged actor Ranveer Singh with their *Gully Boy* rap.

As seen in the trailer of *Mere Pyare Prime Minister*, the children who went to Prime Minister's office to request him to make more toilets in the slums are not just fierce in reel life but also in real life.

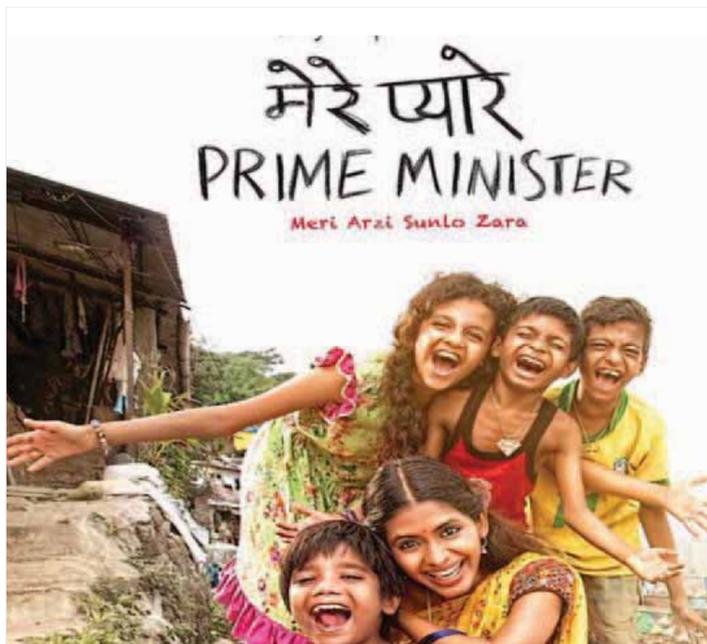
Kanhu from the film named Krishna took to his social media posting a video wherein along with his companions, he challenged actor Ranveer Singh by rapping in a unique way. He posted the video and wrote, "Hui Hai Gandhi Baat Meri Gully Mein. Kya Tu Dega Mera Sath Meri Gully Mein? #RanveerKoChallenge."

The kids could completely relate to the *Gully Boy* Ranveer so they made a rap challenge for him, asking if he will help them.

The film shows the real-life problems faced by people who reside in the slums. The makers of the film decided to launch the trailer on Vasant Panchmi as it marks the beginning of the Holi season and is cited to be the harbinger of spring.

Presented by Jayantilal Gada, Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra and P.S.Bharathi, the film also stars Anjali Patil, Om Kanojia, Makarand Deshpande, Rasika Agashe, Sonia Albizuri, Nachiket Purnapatre and Atul Kulkarni.

(The film releases on March 15.)





Dragun fires as Lacazette sees red

Stanislav puts BATE ahead just before the break as Gunners never threaten an equaliser; Chelsea, Napoli and Inter secure away win

Arsenal's forward Alexandre Lacazette moves out of the ground after receiving Red card against Swedish side BATE Borisov in UEFA Europa League round of 32 first leg match at Barysaw; (right) Chelsea forward Olivier Giroud and midfielder Ross Barkley celebrates after French international scores his side second goal against Malmö in away fixture



a game which saw Alexandre Lacazette sent off for elbowing Aleksandar Filipovic with five minutes remaining. Stanislav Dragun put BATE ahead just before the break in Barysaw and Arsenal never threatened an equaliser, with Lacazette's late dismissal also ruling him out of next week's second leg in London.

Unai Emery's side have now won just two of their last nine away matches — last weekend's victory over the Premier League's bottom club Huddersfield and an FA Cup win against third-tier Blackpool.

Elsewhere, Napoli began life without record goalscorer Marek Hamsik with a 3-1 win in a fiery atmosphere at FC Zurich.

Lorenzo Insigne, who has replaced Hamsik as captain after the Slovakian's move to China, scored the opening goal, with Jose Callejon and Piotr Zielinski also on target.

Celtic's European adventures appear to be over for another season after being outclassed 2-0 by Valencia at Parkhead.

Denis Cheryshev and Ruben Sobrino got the goals as the Spaniards extended their unbeaten run to six matches.

Inter Milan claimed a 1-0 win at Rapid Vienna despite Mauro Icardi snubbing the trip after being stripped of the captaincy over a contract row, with Lautaro Martinez scoring the winner from the penalty spot.

Wissam Ben Yedder's 22nd-minute strike helped record five-time winners Sevilla take a large step towards the last 16 with a 1-0 victory over Lazio in Rome, while Benfica backed up their 10-0 weekend thumping of Nacional by winning 2-1 at Galatasaray.

Salzburg, semi-finalists last season, lost 2-1 at Club Brugge, while 10-man Sporting Lisbon were beaten 1-0 by Villarreal in the Portuguese capital.

AFP ■ LONDON

Chelsea claimed a 2-1 victory at Malmö in the Europa League last-32 first leg on Thursday to ease some of the pressure on beleaguered coach Maurizio Sarri, while Arsenal suffered a shock loss to BATE Borisov.

Visitors Chelsea desperately needed a response after back-to-back humiliating away losses, with last Sunday's 6-0 thrashing by Manchester City following a 4-0 reverse at Bournemouth.

Ross Barkley took advantage of a defensive lapse by the home team to put Chelsea ahead on the half-hour mark, with Olivier Giroud adding a 58th-minute second before Malmö's late goal gave them a glimmer of hope ahead of next week's return match at Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea face Manchester United in the FA Cup on Monday, before facing City again in the League Cup final on

February 24.

"I am happy because we played with confidence and it wasn't really very easy after the last match (the defeat by City)," Sarri told *BT Sport*.

"I think I am always confident but sometimes we had the wrong approach with matches so we need to be careful in every match."

Sarri named a strong team, although he did leave Gonzalo Higuain and Eden Hazard on the bench.

Chelsea found themselves up against a spirited Malmö outfit in the first half, roared on by a vociferous home crowd, but kept the Swedes at arm's length before Barkley grabbed their first away goal of 2019.

Pedro swung over a cross which Lasse Nielsen should have headed away, but the defender failed with his attempted volleyed clearance and Barkley was on hand to control and stab into the net.

Uwe Rosler's Malmö piled on the pressure at the end of the half, but

UNAI EMERY'S SIDE HAVE NOW WON JUST TWO OF THEIR LAST NINE AWAY MATCHES - LAST WEEKEND'S VICTORY OVER THE PREMIER LEAGUE'S BOTTOM CLUB HUDDERSFIELD AND AN FA CUP WIN AGAINST THIRD-TIER BLACKPOOL



Barkley twice produced crucial headers at the other end to keep Chelsea in front. But the Premier League giants took total control of the tie in the 58th minute with a wonderful counter-attack.

Barkley led the charge before picking out William, and the Brazilian powered to the byline before cutting the ball back for Giroud to flick in a cool back-heeled finish.

The French striker has now scored five goals in six Europa League games this season, despite only netting once in 23 matches in domestic competitions.

But Malmö did grab the goal their efforts deserved in the 80th minute, as Anders Christiansen slotted past Chelsea goalkeeper Kefa Arrizabalaga.

ARSENAL BEATEN IN BELARUS

Arsenal face an uphill battle to progress after a 1-0 defeat by BATE in



SONIA, LOVLINA ADVANCE TO QUARTERS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former world Silver-medallist Sonia Lather (57kg) was among the three Indian women boxers who advanced to the quarterfinals but the men were off to a disappointing start at the 70th Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.

World championships Bronze-medallist Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) and Pwilo Basumatari (64kg) also made the quarters of the prestigious European event on Thursday night.

Lather, who is also a two-time Asian Silver-medallist, defeated Serbia's Jelena Zekic 5-0. She will square off against American Yarisel Ramirez in the quarters.

STRANDJA MEMORIAL
Borgohain, a Gold-medal-

list from the Indian Open last year, got the better of Australian Jessica Messina.

Basumatari endured a stiffer challenge in Bulgarian Melis Yonuzova before prevailing 3-2. She has Croatia's Marija Malencia coming up in the quarterfinals.

However, there was disappointment for the country's men with former Commonwealth Games Silver-medallist Mandeep Jangra (69kg) and rookie Harsh Lakra (81kg) bowing out following opening round losses.

Jangra lost 0-5 to Ukraine's Viktor Petrov, while Lakra was beaten by Azerbaijan's Rauf Rahimov.

India's best ever medal haul at the competition stands at 11, which was fetched last year. More than 300 boxers from over 40 nations are competing in the ongoing edition.

Halep enters Qatar semis

AFP ■ DOHA

World number three Simona Halep and three-time Grand Slam champion Angelique Kerber came through tough tests on Thursday to reach the Qatar Open semi-finals.

Also through are Elina Svitolina and Elise Mertens, providing some comfort for tournament organisers who have somehow ended up with three of the world's top 10 in the last four, despite a high number of prominent withdrawals.

Halep won in straight sets but needed two tie-breaks — 7-6 (7/1), 7-6 (8/6) — to edge past Germany's Julia Goerges, despite racing to a 4-0 lead in the first set.

However, the match turned out to be anything but routine for the Romanian who was forced to save two set points and break Goerges' serve in the 10th game to stay in the second set.

"I am very happy, honestly," said Halep.

"It's been a really tough match and it is always tough to play against her." The Romanian will play Svitolina, ranked seventh in the world, in the last four on Friday.

Halep has lost her three last matches against the Ukrainian, failing to win a single set in those matches, stretching back to 2017.

Svitolina was the first player through to the semi-finals, beating Czech qualifier Karolina Muchova by contrast in easy fashion 6-4, 6-2.

"I found a way to have to beat her,"



said Svitolina. "I was very happy I could do it in two sets."

She was followed on court by Kerber, the world number six, who won 1-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) in a tough and feisty encounter against another Czech,

Barbora Strycova, who was given a time violation in the final set.

The German not only battled back from being a set down, she was also a break down in the second and third sets before winning through.

It will be Kerber's first semi-final since she won at Wimbledon last year.

She will play Belgium's Mertens, the world number 21, in the last four, who beat Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-3.

SPAIN TO FACE CROATIA

Rafael Nadal's Spain will host defending champions Croatia in the Davis Cup finals with the 17-time major winner set to be the only member of the sport's big four taking part in the controversially rebooted tournament.

Nadal, a Davis Cup champion in 2004, 2008, 2009 and 2011, will likely face Marin Cilic, Croatia's top player who won both his singles in the 2018 Davis Cup final victory over France.

Russia, the two-time champions, make up Group B.

Ten-time champions France, 2010 winners Serbia and Japan contest Group A while 2016 victors Argentina, Germany and Chile are in Group C.

Group D sees Belgium and Colombia pooled with 28-time champions Australia while Britain, who have been champions on 10 occasions, Kazakhstan and Netherlands make up Group E.

Group F sees record 32-time winners United States clash with Italy and Canada.

NISHIKORI EASES INTO ROTTERDAM LAST 8

AFP ■ ROTTERDAM

Japan's Kei Nishikori carved out a comfortable 6-1, 6-4 win over Latvian Ernests Gulbis on Thursday to power into the Rotterdam Open quarter-finals.

Asia's top player, the world number seven, needed an hour and a quarter to advance as he booked a third victory against former French Open semi-finalist Gulbis, who was a lucky loser at the Ahoy Arena.

Nishikori will on Friday meet Hungarian Marton Fucsovics, who defeated Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 7-6 (7/1), 6-1, for a place in the semi-finals.

Nishikori, who won his 12th ATP title in Brisbane earlier this year, earned his 10th victory of the season against a single loss — when he retired in the Australian Open last eight against Novak Djokovic.

"This was so much better than my first match," Nishikori said. "I was returning well and putting him under pressure."

"The second set was tight for a while but I was not worried even after he got the break back."

"I was able to play good tennis today, I'm very happy with my level."

Earlier, Jo-Wilfried Tsonga won a lengthy opening set and then accelerated past Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor for a quarter-final place.

The Frenchman's 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 victory was a match of two parts, with the labourious first set taking 53 minutes while the second lasted just 23.

Tsonga, the 2017 champion in Rotterdam, will keep up his bid for a second straight trophy after winning Montpellier at the weekend as he continues his comeback from a seven-month absence last season due to knee surgery



and recovery.

The 33-year-old also looks set for another ranking rise from world number 140 as his comeback progress intensifies.

Tsonga next faces fifth-seeded Russian Daniil Medvedev who defeated Spanish veteran Fernando Verdasco for the second time in three meetings, posting a 6-2, 7-5 win.

Medvedev, a Rotterdam quarter-finalist on his 2018 debut, has carried the momentum he gained from his fourth career title last weekend in Sofia.

The 23-year-old improved to 13-2 on the season.

Bosnian Damir Dzumhur followed up on his second-round upset of third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, advancing past Kazakh Mikhail Kukushkin 6-4, 7-6 (7/3).

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Sindhu, Saina & summit clash



"It will be just another match and I don't think it will help me for All England, I will just look to focus and give my best," Sindhu said about the final.

In men's singles, Lakshya Sen,

who is Asian junior champion and a Bronze medallist at the World Junior Championship, secured his second final with a 21-15, 21-16 win over former winner and 2014 Commonwealth Games champion



Parupalli Kashyap in the second semifinal.

The 17-year-old Sen, from Uttarakhand, had lost the finals of the 81st edition against Sourabh Verma and he would look to settle

the scores when he faces the 26-year-old from Dhar in the finals on Saturday.

Two-time former champion Sourabh sealed his final spot after beating Mumbai's Kaushal Dharmamer 21-14, 21-17 in 44 minutes.

Earlier in the day, former champions Saina, Kashyap and Sourabh advanced to the semifinals with contrasting wins.

The three-time former champion Saina hardly broke a sweat to get the better of former India No 1 Neha Pandit of Mumbai 21-10, 21-10 in a lop-sided quarter-final contest.

Kashyap, a 2012 winner, prevailed 21-18, 21-16 over Bodhit Joshi, who had reached the finals of Iceland International last year.

Former world No 30 Verma, who had clinched Super 100 titles at Russia Open and Dutch Open last year, eked out a hard-fought 21-11,

21-23, 21-18 triumph over B Sai Praneth.

In the other semi-final matches of the day, Rohan Kapoor and Kuhoo Garg lived up to their reputation as the top seeds in mixed doubles. The world No 46 pair needed only 32 minutes to dispatch Vighnesh Devlekar and Harika V 21-15, 21-16 to enter the final.

They will take on the unseeded combine of Manu Attri and Maneesha K, who continued their rampage with a fine 21-18, 21-17 win over Shlok Ramchandran and Mithula UK.

In women's doubles, top seeds Meghana Jakkampudi and Poorvisha S Ram continued their quest for the title with a strong 21-13, 21-16 victory over Kuhoo Garg and Anoushka Parikh. They will take on the unseeded Shikha Gautam and Ashwini Bhat K in the summit clash after the latter edged Aparna Balan and Sruthi KP 21-19, 24-22.

Men's doubles second seeds Pranaav Jerry Chopra and Chirag Shetty beat Arun George and Sanyam Shukla 21-17, 21-18 to secure a place in the final.

PANT SET FOR WC BERTH

Young wicket-keeper pips experienced Karthik in ODI squad for Aus clash, Rahul returns for home series



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Young Rishabh Pant took a giant stride towards realising his World Cup dream, pipping veteran Dinesh Karthik in the 15-member ODI squad for the Australia series while KL Rahul all but clinched the reserve opener's slot for the mega event by earning a recall.

While the selectors announced two different teams for the first two and last three ODIs, the side that is expected to travel to England will be the one for the last three games of the series. The engagement with Australia starts February 24 with the first T20 International in Visakhapatnam, while the World Cup is scheduled from May 30.

Rahul returned to the side after he was controversially called back midway through the tour of Australia following his and all-rounder Hardik Pandya's loose talk on women in a TV show.

Regular captain Virat Kohli and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah are also back in the squad for the entire Australia series after a break and even vice-captain Rohit Sharma will not be resting.

The committee headed by MSK



Prasad also announced the T20 squad for the two-match series, in which rookie Punjab leg-spinner Mayank Markande made the cut and Kuldeep Yadav was rested.

However, all eyes were on the ODI squad which is supposed to be a mirror image of the team that will be travelling to England.

One of the biggest calls was regarding the second wicketkeeper-

cum-reserve batsman's slot. Karthik seems to have missed the bus to a much younger Pant, who is considered to be the future of Indian cricket and heir apparent to Mahendra Singh Dhoni behind the stumps.

Karthik was criticised for his on-field decision-making during the lost final T20 International against New Zealand in Hamilton. The Tamil Nadu veteran refused a single when

Krunal Pandya was on a rampage at the other end.

Karthik later justified the call by saying that he was confident of pulling off a six which didn't happen as India lost by four runs.

Pant, on the other hand, is yet to get a significant knock in ODIs but his big-hitting prowess has made him a potential match-winner in big-ticket events like the World Cup.

Shortlisted 18 players & will rotate them: Prasad on WC plans

PTI ■ MUMBAI

National selection committee chairman MSK Prasad on Friday said that 18 cricketers have been shortlisted for the upcoming ODI World Cup and the BCCI is in talks with their respective IPL franchises to manage their workload ahead of the mega-event in England.

There have been discussions that India's World Cup hopefuls' workload management should be monitored during the IPL, starting March 23, so that they remain fresh during the May 30-July 14 extravaganza.

"We have shortlisted 18 players and we will rotate them during the World Cup. As far as workload management is concerned, it is yet to be worked out. There are discussions happening on that front and we will let you know," Prasad said after selecting various squads for the home series against Australia.

Whether the franchises will agree to rest top India players on their roster after paying millions to have them has been a subject



of debate.

When acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary was asked this question, he admitted that the franchises have diverse views on the matter.

"If your question suggests that the franchises will be wary of resting players, it is an issue we will deal with considering it's a World Cup year. There have been views from franchises and I am not going into specifics," he said.

He also urged the franchises to keep the national interest in mind.

"And also considering the fact that all the franchises are Indian franchises, the interest of the country, of doing well at the highest international level, is paramount," Choudhary said.

"That we have included him (Pant) considering many factors. He is a left-hander and we needed to discuss with the team management, which we have already done," Prasad said after the meeting.

"Virat was also a part of the meeting. We will try and figure out the best possible batting position, because being a left-hander, there is an advantage of playing left-right combination, we are discussing all that," Prasad added.

Prasad also dropped elaborate hints that Pant, who is expected to bat in the top-order, was always in the reckoning for the Australia series.

"Definitely. Prior to this series, we had two series in New Zealand and Australia and that's where

Karthik was chosen because Rishabh played four Test matches.

"So we wanted him to get a good break. He had a 20-day break, then he played couple of ODIs against England lions where he did well, then we send him to T20 matches. We want to give him a few games before taking a final call," said the former India stumper, informing that 30-member probables list will be released by March 25.

Karthik's chances of making it to the World Cup are even more slim after Rahul made the cut on the back of his 89 and 81 for India A against England Lions.

Punjab seamer Siddharth Kaul seems to have joined the race for the fourth pacer's slot at the business end of the preparation cycle.

"Siddharth Kaul is doing well and is now a part of the mix," Prasad said.

Kaul made it to the first two ODIs from which Bhuvneshwar Kumar has been rested but more importantly, there are no left-arm seamers in the line-up.

Khaleel Ahmed, who was a disappointment in New Zealand, has been dropped and with Jaydev Unadkat not considered for selection, it is unlikely that the scenario will change prior to the World Cup unless there are some ground-breaking performances in the IPL.

"Khaleel has been playing for the last two series and we seen him and we would like to see Siddharth Kaul also," said Prasad.

Vijay Shankar's decent run with the bat in New Zealand has "changed the dynamics of the squad".

With two leg-spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal being automatic selections, there are no finger spinners in the squad. Kedar Jadhav is expected to chip in with a few overs of off-break.

Quizzed on the oft-repeated aspect of workload management, BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary said the IPL franchisees are being spoken to on the matter.

THE SQUADS

1st and 2nd ODI: Virat Kohli (Capt), Rohit Sharma (VC), Shikhar Dhawan, Ambati Rayudu, Kedar Jadhav, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (WK), Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohamed Shami, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Vijay Shankar, Rishabh Pant, Siddharth Kaul, KL Rahul

Last three ODIs: Virat Kohli (Capt), Rohit Sharma (vc), Shikhar Dhawan, Ambati Rayudu, Kedar Jadhav, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (WK), Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Vijay Shankar, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant

T20I series: Virat (Capt), Rohit (VC), KL Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (WK), Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Vijay Shankar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav, Siddharth Kaul, Mayank Markande.

Hanuma smashes hat-trick of hundreds



PTI ■ NAGPUR

Hanuma Vihari scripted history by becoming the first player to score a hat-trick of hundreds in the Irani Cup, helping Rest of India rally and set Vidarbha a tricky 280-run target at VCA stadium on Friday.

Enjoying a good run of

form, the 25-year-old Vihari created the record with a single down the ground on the fourth day, his second century of the match and third straight in Irani Cup.

The India player had scored 183 for Rest of India during last year's Irani Cup match against Vidarbha, who recently retained the Ranji

MOST 100s IN IRANI TROPHY				
Batsman	M	Runs	AVG	HS
Dilip Vengsarkar (Mumbai/ROI)	9	779	59.92	151
Gundappa Viswanath (Karnataka/ROI)	9	1001	77.00	200*
Hanuma Vihari (Rest of India)	2	477	238.50	183
Abhinav Mukund (Rest of India)	4	596	74.50	161
Sunil Gavaskar (Mumbai/ROI)	12	733	40.72	156*
Wasim Jaffer (Mumbai/ROI/Vidarbha)	12	1294	64.70	286

Faisal Features

Trophy with another exemplary showing.

Besides Vihari's 180, India's Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane made 87 and Shreyas Iyer raced to a 52-ball 61, helping Rest of India to declare their second innings at 374 for three, a day after conceding a big first-innings lead.

Needing 280 for an outright win, Ranji champions Vidarbha were 37 for one at close of play, still 243 runs shy of the target with nine wickets in hand.

While Akshay Karnewar's gutsy century on the third day

powered Vidarbha to a 95-run first-innings lead, Rest of India rode on a third-wicket partnership of 229 runs between Vihari and Rahane to grab the initiative on the penultimate day.

After Rahane's dismissal, Iyer took the attack to Vidarbha as Rest of India looked for quick runs before the declaration.

Vihari struck 19 fours and four sixes during his 300-ball knock, while Iyer smashed five boundaries and four sixes. During his stay in the middle, senior pro Rahane found the fence six times and cleared it once.

Ind 'A' secure innings victory

PTI ■ MYSURU

Young leg-spinner Mayank Markande scalped five wickets to steer India 'A' to a series-clinching innings and 68-run win over England Lions in the second and final unofficial Test on Friday.

Markande (5 for 31) spun a web around the visitors to bowl them out for 180 in the second innings on the third day of the four-day match. England was following on.

Resuming at 24 for no loss and faced with the daunting task of handling the Indian spinners on a turning wicket, the Lions' batsmen came a cropper with only Ben Duckett (50) and Lewis Gregory (44) showing some fight.

Besides Markande, Lalaj Saxena (2/40) claimed two wickets.

The 21-year old Markande, who performed creditably for Mumbai Indians in the IPL last year, troubled most of the England batsmen with his guile.

The talented Ollie Pope was



Markande's first victim, trapped leg-before.

He then removed Steve Mullaney, Dominic Bess and Zak Chappell in quick succession as the Lions capitulated.

Running out of partners, Gregory went on the offensive and hit six fours and a six during his 49-ball knock before becoming the last wicket to fall, handing India 'A' victory with a day to spare.

Pace bowlers Varun Aaron (1/39), Navdeep Saini (1/25) and left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem (1/25) picked up a wicket each.

Pujara, Mary nominated for Indian Sports Honours

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Test cricket run machine Cheteshwar Pujara, Olympic medallists Mary Kom and P V Sindhu figured among a host of star sportspersons nominated for the second edition of Indian Sports Honours which will be awarded on Saturday.

Pujara, his national team-mates Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah were nominated for the Sportsman of the Year (Team Sport) award, along with Indian football captain Sunil Chhetri.

The Sportswoman of the Year (Team Sport) award will be chosen from among Indian women's cricket team members Smriti Mandhana, Mithali Raj and Harmanpreet Kaur, and national hockey side goalkeeper Savita Punia.

Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, badminton player Kidambi Srikanth, top wrestler Bajrang Punia, rising shooter Saurabh Choudhary and ace cueist Pankaj Advani were the candidates for the individual category of Sportsman of the Year award. Along with shuttler Sindhu and boxer Mary Kom, others nominated for the Sportswoman of the Year (Individual Sports) were wrestler Vinesh Phogat, sprinter Hima Das and heptathlete Swapna Barman.

The awards in 17 categories, including one Life Time Achievement Honour, will be conferred on Saturday.



SL fumble in 304 run chase

AFP ■ DURBAN

South Africa took three Sri Lankan wickets in three overs to finish in a strong position on the third day of the first Test on Friday.

Sri Lanka, needing 304 to win, were 83 for three at the close, 221 runs short of their target.

The tourists started their chase promisingly in Durban, with captain Dimuth Karunaratne and Lahiru Thirimanne putting on 42 for the first wicket but both openers were out in the space of five balls, to be followed shortly afterwards by Kusal Mendis.

Thirimanne fell for 21 to a sharp catch at second slip by South African captain Faf du Plessis when he edged an extravagant drive against Kagiso Rabada.

Karunaratne was out for 20 in the next over, leg before wicket to Vernon Philander for the second time in the match. As in the first innings it was a tight decision which Karunaratne reviewed.



Replays showed it was "umpire's call" with the ball flicking the bails.

Duanne Olivier replaced Philander and struck with his fifth ball when Kusal Mendis flashed at a short ball and was caught behind for nought.

Oshada Fernando and Kusal Perera, both showing a willingness to go for their shots, saw Sri Lanka through to an early close when bad light stopped play.

The flurry of wickets negated

Sri Lanka's achievement in taking the last five South African wickets for eight runs.

Left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya, 22, playing in his first Test, took five for 66 as South Africa were bowled out for 259 in their second innings.

IMPRESSIVE DEBUT

South Africa were on course to set the tourists a more challenging target when they reached

Coach Raman keen on improving Smriti's 'patience'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India women's team opener Smriti Mandhana, who is in blazing form, said on Friday that the team's coach W V Raman has set her targets to bat for a specific number of overs to develop her patience at the crease.

"He (Raman) has been telling me to play 30 overs in ODIs as he knows that if I bat till 30 overs, I will continue to bat. And in 20 over games he has been telling me to bat for 13 overs," the 22-year-old Mandhana said.

"He's giving me targets to bat a certain number of balls, because strike rate and those kinds of things never concern me, the only problem is the patience aspect. He is helping with that and giving me targets to bat through these many balls and that many overs and that is being great," said the left-handed batswoman.

Mandhana, asked specifically whether the team is too dependent on her, replied that the perception is not correct.

"No, I don't think so. We have got a lot of match-winners in our team. It is just that sometimes someone goes through a lean patch and you need to



cover up for your teammate. And sometimes that would be the case, if I am not going, the middle order will look after me (help me).

"So you can't say that they (other batswomen) are too dependent, but I think the main responsibility as a bat-

ter is to win matches and dependence never comes (in the way)," she stressed.

During last year's women's T20 tri-series, Mandhana had said that she was throwing her wicket away after setting herself in.

Eleven months later, she feels that she is being able to improve 10 per cent on this aspect, but the next aim is to carry on batting till the end of the innings.

"Somewhat, yes, may be 10 per cent I have improved on that. From 50 to 60s, I have gone to 70s. But I'm still leaving 20-30 runs when we are chasing. I think it will be good if I come back not out. Hopefully I can do that against England in the (upcoming) ODI and the T20 series," she said.

"I'm really excited (for the England series) and we are playing the ICC Championships and we need six points to be up there. Hopefully we will all stick together and win the ODI series (against England). I hope that I can win more matches for India," Mandhana remarked.

The ODI series against England starts Friday next and all the three matches in the 50-over rubber will be played at the Wankhede Stadium.