

OPINION 8
A BEFITTING
REPLY

WORLD 11
81 PERISH IN
DHAKA BLAZE

SPORT 15
ATLETICO BEAT JUVENTUS
2-0 IN CL CLASH

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



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NAMUMKIN AB MUMKIN HAI

India to stop its water into Pak

Implementation may take six years as 100-m high dams need to be built

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has decided to stop the flow of its share of water to Pakistan from rivers under the Indus Water Treaty, a move seen as an immediate fallout of deadly terrorist attack that killed 40 paramilitary personnel in south Kashmir.

Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari tweeted to convey the decision of the Government to stop India's share of water going to Pakistan.

But the actual implementation of the decision may take up to six years as dams as high as 100 metres will have to be built to stop such flow, officials said insisting its decision was in no way a violation of the Treaty and was only aimed at getting the rightful due to people of the country.

Under the Indus Water Treaty signed in 1960, the waters of the western rivers — the Indus, the Jhelum, and the



- ◆ Officials said the Government decision is in no way a violation of the Indus Water Treaty and is only aimed at getting the rightful due to people of the country
- ◆ Under the Indus Water Treaty signed in 1960, the waters of the western rivers — the Indus, the Jhelum, and the Chenab — was given to Pakistan and those of the eastern rivers — the Ravi, the Beas, and the Sutlej — to India
- ◆ However, while about 95 per cent of the water is being used in India after the construction of three main dams across the rivers, close to 5 per cent water flows to Pakistan

Chenab — was given to Pakistan and those of the eastern rivers — the Ravi, the Beas, and the Sutlej — to India.

India's share of water from the Ravi, the Beas and the Sutlej came to 33 million acres feet (MAF). While about 95 per cent of the water was being used in the country after the

construction of three main dams across the rivers, close to 5 per cent water or 1.6 MAF would flow to Pakistan.

To gain access to this water, India is now building more dams which will be completed in six years, officials said.

Another official said the decision was taken two months

back. Water to Pakistan from the three rivers has been flowing for 60 years while the country needs the same to meet needs of its citizens, they said insisting stopping of its share of water from going to Pakistan is in no way a violation of the Treaty.

"Under the leadership of

Hon'ble PM Sri @narendramodi ji, Our Govt. Has decided to stop our share of water which used to flow to Pakistan. We will divert water from Eastern rivers and supply it to our people in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab," Gadkari said in a tweet.

He further said, "The construction of dam has started at Shahpur-Kandi on the Ravi. Moreover, UJH project will store our share of water for use in J&K and the balance water will flow from 2nd Ravi-BEAS Link to provide water to other basin States."

Gadkari's tweets have come barely a week after the gruesome Pulwama terror attack on February 14 in which as many as 40 CRPF personnel were martyred when a terrorist rammed an explosives laden vehicle into a bus carrying them. New Delhi believes the attack was planned and supported by elements in Pakistan.

Continued on Page 6

SP bags 37, sacrifices 1 for RLD, gives BSP 38

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Over a month after announcing an alliance for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) announced the allocation of seats to each partner on Thursday.

In a statement, SP president Akhilesh Yadav and BSP chief Mayawati announced that

while the SP will contest on 37 seats, the BSP will fight on 38. Amethi and Rae Bareilly — the pocket boroughs of the Rahul family — have been left for the Congress.

The three other seats left by the BSP-SP alliance are Baghpat, Muzaffarnagar and Mathura for the RLD.

On January 12, when the SP and BSP announced their alliance, both Mayawati and

Akhilesh had said they would contest 38 seats each and leave four seats for other parties including two for Congress. But the SP sacrificed one seat from its quota to pacify the RLD to remain in the alliance.

As per the list, the SP will contest eight Lok Sabha seats in west UP, 16 in east UP, nine in central UP and two each in Terai and Bundelkhand region.

Akhilesh is likely to contest from Kannauj and Mulayam from Mainpuri.

The SP has been given all the five seats it had won in the 2014 parliamentary elections - Azamgarh, Kannauj, Mainpuri, Budaun and Ferozabad. In the Lok Sabha by-elections, the SP had wrested the prized Gorakhpur and Kairana seats from the BJP.

Because of its sway in eastern UP, the BSP will contest 17 seats of the region, including Ambedkar Nagar from where Mayawati is expected to contest.

The BSP will contest 11 seats of western UP, eight in central UP and two in Bundelkhand region.

Continued on Page 6



Samajwadi Party leaders Mulayam Singh Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav address their party workers in Lucknow on Thursday. PTI

CAPSULE

EPFO FINALISES 8.65 PC INTEREST FOR 2018-19

NEW DELHI: Retirement fund body EPFO has decided to provide 8.65 per cent interest on PF deposits for 2018-19 against 8.55 per cent in the last year to its 6 crore subscribers. Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said on Thursday. All members of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of EPFO at a meeting here agreed to give a higher interest for subscribers for the current fiscal, the minister added. The proposal would now go to the Finance Ministry for approval, Gangwar said after the CBT meeting.

TRIPLE TALAQ ORDINANCE PROMULGATED AGAIN

NEW DELHI: The ordinance making the practice of instant triple talaq a penal offence for Muslim men was issued for the third time on Thursday. The Law Ministry said President Ram Nath Kovind has signed the The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance, 2019. On Tuesday, the Cabinet gave its nod to re-issuing of the contentious triple talaq ordinance.

AVALANCHE: TEAM AWAITS CLEAR WEATHER

SHIMLA: A glacier slid on Thursday morning at Shipki La where rescue parties are on standby to restart the operation to search for five Army jawans trapped in the snow avalanche in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur district, officials said. The Army is waiting for the weather to clear to restart the operation.

UNSC ignores China bid, hits out at JeM for Pulwama attack

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS / ISLAMABAD

The United Nations Security Council on Thursday condemned in strongest terms "heinous and cowardly" suicide attack in Pulwama by Jaish-e-Mohammed.

China had been abortively trying to block any reference to Jaish-e-Mohammed — the Pakistan-based terror group which has accepted responsibility for the attack — in the statement. The UNSC also ignored China's insistence on "India-administered Kashmir".

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Thursday banned the 2008 Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-led Jamat-ud-Dawa and its charity wing Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation, amid intense global pressure to rein in the militant groups following the Pulwama terror attack that killed 40 CRPF soldiers.

A spokesman of the Interior Ministry said that the decision to ban these groups was taken during a meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan at his office on Thursday.

"It was decided during the meeting to accelerate action against proscribed organisations,"

the spokesperson said in a statement.

"It was further decided that Jamat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation be notified as proscribed organizations by the Ministry of Interior," he added.

However, it remains to be seen how effective the latest ban would be on the two groups, which have the tacit backing of the political leaders and the security agencies.

Earlier, the two outfits were kept on the watchlist of the interior ministry.

According to officials, JuD's network includes 300 seminaries and schools, hospitals, a publishing house and ambulance service. The two groups have about 50,000 volunteers and hundreds of other paid workers.

The JuD is believed to be the front organisation for the LeT which is responsible for carrying out the Mumbai attack that killed 166 people. It has been declared as a foreign terrorist organisation by the US in June 2014.

The US Department of the Treasury has designated its chief Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, and the US, since 2012, has offered a USD 10 million reward for information that brings Saeed to justice.

Akhilesh has destroyed half of SP by giving BSP 38 seats: Mulayam

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Expressing annoyance over the Samajwadi Party (SP) joining hands with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav said that Akhilesh Yadav had "finished" the party by deciding to contest only 50 per cent of the Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

"By contesting just 40 of the total 80 seats in the State, Akhilesh has finished half the party. Delaying the announcement of candidates is further

weakening the prospects of the party," Mulayam said while addressing party workers at SP State headquarters here in the presence of media persons on Thursday.

This is the first time that Mulayam has come out openly against his son and SP chief after the party stitched an alliance with the BSP.

"The fight of the SP is with the BJP. The party workers should pull up their socks to fight and win majority of the seats that the party is contesting," he said while conceding

that even as the SP was forging alliances, the BJP was far ahead in preparations and had already sent its observers to different constituencies.

The remarks come days after SP patriarch created a stir in Parliament, saying he wished that Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns to power.

The SP patriarch urged the party workers to approach him if they want a party ticket to contest the parliamentary polls and suggested that he could "change" any decision taken by Akhilesh.

Surgical strike brains to head Cong task force on security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The main architect of the 2016 surgical strikes on terror launch pads in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), former Northern Army commander Lt-Gen (ret'd) DS Hooda, will head a Congress task force on national security. Congress sources said party president Rahul Gandhi had met Hooda earlier and discussed the modalities of the panel to which Hooda agreed.

"The Congress president has set up a task force on national security to prepare a

vision paper for the country," party said in a statement. Hooda will lead the panel and prepare the paper in consultation with a select group of experts.

Hooda's appointment by the main Opposition party attains significance as the Congress has been accusing the Modi Government of politicising the surgical strikes. On September 29, 2016, the Army had carried out the strikes on seven terrorist launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC) in retaliation to an attack on its base in Uri earlier that month.

Continued on Page 6

DMRC set to open its longest Noida corridor next month, trials on

GAYATHRI MANI ■ NEW DELHI

Commuting will become easier between the national Capital and Noida as the Delhi Metro is set to open the 6.6 kilometre Noida City Centre-Electronic City Metro corridor by next month. Signalling trial runs have already been commenced on the section. The Blue Line corridor will become Delhi Metro's second longest Metro corridor after the 59 kilometre long Majlis Park-Shiv Vihar corridor of Phase 3.

6.6-km long corridor is an extension of the existing Blue Line corridor that connects Dwarka with Noida City Centre.

"The section will be a major boost for around 80,000 new passengers living in the inner circles of Noida and will also connect various parts of Delhi. Moreover, the entire Phase-III project of the Delhi Metro will be completed once this section will be ready to open for public," said a senior Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) official.

The new section will have a total of six stations at Sector 34, Sector 52, Sector 61, Sector 59, Sector 62 and NOIDA Electronic City.

Officials added that the six stations on this corridor will cater largely to densely populated areas of Noida. The housing societies in Sectors 34, 52 and 22 will be immensely benefited as it will help commuting within Noida as well.

Further, commuters can also easily reach major hospitals such as Safdarjung and AIIMS in Delhi.

NOIDA CITY CENTRE TO ELECTRONIC CITY
6.6 kilometre
NUMBER OF STATION:
SIX — Sector 34, Sector 52, Sector 61, Sector 59, Sector 62 and NOIDA Electronic City



No wind power at ecology cost: Govt

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

To ensure that its ambition to install 30,000 megawatt of offshore wind power by 2030 does not come at the cost of the marine ecology health, the Government has proposed that lease of wind farm in the sector will be cancelled if they are found posing threat to flora and fauna beneath the sea.

This is one of the major reasons for lease cancellations proposed in the draft Offshore Wind Energy Lease Rules, 2019 issued by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). The Ministry is now seeking suggestions and opinion from the public about the

proposed rules. The rules also propose penalty to the default project proponent in the form of fine and jail imprisonment, if found violating the norms.

As per the draft rules, lease of an offshore wind power project can be cancelled if it is found to be "causing environmental damage to both flora and fauna beneath the sea and posing threat to human life and property while carrying out the activities under water and operation of the wind energy turbines during validity of the lease."

The draft rules also maintains that "If, in the opinion of the Central Government, oper-



ation of the wind turbines/wind turbines is causing damage to environment or damage to property, or pollution can thereby be prevented, the Central Government may order the Wind Farm to be shut down pending an enquiry

under sub-rule (a), which enquiry shall be held within a reasonable period of the making of such order."

In offshore wind farms, wind turbines are elevated over the sea level with different types of foundations, depend-

ing on the depth. The large-scale deployment of offshore wind farms is the part of the Government's shift to renewable energy. Offshore wind power projects are used to exploit the potential of wind in open seas, where wind blows stronger than on land.

The rules follow the national offshore wind energy policy which was notified in October 2015, providing a basic framework for development of offshore wind energy in the country.

As per the policy, offshore wind energy blocks will be allocated to successful bidders through global bidding.

Continued on Page 6

Continued on Page 6

Petrol pump cashier was killed over land dispute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Petrol pump cashier Santosh Dixit (of Aliganj) was killed by a raconteur who exploited the victim's faith in religious practices in a bid to grab his land. His accomplice was also charged with criminal conspiracy. Santosh was killed on the night of February 17.

The facts surfaced after the arrest of the duo on Thursday. Umakant Tiwari of Banda and his aide Shiv Sagar Singh of Hamirpur were nabbed near a bank. The police recovered a car, victim's Aadhaar card and a sharp-edged weapon used for the crime. Tiwari said he had a land dispute with Santosh and killed him taking advantage of "blind faith" that Santosh had in religious practices. It surfaced that Tiwari had a good command over Santosh, his family and even his relatives as he used to perform puja to ward off evil effects of planets on them.

A few months back, Tiwari had sought help from Santosh in getting a mutt constructed to perform puja and other religious activities. Santosh agreed to help him and both pur-



The accused arrested for murder and criminal conspiracy

chased a land in Maal police station area. However, Santosh got the land registered in his daughter's name after which the relations between the two soured. Tiwari chalked out a diabolic plot to kill Santosh.

Tiwari was invited to the marriage of Santosh's relative and he reached there along with Shiv Sagar on the fateful day. The duo asked Santosh to go to an isolated place to perform puja to ward off evil effects of planets on him.

Santosh was asked to sit down and recite mantras keep-

ing his eyes closed. As Santosh closed his eyes, Tiwari repeatedly attacked him with a sharp-edged, killing him on the spot. He later hid the weapon in a mango grove and dumped his blood-stained clothes into the Gomti river before fleeing the scene.

ASP, Rural, Vikrant Veer said Tiwari absconded after executing the crime and the suspicion on him deepened. "We succeeded in nabbing Shiv Sagar who spilled the beans, and we later arrested Tiwari too," he said.

Metro services to remain disrupted for 6 hours today

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Metro train services between Transport Nagar and Charbagh will not be available from 6 am to 12 pm on Friday on account of migration testing of balance section systems with priority section. Meanwhile, ahead of the commencement of commercial run on the entire North-South corridor (Phase-1A) from CCS Airport to Munshipulia, Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation has started the sale of 'GoSmart' cards at 10 stations, administrative office at Gomi Nagar and Transport Nagar Metro Depot.

LMRC has set up special sale counters at CCS Airport, Krishna Nagar, Alambagh bus stand, Charbagh, Sachivalaya, Hazratganj, LU, Bhoonath, Indira Nagar, and Munshipulia Metro stations along with administrative office and Transport Nagar Metro Depot. The 'GoSmart' card is available at Rs 200, inclusive of Rs 100 as security charge, which is refundable. The card saves both money and time for users as 10 per cent discount on each journey is provided to the users and they don't have to stand in queues for tokens. Besides, the 'GoSmart' users can also enjoy free Wi-Fi facility at Metro stations.

Fire engulfs mattress godown in Maulviganj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A major fire broke out in a mattress godown in Bhedi Mandi in Maulviganj under Aminabad police station on Thursday. While no casualty was reported in the incident, sub-inspector SP Singh received minor burns on his hands. The fire broke out in the godown at around 1 pm. The godown is run by Satyendra Gupta of Naka in the house of Khursheed Alam.



Smoke emanates from the mattress godown on Thursday

As the area is highly populated with narrow bylanes, it took time for fire tenders to reach the site. The fire and res-

cue units found it difficult to contain the flames while occupants of nearby houses and

buildings were evacuated. CFO VK Singh said eight fire tenders were pressed into

service and the flames were extinguished after more than two hours. "The situation was grim as it was a mattress godown. We conducted a dousing operation simultaneously. Fortunately, no one suffered any injuries," he added.

Singh said the reason for the fire outbreak had not been ascertained as yet. Aminabad SHO Sunil Kumar Dubey said their major concern was to evacuate people living in nearby houses. Sub-inspector SP Singh suffered burns while dousing the fire," he said, adding that the loss of property was yet to be estimated.

साफ नीयत - सही विकास

प्राविधिक शिक्षा सफलता के नये आयाम

250 नवनियुक्त शिक्षकों से संवाद, लैपटॉप वितरण, सर्वश्रेष्ठ प्रोटो टाइप मॉडल को पुरस्कार एवं केन्द्रीय प्लेसमेंट सेल तथा रोजगार पोर्टल का शुभारम्भ

परियोजनाओं का लोकार्पण/शिलान्यास

मुख्य अतिथि

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश
के कर-कमलों द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

आशुतोष टण्डन 'गोपाल जी'

मंत्री, प्राविधिक शिक्षा एवं चिकित्सा शिक्षा उत्तर प्रदेश

संदीप सिंह

राज्य मंत्री, बेसिक शिक्षा, माध्यमिक शिक्षा, उच्च शिक्षा, प्राविधिक शिक्षा एवं चिकित्सा शिक्षा उत्तर प्रदेश

दिनांक: 22 फरवरी, 2019 | समय: पूर्वाह्न 10:30 बजे
स्थान: पं. अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी सभागार
डॉ. ए.पी.जे. अब्दुल कलाम प्राविधिक विश्वविद्यालय
जानकीपुरम् विस्तार, सीतापुर रोड, लखनऊ

सड़क दुर्घटना से है अगर बचना, तो दोपहिवा वालों हेलमेट पहने रहना। प्राविधिक शिक्षा विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

साफ नीयत-सही विकास

राजस्व निरीक्षक एवं लेखपालों को स्मार्टफोन वितरण का शुभारम्भ

मुख्य अतिथि

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश
के कर-कमलों द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

अनुपमा जायसवाल

राज्य मंत्री, राजस्व, उत्तर प्रदेश

दिन: शुक्रवार, दिनांक: 22 फरवरी, 2019, समय: अपराह्न 4:00 बजे
स्थान: लोकमवन सभागार

दो पहिया वाहन चलाते समय हेलमेट अवश्य लगायें। राजस्व विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

साफ नीयत-सही विकास

स्वास्थ्य मंत्र सभी जाने-सभी मानें

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स्फूर्तिवान किशोर के मंत्र

राष्ट्रीय किशोर स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम

माहवारी प्रबंधन

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मासिक धर्म के दौरान सेनेटरी नैपकिन, साफ सूती कपड़े के इस्तेमाल का उपयोग करने व उसके उचित प्रकार से निस्तारण के बारे में जानकारी देना।

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19 more test positive for swine flu

Lucknow (PNS): As many as 19 fresh cases of swine flu cases were detected in different parts of city on Thursday, taking the total number of patients to 173. Two cases were reported from KGMU while 17 cases from SGPPI, according to CMO officials. The patients have been identified as Devi, Amna Hussain (KGMU), Anya, Sheetal, Ajay Pal Singh, Shuryansh Mishra, Manavi Singh, Amay Raj, Zahida Khatoon, Pushpak Verma, Shivsena Prasad, Rajeev Prakash Singh, Manju Singh, Kishore Kumar Kaul, Mohsin Khan, Karan Singh Sangeeta, Kuldeep Verma, and Shashwat (SGPPI).

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, मोलेपुर, फतेहगढ़ जनाबाद - फर्रुखाबाद - 209601
निविदा तिथि बदलना, एतद्वारा अपकालीन ई-निविदा सं० 150/2018-19 को अपरिहार्य कारणों से विस्तारित किया जाता है, जिसके अपलोड करने की निर्धारित तिथि 28.02.2019 को 15.00 बजे एवं ई-निविदा को सार्वजनिक रूप से दिनांक 28.02.2019 को समय 16.00 बजे ऑनलाइन खोला जायेगा। अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी।
(अनिल कुमार श्रीवास्तव) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, पत्रांक-795/वि०वि०म० (फ०)/दिनांक 20.02.2019, "राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचाय"

Block pramukh thrashed, looted over old enmity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW
Flexing muscle power in full public view, a rival of a Dalit block pramukh, from Ashoha in Unnao and his goons attacked the former and looted his rifle in Krishna Nagar on Thursday morning. The attackers also opened fire on the block pramukh but the latter had a providential escape. Even though police tried to sweep the issue under the carpet terming it a minor skirmish, mediapersons spoiled their plan. The police registered a case of dacoity and murderous assault. The police also slapped SC/ST Act on the accused and his aides.

Ram Kumar Rawat of Bajrang Nagar locality of Krishna Nagar left for his constituency along with his assistant Swami Vishwakarma in his SUV, which was being driven by driver Sunil. When he was about to reach the road around 10:30 am, his rival Arvind Bajpai aka Neetu and his men in an SUV and ten motorcycles stopped him. They dragged out Rawat from his vehicle and started thrashing him. They also looted Rawat's rifle kept in his car. The audacious group also opened fire to keep passersby away from the scene. "The attackers thrashed me and also my assistant and driver. They pinned me down and kicked me. They

also opened fire but the bullet missed the target," Rawat alleged. A police spokesman said a case was registered for rioting while armed with weapons, for murderous assault and for dacoity for looting rifle and other belongings from Rawat. Though he said the police recovered the rifle, he did not disclose the place from where it was recovered and from whose possession. The spokesman said Bajpai attacked Rawat due to an old enmity over block pramukh elections which were held last year. Bajpai was at loggerheads with Rawat since the candidate supported by him lost to Rawat.

SUICIDE ATTEMPT

Piqued over police apathy in searching for her son employed at a hotel in Hasanganj, a woman doused herself in kerosene to end her life on Thursday afternoon. Reports said the woman, identified as Rekha Mishra of Jankipuram, had lodged a case of missing for her son Shubham (23) a couple of days back. She sought help police but the cops sent her back saying they were busy with preparations for election. Irrked over this, she reached a crossing in Hasanganj and attempted suicide. She was rescued by passersby.

Minister launches several schemes at KGMU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The foundation stone of several schemes was laid by Health and Technical Education Minister Ashutosh Tandon at Brown Hall of KGMU on Thursday. The schemes include 14 ventilator and six high dependency units in the superspecialty Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine department in Shatabdi Phase 2, 100-bed MCH wing at Queen Mary's, multi-level parking at Lari Cardiology; new forensic wing to help students learn and research; extra floor in CVTS with 40 beds, and 36 houses

on RALC campus. He indicated tough action on reports of alleged misbehavior with patients, problem of dialysis machines and other issues and also assured KGMU financial help by the state government for all the projects.

However, he asked the KGMU doctors and staff to be well behaved with patients and their attendants.

KGMU Vice-Chancellor Dr MLB Bhatt said they had the biggest ventilator unit with 200 functional machines. He added that the process to set up another unit with 50 ventilators was in final stages.



2-day special camp to enroll left-out voters

LUCKNOW (PNS): The district administration will hold a special camp on February 23 and 24 to enroll voters missing from the electoral rolls. Officials said the voter list had already been printed and the electorate were requested to visit their booths and check their lists. If they do not find their names on the list, they can fill form 6 and submit the same to B.LOs. Officials said that if people faced any problems, they could contact EROs of their respective Vidhan Sabha constituencies. ERO (West) Ajay Kumar Rai said voters should not show laxity and try to get themselves registered. "This campaign of enrolling left-out voters has seen an increase by 20,000 in Lucknow West Vidhan Sabha constituency and first-time voters form 16 per cent of these electorate," he said.

In a recent review meeting presided over by District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma, he had said that trainings of polling personnel would be carried out before elections. Officials said that the process for nomination for the training of polling personnel had been completed and they would be trained by master trainers.

5 underground parking lots in the offing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Development Authority will construct five underground multi-level parking lots in different areas of the state capital at an estimated cost of Rs 500 crore. The state government has approved to the plan and issued orders for funds (first instalment). The idea is to decongest roads for smooth flow of traffic. The initiative has been taken under the Smart City plan as the biggest problem which the planners are facing is traffic

congestion due to increase in the volume of traffic and road-side parking. The state capital cannot be declared as Smart City till the existing traffic system is improved.

The LDA administration will construct underground parking lots in the premises of old Ayurveda directorate adjacent to Yojana Bhawan on Sarojini Naidu Marg. The second parking lot will be located in the compound of Pratibha Cinema between Babu Bhawan and Secretariat. Three other parking lots will

come up at fish market in Kaiserbagh, in the open space on old High Court campus, and at Gungay Nawab Park in Aminabad. Nazul officer Sanjay Pandey said the LDA administration had initiated legal formalities for land acquisition to start basic construction work at the earliest.

Vice-Chairman PN Singh said the LDA administration, in a bid to deal with traffic problems, was involved in chalking out a strategy and the project was among several initiatives to be taken in this

regard. Chief engineer IS Singh said the parking lots would be constructed with the help of private partners and funded jointly by the state government and Union Ministry of Urban Development. The project is expected to be launched by April. The LDA Vice-Chairman said the utilisation of funds would be audited by the account office and the finance department so that there was no scope of misuse. The parking lots will be spacious enough to accommodate over 1,500 four-wheelers.

CITY BRIEFS



The Sindhvi version of Governor Ram Nair's book 'Charaiveti! Charaiveti!' was released by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Shiv Shanti Sant Asudaram Ashram in Alambagh on Thursday

SEMINAR

The Research Design and Standards (RDSO), in association with IIT-Kanpur, organised a three-day seminar on 'Three-Phase Propulsion System', which concluded on Thursday. Around 20 technical officers from RDSO took part in the programme organised under 'Competence Building Centre'. DG (RDSO) Virendra Kumar and ADG (LTRR) AK Mishra addressed the participants and IIT faculty in the opening session.

INAUGURATED

The inaugural ceremony of student's chapter, Institutions

of Engineers, was organised at Babu Banarasi Das Northern India Institute of Technology, Chairman, Institutions of Engineers, Rajesh Trivedi was welcomed by BBDNIIT director VK Singh. The main benefits are dissemination and updating of engineering and technological knowledge and diffusion among the members and information on all matters affecting engineering through technical activities.

DELEGACY 2019

'Delegacy 2019', an outreach activity on environment, laws and concerns, a joint venture between Sri Krishna

Dutt Degree College and Lucknow University, was held on Thursday. "Environmental conservation is the need of the hour. Together we have to protect our planet and con-

serve its natural resources so that every living being can have assurance of provision of basic needs for future," speakers said.

ABHIVYAKTI

Executive director Pankaj Agarwal announced celebration of annual cultural extravaganza 'Abhiviyakti-2K19' of Ram Swaroop Memorial Group of Professional Colleges to mark its Foundation Day Celebrations from February 22 (Friday). The event will culminate with the performance of singer Harshdeep Kaur. The extravaganza will witness participants from various colleges of the state.



Press conference to announce 'Abhiviyakti-2K19'

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL B.R.D. MEDICAL COLLEGE, GORAKHPUR

PH. & FAX NO. 0551-2501736, WEBSITE : www.brdmc.ac.in

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER Dated : 11 Feb. 2019
On behalf of the government of Uttar Pradesh, E-tender offer's for the financial year 2019-20 are invited from the registered contractors in PWD for civil related works and contractors registered in vidhut sanraksha parishad of class A for Electrical related works in two bid system (Technical Bid and Financial Bid) at B.R.D. Medical College Gorakhpur as per terms and conditions stipulated in the tender documents.

Detailed advertisement and tender document can be downloaded from www.etender.up.nic.in and this tender notice shall also be available on our college website www.brdmc.ac.in the downloading of the tender forms shall start from 20-02-2019 and the last date of online submission of tender offer is due on 11-03-2019 up to 04:30 Pm. Technical bid of the tender will be open on 14-03-2019 at 02:00 Pm and financial bid of the tender will be open on 16-03-2019. Tender should be submitted on-line at the "etender.up.nic.in" portal only. Number of quantity may be increased or decreased. The Principal reserves right to cancel or reject in full or in part thereof with respect to offers received without assigning any reason thereto.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost in Lak	Estimate Money	Cost of tender Form
1	Civil and sanitary related annual maintenance work of B.R.D. Medical College, Gorakhpur and it's related Nehru Hospital and hostels, residential and non-residential buildings as per current P.W.D. Shedule norm's/rate & DSR.	80.00	1,60,000.00	1000.00+18%GST =1180.00
2	Electrical related annual maintenance work of B.R.D. Medical College, Gorakhpur and it's related Nehru Hospital and hostels, residential and non-residential buildings as per current P.W.D. Shedule norm's/rate & DSR.	40.00	80,000.00	1000.00+18%GST =1180.00

Note- The terms and conditions of the tender is attaced with the tender form

Principal B.R.D. Medical College Gorakhpur
U.P.: 138834, Dt.: 20-02-19
विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.upgpo.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

कार्यालय :- अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन - 3 जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ

पत्रांक संख्या :- 2126/EE3/GLT/1819 दिनांक : 21.2.19

अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना
जोन-3 के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न कार्यों हेतु जलकल विभाग जोन-3 द्वारा निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 26.02.2019 अपराह्न 2 बजे तक निर्धारित शुल्क जमा करके कैश काउन्टर से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है तथा दिनांक 26.02.2019 को अपराह्न 3 बजे तक निविदा प्रपत्र डाक्री जा सकती है, जो उसी दिवस को अपराह्न 4 बजे निविदादाताओं अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधि के समक्ष खोली जायेगी। निविदा विवरण निम्नानुसार है :-

क्र०सं०	कार्य का नाम	निविदा शुल्क	जमानत धनराशि	अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)
1	सेक्टर 6 जानकीपुरम विस्तार में 6" सी०आई० पाईप लाइन 150 मीटर डालने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 10000.00	₹. 4.84
2	सेक्टर 7 जानकीपुरम विस्तार में 250 एम०एम० डायामी की 70 मीटर सी०आई० पाईप लाइन डालने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 10000.00	₹. 4.99
3	सेक्टर 8 जानकीपुरम विस्तार में शिरोपरि जलाशय पर के 400 एम०एम० डायामी स्लूश बाल्व की आपूर्ति एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 10000.00	₹. 4.99
4	सेक्टर 3 जानकीपुरम विस्तार में शिरोपरि जलाशय के 400 एम०एम० डायामी स्लूश बाल्व की आपूर्ति एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 10000.00	₹. 4.99
5	जानकीपुरम विस्तार सेक्टर 3, 4, 5 के शिरोपरि जलाशय के 150 एम०एम० डायामी स्लूश बाल्व बदलने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 10000.00	₹. 4.66
6	सेक्टर 5 जानकीपुरम विस्तार के शिरोपरि जलाशय के 300 एम०एम० डायामी की राइजिंग मेन स्लूश बाल्व बदलने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 8000.00	₹. 4.01
7	जानकीपुरम विस्तार के सेक्टर 5 शिरोपरि जलाशय के 300 एम०एम० डायामी व सेक्टर 4 नलकूप की राइजिंग मेन स्लूश बाल्व बदलने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 8000.00	₹. 4.01
8	सेक्टर 8 जानकीपुरम विस्तार के शिरोपरि जलाशय के 300 एम०एम० डायामी की राइजिंग मेन स्लूश बाल्व बदलने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 8000.00	₹. 4.01
9	जानकीपुरम विस्तार सेक्टर 5 शिरोपरि जलाशय के 300 एम०एम० डायामी के सप्लाई स्लूश बाल्व बदलने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य	₹. 200.00 +12%GST	₹. 8000.00	₹. 4.01

जमानत राशि अधिशासी अभियन्ता जलकल विभाग, जोन-3 के नाम बन्धक होगा जो जमा करना अनिवार्य है। सभी निविदादाताओं का रजिस्ट्रेशन, जी०एस०टी० नं० की छायाप्रति निविदा के साथ संलग्न करना अनिवार्य है। बिना जमानत धनराशि के व निर्धारित तिथि व समय के उपरान्त किसी भी निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। किसी एक व समस्त निविदा को बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का अधिकार महाप्रबन्धक जलकल विभाग नगर निगम को सुरक्षित होगा। अन्य शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र में उल्लिखित हैं।

अधिशासी अभियन्ता जोन-3 जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-फर्रुखाबाद, ई-निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु अनुमोदी एवं ख्याति प्राप्त टेण्डरों से मोहरबन्ध निविदा दो मागों में दिनांक 14.03.2019 को 15.00 बजे ऑनलाइन एवं निविदा प्रपत्र जमा किये जायेंगे तथा निविदा दिनांक 15.03.019 को 16.00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। प्रथम भाग में नियम व शर्तें एवं निविदा के सम्बन्ध अंकित निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल फर्रुखाबाद के खाता संख्या 11120666007, आई.एफ.एस.सी. कोर्ड संख्या SBIN0001033 भारतीय स्टेट बैंक शाखा फतेहगढ़ में आर.टी.जी.एस. / एन.ई.एफ.टी. के माध्यम से तथा बैंक जमा का साक्ष्य योज्य सी.टी.आर. संख्या तथा बैंक इश्यूइंग बैंक के कन्फर्मेशन मेल की प्रति जो स्वहस्ताक्षरित होगी, ई-टेण्डर के साथ अपलोड की जायेगी, अन्यथा की स्थिति में निविदादाता निविदा में भाग लेने हेतु उपयोग हो जायेगा। निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में दरें जमा करना अनिवार्य होगा। निविदा खुलने की तिथि को यदि अवकाश होता है तो निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस में खोली जायेगी। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को सम्पूर्ण निविदा को बॉन्ड / आंशिक या उसके किसी अंश को निरस्त करने का सम्पूर्ण अधिकार होगा। निगम की वेबसाइट www.dvnl.org पर उपलब्ध है। जहां से समस्त अमिलेख / प्रपत्र डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं। ई-निविदा संख्या, कार्य का विवरण, धरोहर धनराशि एवं निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क : 156/2018-19 विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, फर्रुखाबाद में अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के लिए कार्यालय कार्य हेतु एक नग डीजल चालित कार मय ड्राइवर सहित एवं समस्त वितरण/परीक्षण खण्ड/उपखण्डों/परीक्षणशाला फर्रुखाबाद/कायमगंज हेतु 14 नग डीजल चालित जीप मय ड्राइवर सहित एक वर्ष किराये पर रखने हेतु आपूर्ति। धरोहर धनराशि ₹० 5000.00 एवं निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क ₹० 2100.00, (जी०एस०टी० सहित) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, फर्रुखाबाद, पत्रांक-799/वि०वि०म०(फ०)/टी-12, दिनांक 20.02.2019, एल.ई.डी.बल्व जलायें "राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचाय"

PARADIP PORT TRUST e-TENDER NOTICE NO : EMPED-08/2019

Name of the work : "Up-gradation of HT Power Supply System inside Harbour area to enhance the Power Supply reliability to MCHP, IOHP & Oil Jetty". Estimated Cost : Rs. 2,75,59,379/- . Last date & time of submission of bid : Dt. 11.03.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. Refer our website for details : https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app. Executive Engineer (Port Electrical Division-II) PPT/PR/643/18-19 Dt : 21.02.2019

उ० प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि. शुद्धि पत्र इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा संख्या 194 से 199 एवं 200 से 205/वि०पा०म०/गोष्वा/2018-19 जो क्रमशः दिनांक 26.02.2019 एवं 27.02.2019 को खोली जानी है, के सम्बन्ध में निम्न शुद्धि पत्र जारी किया जाता है। निविदा संख्या 194 से 199 एवं 200 से 205/वि०पा०म०/गोष्वा/2018-19 के खोलने की तिथि विस्तारित कर दी गयी है, अब यह निविदाएं क्रमशः दिनांक 01.03.2019 एवं 27.02.2019 को 14.00 बजे तक अपलोड एवं स्वीकार की जायेगी एवं क्रमशः दिनांक 02.03.2019 एवं 28.02.2019 को 12.00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी। निविदा के अन्य विवरण www.etender.up.nic पर देखे जा सकते हैं। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, 220 केवीओ उपकेन्द्र परिसर, जेल रोड, गोष्वा। संख्या 2567/वि.पा.नं०/गोष्वा/दिनांक-21.02.2019, राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय साधारण बल्व के स्थान पर एल.ई.डी. बल्व का प्रयोग करें"

उ० प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि. शुद्धि पत्र इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा संख्या 194 से 199 एवं 200 से 205/वि०पा०म०/गोष्वा/2018-19 जो क्रमशः दिनांक 26.02.2019 एवं 27.02.2019 को खोली जानी है, के सम्बन्ध में निम्न शुद्धि पत्र जारी किया जाता है। निविदा संख्या 194 से 199 एवं 200 से 205/वि०पा०म०/गोष्वा/2018-19 के खोलने की तिथि विस्तारित कर दी गयी है, अब यह निविदाएं क्रमशः दिनांक 01.03.2019 एवं 27.02.2019 को 14.00 बजे तक अपलोड एवं स्वीकार की जायेगी एवं क्रमशः दिनांक 02.03.2019 एवं 28.02.2019 को 12.00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी। निविदा के अन्य विवरण www.etender.up.nic पर देखे जा सकते हैं। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, 220 केवीओ उपकेन्द्र परिसर, जेल रोड, गोष्वा। संख्या 2567/वि.पा.नं०/गोष्वा/दिनांक-21.02.2019, राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाय साधारण बल्व के स्थान पर एल.ई.डी. बल्व का प्रयोग करें"

Woman duped of gold ornaments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Mother of a clerk, posted at the office of DGP was duped of her gold ornaments on Thursday afternoon by two miscreants posing as cops. Left red-faced, the police announced a reward for those giving a clue about the miscreants. The victim, identified as Pramod, lives on the office campus of IG, Lucknow Range, in Vinit Khand. His mother Ratna Devi was returning home around 12:30 pm when she was stopped by the miscreants and told that a

murder had taken place in the locality. They cautioned Ratna Devi against moving around while wearing ornaments. They kept her ornaments in a packet and gave another packet to her. When Ratna checked the packet after reaching home, she found a plastic bangle. She informed her son Pramod, who lodged a case in this connection.

ROAD MISHAP

In a freak accident, 62-year-old Hriday Narayan Dubey rammed into the door of a car opened by its driver

and was later run over by a road roller in Vikas Nagar on Thursday afternoon. Reports said Dubey was going for some work on his scooter. When Dubey was passing via Tedhipulia crossing, a car driver parked the vehicle on roadside and opened the door to spit. Dubey rammed into the door and later fell by the side only to be crushed by a road roller. He was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre where he was declared brought dead. The driver in question was detained and the car seized.

SCHOOLSCAN

CMS STUDENT WINS ABACUS CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY

Dhairya Bansal, a class IV student of City Montessori School, Rajajipuram Campus II, brought laurels to the institution by winning the championship trophy of state-level Regional Abacus Competition. The competition was organised under the aegis of

educational institute BrainoBrain in which students of several noted schools participated to showcase their analytical skills. Dhairya opted for various abacus tricks to solve mathematical problems and stood winner amidst a tough competition. All praises for Dhairya's skills, the organisers awarded him with a certificate and other prizes.



कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण
पत्रांक : डी/68/प्र.क./का.वि.प्रा./18-19 दिनांक : 21.02.2019
दू-बिड पद्धति से निविदा सूचना
कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण द्वारा कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न अनुभागों में कम्प्यूटर कन्स्यूमेबल सामग्री की आपूर्ति हेतु निविदा (दू-बिड पद्धति से) आमंत्रित की जाती है। उक्त कार्य से सम्बन्धित निविदा प्रपत्र कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण के तृतीय तल पर स्थित कम्प्यूटर अनुभाग में उपलब्ध है। निविदा प्रपत्र में धरोहर धनराशि, निविदा मूल्य, आपूर्ति करने की अवधि, निविदा डालने की तिथि, निविदा खोलने की तिथि तथा अन्य नियम व शर्तों का उल्लेख है।

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	धरोहर धनराशि (₹. में)	निविदा मूल्य +18% जी.एस.टी.	निविदा डालने की तिथि एवं समय
1	कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण में वित्तीय वर्ष 2019-20 हेतु कम्प्यूटर कन्स्यूमेबल आइटम की आपूर्ति हेतु रेट कान्ट्रैक्ट निविदा	30,000.00	950.00 +171.00 =1,121.00	दिनांक 28.02.2019 अपराह्न 02.00 बजे तक

प्रभारी कम्प्यूटर

Opp's crucial anti-BJP meet on Tuesday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of political parties, including the ruling BJP and main Opposition Congress, making alliance partners for the Lok Sabha polls scheduled in next couple of months, the Opposition leaders are all set to meet on Tuesday to discuss the strategy and formation of a sub-committee for evolving a common minimum programme.

To discuss strategy, formation of sub-committee for evolving a common minimum programme

- The meeting to be held at Mohali in Punjab is to be attended by top leaders like Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu among others
- The decision of a public rally in the Congress ruled Punjab is yet to be formalised
- Opposition meeting assumes significance in the wake of both the national parties — the BJP and the Congress — been working overtime to forge alliance
- Both the national parties have announced their alliances in Bihar, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu
- Moving forward on a united anti-BJP front for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, top Opposition leaders were present in the meeting of Opposition parties at Sharad Pawar's residence on February 13

The decision of a public rally in the Congress ruled Punjab is yet to be formalised but the meeting is crucial as a day later, the Congress will launch newly appointed general secretary Priyanka Gandhi in his first public rally in Gujarat this month end. The same day the Congress has scheduled its apex body

Congress Working Committee meeting at Ahmedabad. The Opposition meeting assumes significance in the wake of both the national parties — the BJP and the Congress — been working overtime to forge alliance and the announcements of Parliamentary seats by the BSP-SP combine who are ready to

take on the Modi juggernaut in crucial Uttar Pradesh. Both the national parties have announced their alliances in Bihar, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Moving forward on a united anti-BJP front for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, top Opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, Delhi Chief Minister

Arvind Kejriwal, Naidu, Sharad Yadav, were present in the meeting of Opposition parties at Sharad Pawar's residence on February 13.

The leaders agreed to work together to prepare a common minimum programme to oust the Modi Government and consider forging a pre-poll alliance.

Banerjee, one of the prime movers behind the effort to cobble together an anti-BJP alliance, had organised a mega rally of Opposition parties in Kolkata on January 19. Banerjee has already stated that the differences of parties while in States should be kept aside as the prime agenda of all the Opposition parties is to target the BJP ruled Centre in the Lok Sabha polls.

After Pulwama attack PM was busy shooting for film: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday sharpened its attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Pulwama terrorist attack last week. While it continued to target Modi for his "opened arm" engagement with the crown Prince of Saudi Arabia during the latter visit to India, the grand old party took on the PM over his publicity campaign shooting for a film in the Corbett National Park till the evening of February 14 despite the Pulwama attack taking place in the afternoon.

There was no immediate reaction from the Prime Minister's Office and the BJP over the allegations. Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala, addressing a Press conference, also accused BJP president Amit Shah of "politicisation of terrorism" in his speech in Assam on Sunday.

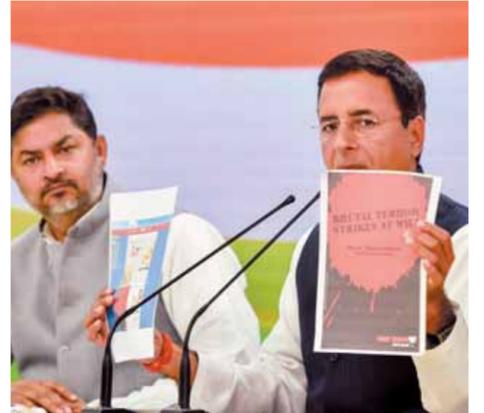
The Congress said questions must be asked about the "gross intelligence failure" of this Government and on the "priorities of a Prime Minister who on a sensitive time like this has gone on a foreign tour to South Korea instead of tackling terrorism".

Citing reports from newspapers, Surjewala gave a timeline of events saying the terror attack happened at 3:10 pm on February 14 with the Congress reacting to it at 5:15 pm. "The Prime Minister also knew about it. Yet the PM, a person who claims himself to be a nationalist, continues to shoot a film (for Discovery Channel) for self propagation in the Corbett National Park in Ramnagar," he claimed.

The Congress spokesperson alleged that the Prime Minister continued to "enjoy boat rides" with the camera crew and later ensured that there was slogan shouting by the BJP people in his favour.

"The Prime Minister continues to have tea, samosas at seven o'clock at Government expense in a PWD guesthouse when every single Indian household didn't have food," he said. "On one hand the country was picking up the 'pieces of our martyrs', and on the other hand the Prime Minister was involved in his 'propaganda and publicity', Surjewala claimed.

"Can such a conduct be expected from the Prime Minister of a country. The Prime Minister should have been chairing the Cabinet committee on security immediately and should have taken



Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala addresses a Press conference at AICC in New Delhi on Thursday

action, instead of shooting films," he said.

Surjewala said the Congress had shown restraint on the direction of party president Rahul Gandhi, but it was important to raise issues of such conduct that "insults martyrs". "The Congress party and the entire nation stands united with our armed forces as also our Government in every step that they take in tackling Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. We are determined in that resolve even today," he said.

Surjewala also hit out at the conduct of BJP leaders in the aftermath of the attack. He displayed a photograph purportedly showing BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj smiling during the final journey of a slain jawan and cited Union Tourism Minister KJ Alphonso taking a "selfie" at a soldier's funeral.

Alphonso has denied taking the picture himself saying some miscreants circulated his photograph at the CRPF jawan's funeral as a "selfie".

Surjewala also said Pakistan will not succeed in its designs and invoked Indira Gandhi's strong action in 1971. He also asserted that the Congress, when in power, has always taken moral responsibility in such situations.

Congress spokesperson slammed the Prime Minister for receiving Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the airport and asked whether according a grand welcome to "those who praised" Pakistan's "anti-terror efforts" was his way of remembering the Pulwama attack victims.

BJP: Attack on Modi exposes Cong's stand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking on the Congress for attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Pulwama attack, the BJP on Thursday lashed out at the Opposition party saying its stand exposes the claim that it was standing with the Government and armed forces in the aftermath of the terror attack in Kashmir and that the party sounds like echoing voices from across the border.

Addressing a Press conference, Union Minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad accused the Congress of seeking to weaken the morale of the armed forces at a time when the whole world is "firmly standing" with India.

Prasad hit out at the Congress for its "shameful" attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said he was in Uttarakhand on the day of Pulwama attack as part of an official programme related to tiger conservation. "Was the Congress aware of the Pulwama attack? We were not aware," the BJP leader said in a dig at the Opposition party.

He said the Congress attack on the Modi Government would have pleased Pakistan adding that styles of what Imran Khan and the Opposition party have said may be different but their contents bore striking resemblance. He charged the Congress with demoralising armed forces in the country where valiantly responding to terror outfits.

Prasad said strength of the Modi Government reflected in removing security of the Kashmiri separatists and eagerness of Kashmiri youth to participate in Army recruitment. He said India has received global backing against Pakistan on the Pulwama attack and the neighbouring country was diplomatically isolated.



Prez promulgates four ordinances

After nod, ordinance makes practice of instant triple talaq penal offence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday promulgated four ordinances, including the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance, 2019. After the President's nod, the ordinance will come into force for the third time in less than a year. The ordinance makes the practice of instant Triple Talaq a penal offence.

The Union Cabinet had given its approval to re-issue the ordinance on Tuesday. The Government failed to pass the Bill, known as the Triple Talaq Bill, in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session of Parliament.

The Centre had first promulgated the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Ordinance in September 2018. A Bill to replace it was passed in the Lok Sabha in December, but remained pending in the Rajya Sabha.

The Government promulgated the ordinance again after the Winter Session of Parliament, but could not pass the Bill in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session.

The ordinance is set to lapse on June 3, when the current Government's term ends and before the next session of Parliament.

The Triple Talaq ordinance has faced stiff resistance from the Opposition parties. On February 20, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had said that the ordinance will be used as "a weapon against minorities".

The other ordinances which promulgated by the President, are the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance 2019; the Companies (Amendment) Second Ordinance 2019 and the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Second Ordinance 2019.

The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Second Ordinance 2019 is to protect gullible investors from

Ponzi schemes. The Ordinance will immediately tackle the menace of illicit deposit-taking activities in the country launched by rapacious operators, which at present are exploiting regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures to dupe poor and gullible people of their hard-earned savings.

The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 2019 to allow the Board of Governors (BOG) to run the scam-tainted apex body for regulating medical education.

The Companies (Amendment) Second Ordinance 2019 It is based on the recommendations of the Committee to review offences under the Companies Act, 2013, so as to fill critical gaps in the corporate governance & compliance framework as enshrined in the Companies Act 2013, while simultaneously extending greater Ease of Doing Business to law abiding corporates.

The President also gave his assent to changes in the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, which will rationalise and harmonise the system of levying stamp duty and help curb tax evasion. The Amendments to the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, were introduced as part of the Finance Act 2019, and was approved by Parliament.

The amendments propose to create the legal and institutional mechanism to enable States to collect stamp duty on securities market instruments at one place by one agency (through the Stock Exchanges or Clearing Corporations authorised by the stock exchange or by the Depositories), the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

A mechanism for appropriately sharing the stamp duty with relevant State Governments based on state of domicile of the buying client is also proposed, it added.

The proposed rationalised and harmonised system is expected to lead to zero tax evasion. The stamp duty will have to be paid by either the buyer or seller of a financial security, as against the current practice of levying the duty on both, the Ministry added.

JeM fidayeen bomber used YSMS app, says probe

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Preliminary probe into the Pulwama has revealed that YSMS, a mobile application, was hosted on the 'dark web' and regulation of such communication apps on the internet by the US could have helped in containing the Pakistani terror groups' nefarious agenda in the region, officials connected to the suicide bombing probe said.

Interestingly, the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) module that carried out the deadliest attack in the three decades of militancy in Jammu & Kashmir had used the YSMS app for communication among one another before executing the suicide bombing on a CRPF convoy leading to the death of 44 CRPF personnel. The app does not leave any signature on the Internet and can be traced only if the hardwares are intercepted.

The websites of Pakistan army/Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) and its terror proxies Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and JeM also hosted on a common server by American firm Cloudflare Inc which is a contradiction of the sanctions and bounties put on the heads of the terror masterminds of these two groups by the US under its terror listing regime. The server of the Pak-backed Referendum 2020 campaign targeting Khalistani movement is also located in the US and hosted by the Cloudflare Inc.

In addition, American

- YSMS, a mobile application, was hosted on the 'dark web' and regulation of such communication apps on the Internet by the US could have helped in containing the Pakistani terror groups' nefarious agenda in the region
- The Jaish-e-Mohammad used the YSMS app for communication among one another before executing the suicide bombing on a CRPF convoy
- YouTube has uploaded millions of videos of LeT and JeM terror preachers, including Hafiz Sayeed, Abdul Rahman Makki and Masood Azhar, leading to continuous radicalisation of the youth in India
- Twitter is also being used by the Pakistan-based terror groups for furthering the jihadi agenda without putting any effective filters
- Search engine Google's features are also being exploited by the terror groups for accessing information under the Do It Yourself programmes for knowhow on sensitive issues like assemblage of IED and remotely-operated vehicle



video sharing platform YouTube has uploaded millions of videos of the LeT and JeM terror preachers, including Hafiz Sayeed, Abdul Rahman Makki and Masood Azhar, leading to continuous radicalisation of the youth in India and the region.

Yet another American firm Twitter is also being used by the Pakistan-based terror groups for furthering the jihadi agenda without putting any effective filters. Search engine Google's features are also being exploited by the terror groups for accessing information under the Do It Yourself (DIY) programmes for knowhow on sensitive issues like assemblage of IED and remotely-operated vehicle. IEDs have been used by the terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir. The inimical forces, including Zakir Musa, a former Jaish commander who has since

floated Ansar Ghatwatul Hind, subsequently rechristened as al-Qaeda Kashmir is seeking to develop remotely-operated vehicles for execution of bomb blasts in the Kashmir Valley.

Counter-terrorism expert Dr Rituraj Mate said, "The JeM and LeT might have outsmarted the US administration by getting their websites hosted in America but the USA had invented the Internet technology and will be bound to take action against such misuse one day or the other if it is serious in containing terrorism globally, including those exported by Pakistan." Continuous backing and funding to Pakistan by the US is bound to infuse an anti-American sentiment towards their products as is the case with China when boycott calls are often given against Chinese goods.

Nepotism in UPPSC: CBI starts probe against officials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a preliminary enquiry against unidentified officials of Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission for allegedly granting favours to close relatives of public servants in an examination to select additional private secretaries during Mayawati's tenure as Chief Minister in 2010.

The PE is based on a complaint from the BJP-ruled Government in the State which subsequently sent to the CBI by the Central government in

January. It is alleged in the complaint that certain unidentified people including officials of the UPPSC committed irregularities and misconduct in the examination for about 250 posts of additional private secretaries in 2010, officials said.

The officials who have not been named in the PE extended undue favours to underserving candidates. Some of the candidates who were the beneficiaries in the examination

did not fulfill even the basic minimum eligibility, the official said quoting from the complaint.

The complaint has alleged that some selected candidates are "close relatives" of public servants then serving the Uttar Pradesh Government which was headed by Mayawati from 2007-12, they said.

The officials of the UPPSC in alleged connivance with the examiners altered marks of

the candidates to enable their selection. The definition of public servants includes elected representatives who have taken oath of office.

On a question whether the "close relatives" were of elected representatives in the government, the official did not offer any comment saying, "These are allegations in the complaint from the state government. We have registered a preliminary enquiry."

The move of the agency became public on a day Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party sealed their seat-sharing agreement for Lok Sabha polls to forge a formidable opposition against the ruling BJP.

The PE has no sanction under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and the suspects can refuse to even join the enquiry.

However, the agency can register a regular case (FIR) after gathering prima facie material to substantiate the allegations in the PE.

Leprosy has not declined, says IADVL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to the Government's claims that leprosy is on decline in the country, the Indian Association of Dermatologists Venereologists & Leprologists (IADVL) during its unique 63 days drive which culminated here on Thursday noted that there were high endemic pockets of the crippled disease and that patients were suffering with serious infectious cases. "What is worrying is that in the last two three-years, and that what we also noticed during our drive undertaken in 18 States that we are seeing patients with multibacillary leprosy - the more severe form, which includes some of the most infectious cases," said Dr Mukesh Girdhar, national Vice President, IADVL.

ment for longer duration. "Yes, there is resurgence of cases, severe cases. Disability index of these patients is definitely high. In fact some of the patients we received at our camp had bacteria droplets from their noses, making them highly infectious to their contacts," said Dr Girdhar, highlighting the gravity of the situation.

"Due to lack of public awareness there is a delay in diagnosis of leprosy," Dr Dinesh Kumar Devaraj, Joint Secretary IADVL said, adding most leprosy cases were from Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra. During the drive, the association reached out to more than 3,00,000 people with chronic cases as high as 95 per cent and recurrent cases as high as 60 per cent.

One of the other diseases that was widely prevalent was Vitiligo. More than 10 million Indians suffer from Vitiligo. Dr

Rohit Batra, dermatologist, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and Chairman, IADVL People Connect Cell said that "Even though the prevalence of vitiligo is 1-2 per cent of the general population but we observed that out of all the people approached us during the drive it was more than 5 per cent."

Talking about fungal infection observed during the drive, Dr Girdhar, said, "There were a lot of patients suffering from fungal infections. We saw chronic cases as high as 95 per cent and recurrent cases as high as 60 per cent. Family members were affected up to 70 per cent and more than 80 per cent of child cases have an affected adult in family. Also, 50 to 70 per cent have used steroid creams for fungal infections."

Quackery is of major concern in these situations where Schedule H drugs are prescribed by unqualified people (quacks), said the experts.

Kisan Nidhi 1st instalment on Feb 24

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to launch the direct income support scheme — Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi-PM-Kisan scheme and distribute the first instalment of Rs 2,000 during his visit to Gorakhpur and Prayagraj on February 24.

However, doubts are being raised over the implementation of the scheme in some non BJP States — Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Both the States are seeking funds from the PM-Kisan yojna and want to distribute by their own to the beneficiary farmers.

As many as 1.22 crore small and marginal farmers have been enrolled by the Ministry of Agriculture till date for the PM Kisan scheme. The Modi Government intends to ensure release of first instalment to all eligible farmers — small and marginal — before the model code of conduct kicks in.

Top sources said that UP Government has enrolled over 70 lakh small and marginal

farmers under the scheme. The UP Government is working on war-footing to upload details of eligible farmers on the central database by Friday. Haryana Government has registered over 10 lakh such farmers.

"PM Modi will address the two-day national conclave of the BJP Kisan Morcha on Sunday and later release the money — Rs 2,000 per land holding — electronically to the bank accounts of farmers, mostly from Uttar Pradesh, with the click of a button," sources said. As per initial reports, over 1.22 crore farmers have been enrolled under the scheme across the country till date. The Ministry is Agriculture is working to enroll over two crore farmers by the time of launch of the scheme. As per estimate, there are 12 crore small and marginal farmers in the country.

According to sources, non-BJP State Government wants fund from the Centre and distribute it on their own while the Centre on the other hand, want to distribute to the ben-

- As many as 1.22 crore small and marginal farmers have been enrolled by the Ministry of Agriculture till date for the PM Kisan scheme
- The Ministry is Agriculture is working to enroll over two crore farmers by the time of launch of the scheme. As per estimate, there are 12 crore small and marginal farmers in the country
- In the interim budget, the Modi Government announced direct income support of Rs 6,000 per year to 12.5 crore small and marginal farmers with land holding up to 2 hectares under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana



eficiary by their own to get maximum political mileage in the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. Earlier, the Odisha Government was not keen but now they have agreed to join the Centre's PM-Kisan scheme.

"Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has urged PM

Centre to implement the scheme," the sources said.

"The State Governments have to ensure that everybody who is a farmer and owns two hectares of land as on cut-off date subject to exclusions should be included. The significance of PM-KISAN is that, for the first time, an attempt has been made to transfer income directly to farmers without using price policy (of either inputs or output). In most of the programmes in the past, including those of previous governments, the policy instrument used has always been price," said the officials.

In the interim budget, the Modi Government announced direct income support of Rs 6,000 per year to 12.5 crore small and marginal farmers with land holding up to 2 hectares under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Since the scheme was launched in retrospective effect from December 1, 2018, the first instalment of Rs 2,000 is due within the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

Didi for united, powerful India

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

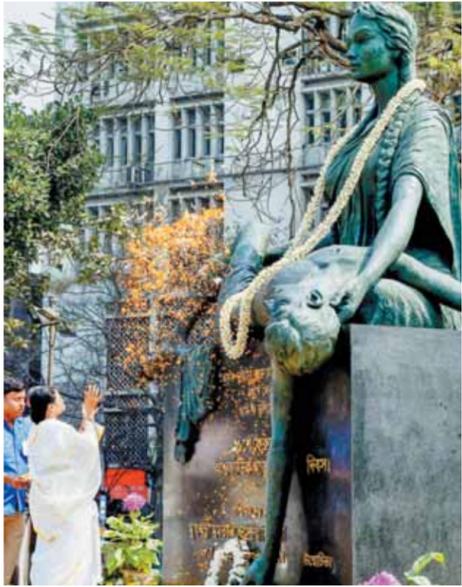
Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday expressed her strong resolve to espouse and defend India's unity and urged the people to respect each others' languages in tandem with taking "pride in your mother tongue."

Banerjee who was speaking at the inauguration of the International Mother Language Day said she wanted a truly united India which was powerful and where the people were mutually respectful each others' cultures.

In an apparent reference to the post-Pulwama hysterics where the people of Kashmir were subjected to victimisation all over the country Banerjee said the entire community should not be judged by the act of one person.

"I cannot expect victimisation of (Kashmiri) people for one instance," she said adding "there is no reason to judge all the Kashmiris by the act of one person."

A suicide attacker from Kashmir had last week rammed into a CRPF convoy with an IED-loaded vehicle killing 44 jawans inviting world-wide



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee pays floral tribute at the Bhasha Shahid Memorial monument on the occasion of International Mother Language Day in Kolkata on Thursday

condemnation against in India. Pakistan-sponsored terrorism Banerjee who earlier

expressed on the Twitter her "best wishes to all on International Mother Language Day" asking the people to "respect all languages but take pride in your mother tongue" told a gathering at Deshapriya Park in South Kolkata that she wanted a united India which was strong and powerful by dint of its unity.

"We all want to sleep with unity, walk with unity, talk with unity... we want a united India, a powerful India," Banerjee said.

Meanwhile, ruling Trinamool Congress sources said the Bengal Chief Minister would next week attend the anti-BJP opposition meet scheduled to be held at Mohali in Punjab.

The meeting is likely to be held on February 26. A senior TMC leader said "the Chief Minister will take part in the all-party meeting at Mohali as she has been a prime mover for an opposition unity to throw the BJP out of power."

Banerjee had earlier attended a similar meeting at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's residence in Delhi where she met most opposition leaders including Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

IED recovered from Govt bus in Maharashtra

Security beefed at bus depots, stands, checks ordered in buses

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

An improvised explosive device (IED) was recovered from a State Transport bus in Maharashtra's Raigad district late on Wednesday night.

The ST bus was on its way from Karjat to Apta village near Panvel town when the driver found a suspected material kept in a bag on board the bus, at around 11 pm.

The circumspet ST bus driver quickly acted and asked the passengers to disembark the bus. He also immediately alerted the police about the finding.

A team of Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad from the nearby Alibaug rushed to the spot short afterwards. The team found that the material looking a device kept in a bag was indeed an IED. "The team took nearly five hours

to defuse the IED by removing the wires and detonator in it. The police sanitised the ST bus in the early hours of today," a senior police officer said.

Raigad's district superintendent of police Anil Paraskar said that device had been sent for forensic examination. "We have a reason to believe the device might have been kept to create a panic and terror among people," Paraskar said.

After the incident, the coastal Raigad district was placed under a high alert. The State-run Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) ordered beefing up of security across its depots, bus stands and buses in the state.

Maharashtra's Transport minister Diwakar Raote ordered a check of all the buses in its fleet. "This is serious and the matter is being investigated," he said.

Meanwhile, initial investigations have revealed the IED device was of relatively of a low intensity explosive.



Akhil Bharatiya Kisan Sabha members at the start of their Nashik to Mumbai protest march to press for their various demands in Nashik on Thursday

Ex-Visva Bharati V-C, Registrar get five-year RI for forgery

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a rare judgment a Birbhum court on Thursday sentenced former Vice Chancellor, Registrar and a professor of the prestigious Visva Bharati University to five years' rigorous imprisonment after they were found guilty of forgery by the same court.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Arvind Mishra on Thursday sentenced ex VC and mathematician Dilip Kumar Sinha, Registrar Dilip Kumar Mukherjee and Mutki Deb a former professor to 5 years' RI after they were found guilty under various sections of Forgery Act, and Sections 467, 468, 471, 475 and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code.

A prosecution lawyer said that Deb had forged her testimonials and joined the University as a lecturer in mathematics despite being an undergraduate. Photostat copies of her forged mark sheets and certificates were allegedly stamped and attested by Dr Sinha who functioned as the VC of the said central University from 1995 to 2001.

Visva Bharati was founded by Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore and is considered a centre of excellence throughout the world.

It was alleged that Sinha had impersonated as one Rashbehari Ghosh a professor



Former Vice-Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University Dilip Sinha (L) and Registrar Dilip Mukhopadhyay (R) being taken to be produced at ACJM court, in Birbhum on Thursday

in the University of Calcutta. As a result Deb's forged testimonials established her as a B.Sc, M.Sc and M.Phil pass outs from CU, Jadavpur University and Visva Bharati University respectively. The Registrar was found guilty for neglecting his duty by cross-checking the testimonials.

A case was registered after Deb applied for enrolment in Ph.D course in 2002. When she was asked to produce her original certificates she withdrew her application saying they had been stolen and even placed a police diary in favour of her claims. After the authorities conducted a probe all the three were found guilty and an FIR was registered with the Bolpur Police Station.

Meanwhile, the advocate of the convicts said his client would prefer an appeal in the higher courts even as the trio was taken into jail custody.

Niti: Govt reforms made India fastest economy

India's growth in the current fiscal year is estimated to be 7.2 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The host of reforms undertaken by the Government has transformed India into the fastest-growing major

economy along with the macroeconomic stability not witnessed in the past, according to a note prepared by the Niti Aayog.

The country's growth, the note added, has decisively increased over the last five years and is much higher than the average growth among the emerging and developing economies.

"India's economic performance dipped considerably during 2010-13.

"Over the last five years (2014-18), the India economy has recovered and now is going through one of its best-ever phases of economic growth



combined with the microeconomic stability," the note said.

Narendra Modi became the prime minister in May 2014 after the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance won the general elections. The next general elections are due in April-May.

According to the note, in 2018-19, against India's likely growth of 7.2 per cent, the world GDP growth would be 3.7 per cent and median of seven emerging market economies (Brazil, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Russia, South Africa and Turkey) is 3.5 per cent.

The closest to India is

China, which is estimated to grow at 6.6 per cent in 2018-19, the note said.

"The uptick in economic growth has come from various economic reforms undertaken by the Government such as improvement in ease of doing business, opening up to foreign direct investments, the push for infrastructure development and a stable and decisive policy environment," it added.

India's growth in the current fiscal year is estimated to be 7.2 per cent with the growth in preceding three years being 8 per cent, 8.2 per cent and 7.2 per cent.

उत्तर प्रदेश प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड

क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय : 34 ए, निकट संत तुलसी पब्लिक स्कूल, न्यू बिल्डिंग, इन्दिरा नगर चिल्ला रोड, बाँदा

पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति हेतु आयोजित की जाने वाली लोक सुनवाई की सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि जनपद-हमीरपुर/बाँदा में विभिन्न खण्डों एवं ग्रामों में निम्न सूची के अनुसार सैण्ड/मौरम माइनिंग प्रोजेक्टों के प्रस्ताव पर लोकसुनवाई के सम्बन्ध में पर्यावरणीय प्राधिकरण से पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति सम्बन्धित प्रस्ताव उ0प्र0 प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड, लखनऊ के सम्मक्ष प्रस्तुत किये गये हैं।

क्र0 सं0	परियोजना एवं आवेदक का नाम एवं पता	प्रोजेक्ट एवं उत्पाद का नाम	परियोजना स्थल का पता	क्षेत्रफल एवं उत्पादन क्षमता	स्थान	दिनांक व समय
1	मैसर्स रणछोर इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स (प्रा0) लि0 द्वारा श्री मुकेश कुमार, निवासी-प्लॉट नं0-2, द्वितीय तल, अलाइड हाउस, ओल्ड रोहतक रोड, इन्द्रलोक, नई दिल्ली।	मैसर्स रणछोर इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स (प्रा0) लि0 सैण्ड/मौरम माइनिंग परियोजना	खण्ड नं0-26/01 ग्राम चांदवारी घुरौली, तहसील-सरीला, जनपद-हमीरपुर	क्षेत्रफल 24291 हैक्टेअर (क्षमता 4,85,747.00 घन मीटर/वर्ष)	निकट परियोजना स्थल के समीप ग्राम-चान्दवारी घुरौली, तहसील-सरीला जनपद-हमीरपुर (उ0प्र0)	दिनांक 27.03.2019 को अपराह्न 03.00 बजे
2	मैसर्स सुरेन्द्र सिंह चौहान द्वारा श्री सुरेन्द्र सिंह चौहान निवासी-1055, किदवई नगर कानपुर (उ0प्र0)	मैसर्स सुरेन्द्र सिंह चौहान सैण्ड/मौरम माइनिंग परियोजना	खण्ड नं0-31/08 ग्राम पत्योरा, तहसील व जनपद-हमीरपुर	क्षेत्रफल 36437 हैक्टे0 (क्षमता 7,28,640.00 घन मीटर/वर्ष)	निकट परियोजना स्थल के समीप ग्राम-पत्योरा तहसील व जनपद हमीरपुर	दिनांक 28.03.2019 को अपराह्न 03.00 बजे
3	मैसर्स दीप्ती गुप्ता पत्नी श्री कपिल रेजा द्वारा श्रीमती दीप्ति गुप्ता पत्नी श्री कपिल रेजा निवासी - सर्व नगर कालोनी, मिशन कम्पाउण्ड, थाना, सिपरी बाजार, तहसील व जनपद झाँसी (उ0प्र0)	मैसर्स दीप्ती गुप्ता पत्नी श्री कपिल रेजा सैण्ड/मौरम माइनिंग परियोजना	खण्ड नं0-26 (गाटा नं0 01 का भाग, 02, 03, का भाग, 2139, 2138, 2137 का भाग 2136 का भाग in revised DSR on dated 17.08.2018) ग्राम-जौहरपुर, तहसील व जनपद-बाँदा (उ0प्र0)	क्षेत्रफल 15.00 हैक्टेअर (क्षमता 3,00,000.00 घन मीटर/वर्ष)	निकट परियोजना स्थल के समीप ग्राम-जौहरपुर, तहसील व जनपद बाँदा (उ0प्र0)	दिनांक 29.03.2019 को अपराह्न 03.00 बजे

बोर्ड द्वारा पर्यावरण, वन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार द्वारा जारी अधिसूचना संख्या-एस.ओ. 1533 दिनांक 14-09-2006 यथा संशोधित एसओ0-3067 (ई) दिनांक 01.12.2009 एवं अन्य के अनुपालन में उपरोक्त परियोजना की लोक सुनवाई उपरोक्त सूची में अंकित वर्णित स्थान, दिनांक एवं समय के अनुसार आयोजित की जायेगी। उक्त परियोजना की लोक सुनवाई हेतु जनता के सुझाव, विचार, टीका एवं टिप्पणियां आदि आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं। परियोजना से सम्बन्धित ईओआईए0 एवं संक्षिप्त अभिलेख निम्नांकित कार्यालयों में उपलब्ध है।

- 1- जिलाधिकारी, कार्यालय सम्बन्धित जनपद-हमीरपुर/बाँदा।
- 2- महाप्रबन्धक जिला उद्योग केन्द्र, सम्बन्धित जनपद-हमीरपुर/बाँदा।
- 3- क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय उ0प्र0 प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड, मकान नं0-34ए, निकट संत तुलसी पब्लिक स्कूल, न्यू बिल्डिंग, इन्दिरा नगर गेट नं0-2, चिल्ला रोड, बाँदा. रु- (उ0प्र0) 210001
- 4- उ0प्र0 प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड टीओसी0-12 वी, विभूति खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ।
- 5- कार्यालय जिला पंचायत, सम्बन्धित जनपद-हमीरपुर/बाँदा।
- 6- क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय मध्य क्षेत्र, पर्यावरण एवं वन मंत्रालय भारत सरकार, पंचमल, सेक्टर-एच अलीगंज लखनऊ।

अतः समस्त सर्वसाधारण को इस आम सूचना के माध्यम से सूचित किया जाता है कि उक्त प्रस्तावित सैण्ड/मौरम प्रोजेक्ट की पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति से सम्बन्धित प्रकरण के निस्तारण हेतु उपरोक्त वर्णित स्थान, दिनांक एवं समय के अनुसार आयोजित लोक सुनवाई में उपस्थित होकर अपने आक्षेप, सुझाव प्रस्तुत कर सकते हैं अथवा सुझाव एवं आपत्तियां आदि लिखित रूप में प्रकाशन की तिथि से 30 दिन के अन्दर समस्त सम्बन्धित को प्रेषित कर सकते हैं।

क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी



Ministry of Science & Technology
Department of Science & Technology

Call for Applications- 11th Batch

Women Scientists Scheme-C (WOS-C)

KIRAN-IPR

If you have hunger to deal with latest scientific and technological inventions and innovations, this opportunity may be for you.....



Women Scientists Scheme (WOS) is a flagship programme of KIRAN Division of Department of Science & Technology (DST). Through one of its components- 'Women Scientists Scheme-C (WOS-C)'- it provides one year on-the-job training in the area of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Patent Facilitating Centre (PFC) of Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) has been entrusted with implementation of WOS-C.

Eligibility Criteria

- Women with Indian citizenship
- **Minimum essential qualification:** Master of Science; Bachelors in Engineering/Technology or equivalent.

Desirable : a) Proficiency in handling computerized database, collection, collation, analysis and report preparation, (b) Basic understanding of various IPR aspects & issues with logical aptitude towards scientific developments across the world and experience in research, preparation of project reports, term papers and similar activities.

Age: 27 - 45 years as on 20-03-2019

Note: a) Women in permanent position are not eligible to apply and b) Those who have already undergone training (partially or fully) in any of the earlier batches or those who are undergoing training in the ongoing batch are not eligible to apply.

Stipend

MSc in Basic or Applied Sciences / BTech / MBBS or equivalent	Rs. 20,000/- pm
M.Phil / MTech / M.Pharma / MVSc or equivalent	Rs. 25,000/- pm
PhD in Basic or Applied Sciences or equivalent	Rs. 30,000/- pm

Duration of Training : 1 Year

For detailed information and online submission of application, visit the website www.pfc.org.in. Applications should be submitted **through online mode only**.

Last Date for Online Submission : March 20, 2019

Patent Facilitating Centre (PFC)
Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC)
[An autonomous body of Department of Science & Technology (DST)]



Saudi significance

India's ties with Saudi Arabia have been symbiotic but it's important to balance the relationship



For some, it might seem incongruous that Prime Minister Narendra Modi received Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin-Salman (MbS), at the airport when the *de facto* ruler of the world's largest oil producer and effective leader of the Muslim world landed in India. MbS, as a young leader who styles himself in an attempt to be cool with young Saudis, had after all just gone to Pakistan merely days after the Pulwama attack and not even rapped the Pakistanis. But then, screamed critics in India, why was Narendra Modi going to receive MbS at the airport? He should have been given the same treatment that Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, got during his official visit last year thanks to the Khalistani links of that government.

The problem is that this is a complicated geopolitical issue that cannot really be brought down to simplistic arguments. The close ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan go back a long way, to the formation of Pakistan as a theocratic Islamist state. Saudi Arabia provided Pakistan with money and weapons during the 1965 and 1971 wars, and it was rumoured to have even provided fighter pilots. Pakistan plays a role for Saudi Arabia as well, it channelised Saudi money and citizens such as Osama bin Laden into Afghanistan where they fought as *mujahideen* against the Soviet Army in what became a "Holy War" of sorts. Given the shortage of Saudi citizens wanting to be enlisted soldiers, Pakistani citizens make up large numbers in that nation's army. And it was Pakistani special forces that finally helped the Saudi state and the ruling al-Saud family during the dramatic 1979 rebellion in Mecca when the Ka'ba itself was stormed. Today, Pakistan is a pawn in Saudi Arabia's undeclared war with Shia Iran. So when MbS says that Pakistan has the potential for \$20 billion in investment, he is in essence repaying a debt to Pakistan.

Therefore, some might ask why India should entertain a man so obviously allied with Pakistan. Of course, India's huge Muslim population is the most obvious reason, so keeping MbS and the Saudi state at least partially on one's side is the intelligent thing to do. And it is no secret that Modi has received very few leaders at the airport, MbS and previously Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, being two of them. India plays a critical role between those two nations, in fact that is why Air India got over-flying rights over Saudi Arabia for its Tel Aviv flight. And then there is the simple fact that Saudi Arabia is home to millions of Indians and the remittances they send here are still important to our economy. MbS wants to encourage the 'Saudisation' of the job force in his country which will be detrimental to Indian workers, so keeping him on our side is strategic. Of course, Saudi Arabia is and will remain one of the largest suppliers of oil to India and now as it prepares for a post-oil future, its funds to India's start-up economy matter as well. MbS is no hero, his role in the brutal murder of columnist Jamal Khahoggi and the way he went after his rivals in the Saudi court should worry people. But we have little choice but to keep Saudi Arabia happy. However, it is plainly clear that MbS is learning on the job and has realised that prickling India is not the way to go even for him.

No gods in Tamil Nadu

Minus the monolithic Jayalalithaa and Karunanidhi, the state will give a mixed verdict



For the first time in Tamil Nadu, elections won't be about demi-gods in the absence of J Jayalalithaa and M Karunanidhi, the two leaders who had become larger than life enough to not only dominate state politics but alternately become kingmakers in national governments with plum portfolios. And considering the southern state along with Puducherry has a sizeable 40 seats in the Lok Sabha, all national parties or coalitions have courted them at one time or the other. There have

been stories about getting a rare audience with the imperious Jayalalithaa after hours of waiting at her Poes Garden residence and confabulations with the closest aide of Karunanidhi to convey messages from Delhi. So yes, with their passing, there is a political vacuum which their successors may not be able to fill. Despite best intentions. And though both the AIADMK and DMK are looking at national parties, the former aligning with the BJP and the latter with the Congress, to cushion themselves from a great fall, fact is both, in their current denuded state, may for the first time give their national counterparts a confidence to make good in Tamil Nadu on their own. They themselves might just become survivors rather than captains of their destiny. Contrary to the two icons, who have always looked outward as nobody challenged their heavyweight status at home, their parties at this time are looking inward, hoping their alliances will decide their fate in the Assembly elections.

Let's look at the AIADMK, the giant killer of the 2014 elections, and its tie-up with the BJP, which is not exactly riding a Modi wave this time. But it is the best fertile ground for both to pull each other up, especially now that the BJP has mended fences with its erstwhile ally, the PMK. One doesn't know whether Jayalalithaa's posters or videos will have the same effect as her live campaigns but the AIADMK under Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami is clearly fearing a sizeable fall in vote share. Torn by dissension and faction fights, he has safely staked the party's future in only 25 seats. Besides, the nephew of Jayalalithaa's aide Sasikala, TTV Dhinakaran, is likely to take a big bite of the AIADMK's vote pie. Dhinakaran is nowhere trying to appropriate Amma's aura but away from the alliance photo sessions, he is campaigning in the villages, emerging to be the only leader after her to put Tamil Nadu first and talk about people's issues. Voters feel Palaniswami has not stood up enough in the Cauvery water dispute or the Sterlite protests. Besides, Dhinakaran has an excellent ground network in southern Tamil Nadu. Of course, the PMK, given its past vote share, could steady the northern votes for the AIADMK-led alliance. But nobody expects a blockbuster performance, though every incremental seat for the BJP could only help in making up a projected deficit in its national tally. Technically, the DMK scion MK Stalin has a slight edge and is following his astute father's template in stitching up a pact with the Congress. First, the DMK is better off than 2014, when the 2G scam did it in and it fought without allies, its voteshare plummeting in a free fall. Now that Raja and M Kanimozhi are acquitted in the 2G case, the DMK and the Congress are hoping to regain their 2009 vote share of around 44 per cent. Meanwhile, actor Kamal Haasan could emerge vote cutter than the new god. Tamil Nadu seems to be setting an all-new template of hand-holders.

A befitting reply

For India's response to the Pulwama terror attack to be truly effective, we must show our ability to be patient and cause maximum damage at the most appropriate time



AJOY KUMAR

February 14, 2019, will henceforth be remembered as a day marred by the horrific images of a cowardly act of terror where more than 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) soldiers were killed in Pulwama. The suicide bomber, Adil Ahmad Dar, who has been identified as the culprit of this dastardly act, detonated close to 60 kilos of explosives near a convoy of CRPF soldiers. The Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) has claimed responsibility for this act of terror and it has been widely reported that the JeM has been supported and enabled by the Government of Pakistan. There is no denying the fact that this was a day of mourning for India but it is crucial that this incident also becomes an inflection point where India provides a befitting reply to its enemies and emerges stronger than before.

India then stands at the crossroads. While every Indian, I am sure, agrees that such acts of terror must not go unpunished and should be avenged, the question for us as Indians is: What constitutes a befitting reply? Is it a reply that is ill-thought out, reactionary and detrimental to India's interests and values in the long-term or is it one where we emerge stronger and show the enemies of our country that while its enemies will try creating a divide through cowardly acts of terror, our country will continue to stand unafraid and unmoved. We must refuse to give up those values, which distinguish us from failed states that have long ago given up the ideals of a prosperous and democratic society.

I am just as angry and livid at the attack as any patriot but at a time like this, it is important to remember the words of Aristotle, who had said, "Anybody can become angry — that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose and in the right way — that is not within everybody's power and is not easy." In this week's column, I will attempt to show how India can show its enemies that not only is the country capable of taking hard decisions and demonstrate that these acts of terror will not be taken lying down but also that it will emerge stronger because of them.

Establish a Commission after such acts of terror: In the aftermath of 9/11, the US instituted the 9/11 Commission, which was an independent, bipartisan body consisting of not only Republicans and Democrats but also staff members, who were experts in various fields. The Commission was charged with preparing a complete report of the circumstances surrounding the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The report examined the preparedness of the US and also provided recommendations to guard against such future attacks. It is imperative that with acts of terror such as the recent one in Pulwama, India responds similarly. As part of the 9/11 Commission report, the



body examined the chronology of events on September 11, 2001, right from early 1999, when the hijackers prepared for the attack while living in Germany till the point when the planes had been hijacked by the terrorists. At each point in the chronology of events, the Commission submitted expert suggestions on how to plug each and every lapse that led to the 9/11 attacks. It is imperative that India draws a similar approach by constituting a commission of experts, which examines the chronology of events that ultimately led to the February 14 attack and debate this report in Parliament. Ultimately, this report should be made public since such a step will help heap public pressure and prevent such lapses in the future.

Strength from within first, then without: Terrorism's short-term objective is to inflict pain and sorrow through violence, and while horrific, its long-term aim of creating an environment that thrives on hate and suspicion in the country is much more frightening and harmful. This terrorist attack seeks to achieve the same goal. We, as Indians, must not succumb.

While understandably, there is a lot of anger in our country over these attacks, some of the reactions to it are

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IF INDIA DOES EXECUTE ITS RESPONSE WITHOUT ADEQUATE PREPAREDNESS AND AT AN INOPPORTUNE TIME, IT WILL RUN THE HUGE RISK OF LOSING MORE BRAVE SOLDIERS, NOT BECAUSE OF AN ACT OF TERROR BUT DUE TO RASHNESS. SUCH AN OUTCOME IS UNACCEPTABLE
 ”

questionable and are, in fact, aiding our enemies. The first type of reaction is one that demands an all-out war against another nuclear power. Unsurprisingly, a number of these calls are from individuals, who have the luxury to opine without the threat of consequence. The more rational voices on the subject are typically from soldiers and members of the armed forces, who understand the cost of war and, perhaps, more significantly, the cost of rashness in a battlefield.

For example, if India does execute its response without adequate preparedness and at an inopportune time, it will run the huge risk of losing more brave soldiers, not because of an act of terror but due to rashness. Such an outcome is unacceptable. While desire for revenge is normal, it cannot be at the cost of reckless disregard for an Indian life. That outcome, in my opinion, is unacceptable. While there are always casualties in war, it is difficult to justify such casualties if they are a result of aggression.

The other type of reaction we have seen is the targeting of Kashmiris across India. This, too, is a response that cannot be justified and must be condemned. First, from a humane perspective, we must recognise that the minute we take out our anger on

an entire community due to our pain over terrorist attacks, we lose humanity, something that distinguishes us from the cowardly terrorists, who attack India and what it stands for.

All of us, including all political parties, must come out clearly and unequivocally against this behaviour. We must recognise that such a reaction is what the forces, that seek to divide India, actually hope to achieve. Creating divides within the country so that we turn on each other makes any future acts of terror easier for our enemies. We must not allow the enemies of the country inflict that sort of irreparable damage.

An examination of acts of terror throughout the world shows that rarely if ever are acts of terror random acts of violence. Instead, they are thoroughly planned and ruthlessly executed. Therefore, in order to be truly effective, our response must also demonstrate our ability to be patient and cause maximum damage at the most appropriate time. While it may be easy to give in to our more basic demands for immediate revenge, I think we can demand better from ourselves and emerge stronger as a result of it.

(The writer is Jharkhand PCC president, former MP and IPS officer. Views are personal)

SOUNDBITE

It is essential that there must be accountability under international law and perpetrators of terrorist acts be brought to justice swiftly.



UN chief
—Antonio Guterres

Who is destroying the party? Our own people from the party. It (SP) was such a strong party and won elections on its own.



Samajwadi Party veteran
—Mulayam Singh Yadav

They (BCCI) threaten the players by asking them not to play in the Pakistan Super League, else they won't be allowed to play in IPL.



Former Pakistan skipper
—Shahid Afridi

As far as development is concerned, there should be no politics on this. State and Centre should unite for development.



Vice President
—Venkaiah Naidu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

China stands exposed

Sir — On the one hand, India has relentlessly been demanding that Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief, Maulana Masood Azhar, be banned and has been exerting pressure on the UN to declare him as global terrorist. On the other, China, one of the permanent member nations in the UN, has constantly been foiling India's bid to name him.

Ironically, another permanent member country, France, has been moving a proposal to ban Azhar. Saudi Foreign Minister, Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, joined the chorus and demanded his proscription. Meanwhile, Russia, too, has said that it isn't averse to banning Azhar. Clearly, China stands exposed on its self-appealing approach. It is also a fact that the JeM claimed responsibility for the Pulwama attack. Beijing needs to know that terrorism in one part of the world slowly and steadily spearheads to every nook and corner. It cannot be an exception to terror.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

Alliance politics in Chennai

The battle lines are drawn in Tamil Nadu. The formalisation of the alliance between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) followed by the Congress' seat-sharing agreement with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) means the choice before the electorate has been limited to these two alliances. Whether TTV Dhinakaran's Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) upstages the EPS-OPS-led AIADMK remains to be seen. If Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiyam decides to go solo, it will have only an outside chance.

In the AIADMK-BJP combine, it is a clear case of one party piggybacking on another. The BJP and the AIADMK are not natural allies but an opportunistic combine. As a Dravidian party, AIADMK subscribes or should subscribe to the conception of social justice by Periyar and not to the Hindutva ideology espoused by the BJP. No wonder, the BJP-AIADMK alliance is widely perceived to be an 'alliance of convenience.' On the other hand,



the DMK-Congress alliance is more compatible as their ideologies may be divergent but not antithetical. The anger against the Modi Government and EPS Government or anti-incumbency sentiment is strong and palpable in the State. For the formation of the next Government at the Centre, which alliance (and not which party) wins is what will count to the last seat.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Bailing out the youth

Sir — This refers to the article, "Getting a grip of Kashmir's problem" (February 20) by Kalyani Shankar. I subscribe to the writer's view that radicalisation and alienation of the youth in the Valley is on the rise. Failure to provide them with

jobs has made matters worse. Sadly, despite severe castigation from social, political and religious quarters, terrorist attacks continue unabated.

The writer is spot on in suggesting that while teaching the recalcitrant neighbour, Pakistan, a lesson is a must, the Kashmir problem, too, needs to be addressed pragmatically. A pro-

longed scenario of indecision and precariousness hanging over the youth's future is at the root of their disappointment and frustration. Ironically, they are exploited by vested interests, too.

That a popular and democratic Government is trying to rope in prominent leaders from all political parties will help the situation return to normalcy. This

is worth giving a try.
Azhar A Khan
Rampur

Stand united

Sir — This refers to the article, "Getting a grip of Kashmir's problem" (February 20) by Kalyani Shankar. All those, who try to divide India by killing innocent lives must be punished in accordance with the law of the land. Those, who do the same by assaulting innocent Kashmiri students and shopkeepers, too, must be punished accordingly.

In this hour of darkness, our country needs to be united. We need to show it to the world that Kashmir is an integral part of India and Kashmiris are our brothers and sisters. Similarly, the international community must come together and pledge to root out the menace called terrorism. The 45 CRPF soldiers, who were killed in the Pulwama, represent the unity in diversity of our great country. Indeed, Pulwama martyrs teach us what India is all about.

Sujit De
Kolkata

Send your feedback to:
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Waiting for polls in Nigeria

Nigerian politicians switch parties as often as they change wives. You would think that such a system could not survive but it still does



GWYNNE DYER

Lengthy delays before announcing the results of African elections are commonplace (the Democratic Republic of Congo last month, Zimbabwe last July, etc). It just means that people voted the wrong way, and the Government needs time to re-arrange the results before publishing them. Postponing the vote at the last moment is much less common, and not so easy to explain. That's what happened in Nigeria last week. Only five hours before the polls were due to open, the Independent National Election Commission postponed the election for a week, citing as reasons attempted sabotage, bad weather and problems with delivering the ballot papers. It's weird but it's hard to see who benefits from it. It may be down to simple incompetence.

There are 79 candidates for the presidency but only two count. The incumbent, former general Muhammadu Buhari, is running again despite a less than stellar performance in his first term as an elected President. (He also held the office as a military dictator for 20 months in the 1980s, before being overthrown by another general.) Buhari won power in 2015 by claiming to be a born-again democrat and a 'new broom' who would sweep away corruption and many Nigerians dared to believe him. He was the first Opposition candidate ever to win a free presidential election. But four years later, Nigeria has fallen another 12 places on Transparency International's corruption index: It now ranks 144th out of 180 countries, just ahead of Mauritania.

Buhari is personally clean but his anti-corruption measures almost exclusively targeted politicians of other parties. Nigerian average incomes fell by more than a third and unemployment doubled on his watch (mostly because of the collapse in oil prices). He didn't deliver on his promise to eliminate the Islamists extremists of Boko Haram, affiliated with the Islamic State (IS), who have terrorised the north-east of the country. He is also so lethargic, perhaps due to chronic illness, that he is popularly known as 'Baba-Go-Slow'. He took six months to name his Cabinet and he was abroad so long on sick leave (five months) that when he finally came home, conspiracy theorists claimed that he had died and been replaced by a body double (Jubril from Sudan) who had undergone plastic surgery.

Buhari should lose, and he probably will, because three ex-generals (all former Presidents), who once backed him, have switched to his challenger, businessman Atiku Abubakar. 'Atiku' is a billionaire who started out as a humble customs officer. People speculate that this made him very useful to generals and other powerful people, who wanted to parlay a small fortune into a big one. Be that as it may, Atiku then went into the oilfield supply business and prospered mightily (maybe with a little help from his friends). He served two terms as Vice President, after the first of which, he was accused of having diverted \$125 million of public funds to his own business interests.

A US Senate report in 2010 accused him of having transferred \$40m of "suspect funds" to the US, using his American wife's bank account but he has never faced a court. But he vows to use his skills as an entrepreneur to sort out the country. If he succeeds, and some of the money sticks to him, who cares? At least it can be said on his behalf that he supports Arsenal. This is the choice that faces Nigeria and it's really no choice at all. Both candidates embody exactly the characteristics that define the country's problems. First, they are very old — Muhammadu Buhari is 72, Atiku Abubakar is 72 — in a country where half the voters are under 35, and half the population is under 18. The country is run by a congeries of mostly rich old men, mainly for their own benefit and it has been, thus, ever since the return of democracy 20 years ago. Before that, it was run by a bunch of somewhat younger soldiers, also mostly for their own benefit.

Nigerian politicians switch parties as often as they change wives, and show only rhetorical concern for the 10 million young people who are unemployed. You would think that such a system could not survive and perhaps, one day, it will be swept away but there is no sign of it happening in this election. The other thing the two chief presidential candidates have in common is a plethora of children. Buhari has 10 offspring from two marriages (one after the other). Abubakar has 28 children from four marriages (simultaneous). Humble people can't afford quite that many but most people are doing their bit to ensure that Nigeria's population outgrows its resources. This is a sensitive topic, but not to talk about it is to ignore Nigeria's biggest problem. In 1960, it had a quarter of the population of the US. Now it has more than half as many people and by 2050, it will overtake the US to become the world's third most populous nation. At that point, it will have over 400 million people. Nigeria is only slightly larger than Texas (28 million). It will probably be a 'free and fair' poll, but it won't change any of that.

(The writer is an independent journalist)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS MOURNING, MODI WAS BUSY SHOOTING FOR A FILM. IS THERE ANY PRIME MINSITER IN THE WORLD LIKE THIS? I HAVE NO WORDS REALLY.

—CONGRESS' CHIEF SPOKESPERSON
 RS SURJEWALA



WHEN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IS ONE, WHEN NATIONS HAVE BEEN PASSING RESOLUTIONS, THE CONGRESS IS SEEKING TO WEAKEN THE MORALE OF THE NATION.

—UNION MINISTER
 RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

Words without meaning

Though general elections are a few months away, the BJP and the Congress are simply attacking each other. Will they pull out a rabbit from their hats and bring a fresh narrative?



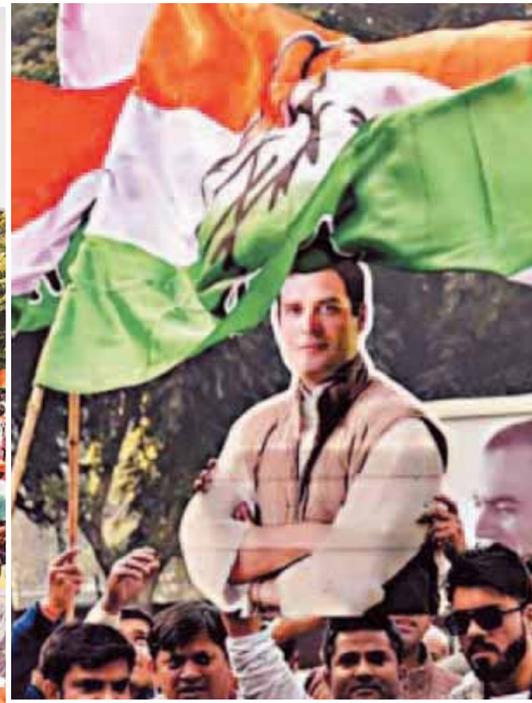
AMITABH SHUKLA

After Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's entry into active politics, our grand old party, the Congress, looks energised, motivated and has the momentum on its side to face the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Of course, it has been helped in no small measure by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which now looks faded, carries the disadvantage of anti-incumbency and is seemingly devoid of the same energy and enthusiasm that marked the party's campaign throughout 2013 till the 2014 general election. Despite being on a roll — to an extent as Congress supporters would like to believe — after last year's victories in the Assembly elections to Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, this would be the first battle in recent years where the grand old party, which by default is the main challenger to the BJP, is yet to come out with a positive poll narrative or sound implementable promises. It needs a pitch, now.

Rather than projecting any positive agenda for the creation of jobs, to boost the country's economy or putting forth any dynamic agenda which it might have for foreign policy vis-à-vis our neighbouring countries, all it is dependent this time around is on the "failure" of the Modi regime to fulfill promises it made in 2014. As of now, Rafale seems to be the single most important agenda for the Opposition, even as the ruling party is spiritedly defending itself and has been denying any wrong doing. Attack, attack and attack...seems to be the Congress' mantra as it enters the last phase before the elections are formally announced by the Election Commission of India. But Rafale doesn't have the ability to wash with the electorate as an emotional issue. Can the Modi Government's alleged failure, therefore, become the trump card for the Congress? If the party's think-tank believes it can take the electoral plunge without any positive agenda, or without any performance-oriented narrative, it is, perhaps, going through a delusional phase. There will be near unanimity among non-BJP parties and also a large section of the academia and economists that demonetisation was a blunder and that the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) could have been done in a better way, and perhaps, in a phased manner. There can be no argument on this front. But can this failure of the ruling party become the main weapon of the Congress fightback?

At present, all that the Congress has offered include loan-waivers to farmers in States like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, where the party won last year, triggering speculation that it would do well in the general elections too. But can loan-waiver alone be the panacea of all the ills that plague the farming community? No farmer, agriculturist or expert dealing with the farm economy and farm crisis thinks so. At best, it is a pill which can only remove the symptom but can never fight the cause of the disease.

So, what can the Congress offer to the farmers of the country? Farm distress is, perhaps, the single most reason to make the Modi Government unpopular among the rural vote-base. Low farm prices have ensured that the



farmers' returns from investments in crop, seeds, fertilisers and land are reduced and have, in fact, come down significantly in recent years. But will the Congress implement the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission report, which advocates a new mechanism for fixing Minimum Support Price for their crops? We have not heard much from the party on this front except some vague promises.

In fact, even in Punjab, where the party has been in power for almost two years now, and which is plagued by farm distress and farmers' suicides for long, we are yet to hear much except that provisions for cosmetic loan-waivers have been made. Farmers continue to be stressed in the State even though the Congress under Capt Amarinder Singh took over the reins of power almost two years ago.

If you do not have anything concrete on the farm front, that's fine, you can take a call later. But what are your plans about job creation and giving impetus to the economy? There is no denying that demonetisation, which was followed by GST in quick succession, affected job growth. In fact, the combine triggered massive job losses. Has the Congress come up with a plan to infuse new life to the economy and create jobs? The answer obviously would be a big no.

In 2014, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was bidding for power at the Centre, he, too, attacked the Congress left, right and centre, using every possible imagery to pin down the party and expose its inner contradictions. This was similar to what the Congress is doing right now. At that time, Modi found traction among voters with three crucial words — Modi, Modi, Modi — that echoed in almost all public meetings in the Hindi heartland throughout the campaign period. But at the same time, while tommorrowing his personal charisma, he had also come out with slogans of creating two crore jobs every year and gifting 15 lakh in every bank account from the black money which was supposedly parked in foreign accounts. Of course,

IN THE ABSENCE OF A POSITIVE NARRATIVE AMONG BOTH CONTENDERS FOR POWER — BJP AND CONGRESS — ELECTIONEERING SO FAR HAS BEEN REDUCED TO CHARGES AND COUNTER CHARGES. OF COURSE, REAL ELECTIONEERING IS YET TO PICK UP AND WILL BE SEEN ONLY AFTER THE NATION GETS OVER THE PULWAMA TRAGEDY

the promise of *achhe din* acted as the catalyst that instilled hope among a large section of the population, cutting across caste and religious lines.

Five years down the line, all of these largely remain a promise and the slogans raised then have been given a decent burial. Even the "Gujarat model of development", which was supposed to be implemented at the national level, remains forgotten and no one hears anything about it anymore. What Modi and his party are doing this time around is what they did in 2014 — virulently attack the Congress. Dynasty and alleged acts of omission and commission are the top subjects on which the grand old party can be attacked. There is no attempt to even sell a rescue plan for stressed Indians.

So, there you are: Both the main contenders are calling each other names, they want the people to believe that the other is corrupt and are trying to attract the voters' eyeballs with their colourful vocabulary, which they are using against each other. What catapulted the BJP under Modi in 2014 was complete disillusionment with 10 years of UPA regime, charges of big ticket corruption, perception of a remote-controlled Prime Minister and loss of hope among the electorate for the future. Modi brought in a wave of fresh air, positive change, political machismo and above all, hope for *achhe din* with some specific policy measures.

In the absence of a positive narrative among both contenders for power — BJP and Congress — electioneering so far has been reduced to charges and counter charges, attack and defence. Of course, real electioneering is yet to pick up and will be seen only after the nation gets over the Pulwama tragedy. But people are still wondering if elections this time round would be fought on negative agenda, making both sides look opportunist than committed visionaries who will see us through.

(The writer is Senior Editor, The Pioneer, Chandigarh)

Give political *shakti* to women

Increasingly, women have shown equal, if not greater, understanding of their role as leaders. But obstacles are many and they have to triumph over them. Most important of all, the power to give women a chance still rests with the men



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

When many of the guests left her wedding reception because of the terrible smell emanating from unhygienic conditions prevailing in her village in Maharashtra, Madhuri Sawant was determined to change things. It took 14 years of single-minded determination to overcome a rigid mindset and conditioning but Sawant ensured that her village was among the 12 villages from Maharashtra to win the first Nirmal Gram Puraskar, an award instituted by the Union Government in October, 2003, to promote rural sanitation. Sawant's village beat 443 contenders from 10 States to win the award given to panchayats

or local self-governments, that have ensured that all households have access to toilets; are free of open defecation; and have separate toilets for boys and girls in schools and anganwadi centres.

Although Sawant started her campaign much before she became the village's first woman *pradhan*, holding an office made it easier for her to push for sanitation and developmental work. It was her ability to catalyse change that catapulted her village to the top.

Sawant is not the only one who has been bringing change. There are innumerable examples of how the leadership of women in *panchayats* is transforming India and have been underlining why there is an urgent need for an increase in women's participation in the political system. Their presence in the village not only inspires other women but increases aspirations among families with daughters.

When women are seen taking up responsibilities of village leaders, which are traditionally appro-

riated by men, others are motivated to try and follow in their footsteps. Research has shown that perceptions of women as leaders improve when they are seen and heard at village meetings.

Studies have proven that women's representation in local Governments can make a tangible difference. For example, the number of drinking water projects in areas with women-led *panchayats* was 62 per cent higher than in those that were led by men. Further, women legislators enhance economic performance in their constituencies by about 1.8 percentage points per year more than male legislators. Women legislators are more effective at completing road projects and, hence, creating infrastructure for growth, according to a recent study by the United Nations University.

Additionally, by improving educational outcomes for girls, these women leaders lay the foundation for increasing their participation in the labour force and, thereby, closing the gap of male-to-female work-

ing population in India.

Even at the national level, women's leadership in the political decision-making processes champions issues of development, gender justice, elimination of gender-based violence, gender-equality laws, healthcare and safety of women, irrespective of party affiliation. Despite their low numbers, (women constitute 12.2 per cent of the MPs in the 16th Lok Sabha and 11.5 per cent in the Rajya Sabha), women have shown equal, if not greater, understanding of their role in Parliament.

While women MPs on an average asked 234 questions in the Lok Sabha, compared to 236 questions by men MPs, female MPs on average participated in more debates (56) than their male counterparts (55), according to data collected by PRS Legislative Research for the 16th Lok Sabha (June 1, 2014, to July 31, 2018).

Incidentally, female voter turnout was higher than male turnout in 16 States and Union Territories out of 35 in the last gen-

eral elections in 2014. Can this be translated into greater participation of women as candidates? Yes, says a recent survey by Shakti, a non-partisan inclusive platform of women across the country.

On being asked whether they wanted more women MPs in Lok Sabha in 2019 elections, Shakti received an affirmative answer from 10 lakh registered voters across the rural, urban, women, men and youth spectrum. Their Shakti-Neta App survey recorded 82.2 per cent 'YES' across 24 States.

But first, political parties have to give women a chance to contest the elections. Only 8.8 per cent tickets were given to women candidates by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and 12.9 per cent by the Congress in the 2014 general election. Will it be different this time around? Will women be able to overcome prevailing cultural attitudes regarding gender roles, lack of finances and the threat of violence?

That it is possible for women to triumph over these obstacles has been shown by Jayanti, a young

woman from the backward Sahariya tribe in the Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh. Jayanti's journey from a daily-wage labourer to a *pradhan* symbolises the growing political empowerment and coming of age of many marginalised women.

In the feudal and backward Bundelkhand region of the State, these women are now more willing to participate actively in the electoral process. Jayanti stood her ground despite threats and coercion to withdraw from the elections.

Even the announcement that she had lost by four votes did not break her spirit. She exercised her right to a recount and was vindicated when she was declared the winner by a thin margin of six votes. Since then she has resolved problems related to the mid-day meals old age pension cards and roads.

The power to give women a chance still rests with the men. Now is the moment to prove that commitments for women-led development don't remain mere rhetoric.

(The writer is a senior journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



IDEA OF A MIDDLE EAST NUCLEAR DEAL

Congressional disaffection with Saudi Arabia was already rising over the Yemen war and the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. The House Oversight Committee's investigation painting a familiar picture of Trump associates skirting the law to curry favour with people who can make them richer is a stark warning that there is even greater reason for concern and for Congressional efforts to put stricter controls in place.

(The New York Times editorial)

Markets extend gains; PSU banks, metal stocks shine

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices closed higher for the second straight session on Thursday, led by metal, pharma and banking stocks amid widespread buying by foreign and domestic institutional investors.

Global markets were mixed following release of Federal Reserve minutes which showed that the US central bank would be patient on interest rate hikes.

After a choppy start, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 142.09 points, or 0.40% higher at 35,898.35. The broader NSE Nifty gained 54.40 points, or 0.5%, to 10,789.85.

Tata Motors was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 2.94%. It was followed by Vedanta, Bajaj Finance, Sun Pharma, ONGC, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Auto, Tata Steel, RIL, HDFC duo, L&T and SBI, rising up to 2.78%.

On the other hand, Yes Bank, Coal India, Infosys, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Bank, Axis Bank, ITC and TCS slipped up to 1.33%.

Shares of public sector banks (PSBs) jumped up to 1.9% after the government on Wednesday announced fund infusion of ₹48,239 crore in 12 such lenders.

Corporation Bank zoomed

Undercurrent in the market is yet to stabilise due to caution on global trade and growth while falling interest rates and reforms by government will give impetus to consumption-led stocks

19.02%, UCO Bank 8.75%, United Bank 7.19%, Central Bank of India 5.50%, Allahabad Bank 5.34%, Andhra Bank jumped 5.22%, Bank of Maharashtra 3.96%, Syndicate Bank 3.59%, and Punjab National Bank ended 2.95% higher.

Sectorally, the BSE metal index, consumer durables, healthcare, finance and bank rose up to 1.14%, while IT and tech indices ended with losses.

Broader indices outperformed the benchmark. The BSE Midcap index climbed 0.88% while the small-cap gauge rose 1.07%.

Market extended gains as investor sentiment has been boosted owing to recapitalisation of PSU banks and Fed's

affirmation of slow pace in rate hikes.

"Accumulation is seen on heavyweights after recent fall while mid and small cap outperformed. Undercurrent in the market is yet to stabilise due to caution on global trade and growth while falling interest rates and reforms by government will give impetus to consumption-led stocks," said Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs), who had been heavy sellers over the past few sessions, net bought equities worth ₹713.47 crore on Wednesday while domestic institutional investors bought shares to the tune of ₹113.27 crore, provisional data showed.

Elsewhere in Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 0.41% and Japan's Nikkei ended 0.15% higher; while Shanghai Composite Index shed 0.34% and Korea's Kospi slipped 0.04%.

In the Eurozone, Frankfurt's DAX was up 0.28%, Paris CAC 40 fell 0.06% and London's FTSE was down 0.63% in early deals.

The benchmark Brent crude futures fell 0.12% to USD 67 per barrel.

Meanwhile, the rupee depreciated marginally to 71.14 against the US dollar intra-day.

Tech Mahindra to buy back shares at 14.59% premium

New Delhi (PTI): IT firm Tech Mahindra on Thursday announced a ₹1,956-crore buyback of its shares at ₹950 apiece, a 14.59 per cent premium over current trading price. The share buyback proposal has been approved by the company's board. The firm is proposing to buy back up to 2.05 crore (2,05,85,000) equity shares at a price of ₹950 per equity share for an aggregate amount not exceeding ₹1,956 crore, Tech Mahindra said in a regulatory filing.

March 6, 2019, is the record date for the purpose of ascertaining the eligibility of shareholders to participate in the buyback, it added.

RCap invites Nippon Life to buy its entire stake in asset management JV

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Capital (RCap) on Thursday said it has invited Nippon Life Insurance to acquire its entire 42.88 per cent stake in Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management (RNAM).

Japan's Nippon Life Insurance already holds 42.88 per cent stake in RNAM.

"Reliance Capital has invited its partner, Nippon Life Insurance, to make an offer to acquire up to 42.88 per cent stake held by Reliance Capital in Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management," Reliance Capital said in a regulatory filing.

The company said it would

make further announcements at the appropriate time.

As per BSE data, as on December 31, 2018, Reliance Capital held 42.9 per cent stake in Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management.

Sources said the transaction could help clear around 40 per cent of Reliance Capital's outstanding debt worth ₹18,000 crore.

The transaction price is likely to be at a significant premium to the current market price, as it would also involve control premium, they added.

The proposed share sale would also trigger the requirement of open offer to be made for 26 per cent stake in the

company. According to the sources, once the transaction goes through, the company would become the largest wholly foreign-owned mutual fund in India.

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group companies have been trying to monetise some of their assets and bring down the debt significantly.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday held RCom Chairman Anil Ambani and two others guilty of contempt of court for violating its order by not paying dues of ₹550 crore to Ericsson, and said they faced a three-month jail term if ₹453 crore was not paid to Ericsson in four weeks.

iRobot looks to strengthen presence in India

New Delhi (PTI): iRobot Corp, which offers premium robotic cleaners globally, is looking to strengthen its distribution network as part of expanding presence in India, according to an official.

"We have witnessed strong double-digit growth in the Indian market. This is coming from both metros as well as smaller cities," Puresight Systems director and chief operating officer Pulak Satish Kumar said.

Puresight is the exclusive distributor of iRobot's products in India. Kumar said the products, priced between ₹19,900 and ₹89,900 were available through franchise outlets, Croma and online retailer Amazon.

Auto sales to pick up in second half of next fiscal: Ind-Ra

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's overall automobile sales are likely to remain tepid in the first half of 2019-20, but the upcoming implementation of BS-VI emission norms will drive the demand in the second half of the year, according to India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

As per the ratings agency, the passenger vehicle (PV) segment, which has clocked a 4 per cent growth in the ten months of the ongoing fiscal,

is expected to grow "moderately" next fiscal.

The commercial vehicle (CV) segment, which has grown 23 per cent in the ten months of 2018-19, is expected to see high single-digit to low double-digit growth in 2019-20, Ind-Ra said in a statement.

Two-wheelers are also poised for steady growth in the next fiscal, it said. The segment has grown by 8 per cent so far in the ongoing fiscal.

Buying preponement on

the expected price rise in 2020-21 due to the implementation of BS-VI norms, improvement in consumer sentiments along with new model and variant launches will be among the key growth drivers for the PV segment.

For the CV segment, it said, continued uptick in industrial activity, road and infrastructure development, and the likelihood of liquidity of NBFCs will fuel demand.

The rise in rural income and growing middle class pop-

ulation with increasing disposable income will be the key growth drivers for two-wheeler segment, along with a young population showing preference for premium products.

While maintaining a stable outlook for automobile sector, the ratings agency said BS-VI implementation from April 1, 2020 will make vehicles costlier across all segments.

"As per industry estimates, the cost of petrol variant PVs and two-wheelers could increase 10-15 per cent

that of diesel variant by 20-25 per cent," it said.

Due to this, Ind-Ra expects demand to pick pace in second half of 2019-20, although it is likely to remain tepid in the first half, it said.

The agency further said credit ratings of most of the large players in its sample are set to be unaffected in 2019-20 despite capex plans in view of the ongoing regulatory changes, development of an electric vehicle platform and continued new product launches

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY50	10744.10	10808.85	10721.50	10789.85	54.40
BULLISHGN	6500	6890	6445	6855	40.75
BAJAJFINS	60400	62200	59820	61905	192.60
TATAMOTORS	165.60	170.60	165.10	170.00	5.20
DREDDY	25500	26060	25185	26045	78.90
VEDL	161.70	165.60	160.30	164.40	4.15
GRASIM	726.30	751.65	725.05	747.85	17.15
RPL	328.00	337.65	326.25	337.00	6.00
SUNPHARMA	425.20	432.00	422.70	430.35	8.00
ICICIBANK	346.80	354.95	346.25	351.30	6.30
BAJAJ-AUTO	27700	28290	2751.70	2825.00	50.30
BAJFINANCE	26100	26600	25935	2625.55	46.40
ONGC	145.00	148.60	144.20	146.60	2.55
ULTRACEMCO	3583.00	3654.00	3560.00	3631.25	57.90
IOC	129.00	131.45	128.00	131.25	1.95
TATASTEEL	492.55	502.90	490.35	497.85	6.70
HINDPETRO	219.00	224.00	219.00	223.90	2.95
JSWSTEEL	276.00	279.00	273.40	277.30	3.25
HINDUNILVR	1737.00	1758.00	1736.35	1753.80	20.30
TECHM	814.00	840.00	809.10	821.65	9.25
HERMOTOCO	2632.00	2657.00	2581.50	2653.45	29.70
HDFC	187.00	189.70	186.50	189.05	1.95
RELIANCE	1236.00	1257.80	1229.35	1247.30	12.95
TITAN	1039.90	1045.00	1031.25	1043.50	10.75
CIPLA	542.85	547.90	540.50	546.00	4.90
HINDALCO	193.90	195.50	192.25	194.30	1.30
GAIL	332.00	336.60	324.05	331.55	1.85
WIPRO	372.80	376.80	370.80	374.05	1.85
IT	1282.00	1291.50	1265.10	1281.00	4.45
HDFCBANK	2101.70	2119.95	2093.60	2115.70	7.35
BHARTIARTL	305.90	311.00	303.00	310.05	1.05
ZEEL	444.00	451.90	440.00	446.25	1.20
UPL	825.00	832.70	818.00	824.00	1.25
SBIN	270.30	271.00	267.00	268.00	0.30
ADANIAPORTS	352.10	359.25	350.00	355.05	0.30
M&M	633.55	635.95	625.00	634.00	0.45
ASIANPAINT	1399.00	1407.85	1390.30	1397.00	0.10
KOTAKBANK	1291.90	1297.60	1283.50	1288.45	-1.30
TCS	1914.75	1940.00	1897.05	1912.00	-2.75
ITC	275.90	276.75	274.20	275.05	-0.80
POWERGRID	182.70	183.50	181.20	182.00	-0.60
HCLTECH	1060.00	1061.00	1042.60	1053.90	-4.05
EICHERMOT	20450.00	20634.70	20250.00	2047.95	-80.60
MARUTI	6868.95	6879.65	6715.00	6818.05	-31.85
AXISBANK	700.50	706.50	695.10	697.00	-3.35
INDUSINDBK	1479.45	1494.40	1455.00	1472.80	-8.00
COALINDIA	215.05	215.70	213.20	213.80	-1.15
NTPC	137.80	138.50	135.50	136.40	-0.80
INFY	738.00	738.00	727.10	734.00	-6.70
YESBANK	218.85	218.85	214.00	215.25	-2.35
INFRATEL	317.60	318.00	306.30	312.50	-5.95

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	DMAT
RCOM	5.90	6.54	5.72	6.33	MUHOOTFIN
SUZLON	3.69	4.61	3.62	4.43	REPCOHOME
RELCAPITAL	144.00	163.75	140.70	161.20	LUPIN
BULLISHGN	651.00	688.70	645.00	683.10	AJICORPITD
TECHM	814.50	840.10	809.70	820.40	ADANIAPORTS
RELIINFRA	118.00	125.90	116.00	124.40	GRASIM
DHFL	131.00	141.70	131.00	137.10	HDFC
YESBANK	219.00	219.00	214.20	215.00	GRASIM
RELIANCE	1236.00	1256.70	1230.20	1246.45	HDFC
KSCAL	413.00	423.75	404.25	416.65	MIDCINDIA
TATASTEEL	492.60	519.05	490.60	497.90	MIRZAPUR
ICICIBANK	346.00	354.70	346.00	350.40	OIL
PNB	75.60	76.75	72.70	73.20	NAUKRI
JPASSOCIAT	5.15	6.08	5.15	5.92	UJIVAN
JINDALSTEL	149.90	156.45	147.80	155.35	DEEPAKERT
VEDL	161.70	165.60	160.45	164.60	IDFC
TATAMOTORS	166.00	170.60	165.20	169.70	BHARTIARTL
NATIONALUM	49.70	50.15	47.75	48.40	BHARTIARTL
TCS	1924.00	1939.80	1898.65	1912.25	GAIL
MARUTI	6860.00	6878.00	6718.30	6796.80	FEDERALBANK
LT	1282.00	1288.00	1265.15	1282.25	SPARC
TEJASNET	155.00	178.00	151.25	161.20	PNB
SUNPHARMA	425.00	431.95	423.00	429.75	CANBK
DISHTV	35.15	37.35	34.75	37.00	SUNTECH
ALBK	48.40	48.40	45.10	46.35	ANULIOPHOS
SBIN	269.95	270.90	267.00	267.55	COBANK
CGPOWER	30.25	31.95	29.70	31.20	MROPL
RNAM	155.55	187.05	151.25	187.05	EQUITAS
IBVENTURES	265.80	306.45	265.60	297.80	BAJAJFINS
AXISBANK	702.00	706.70	695.35	696.90	MIDALLOPES
ONGC	145.50	148.30	144.35	147.00	NITITECH
L&T	125.00	127.80	123.75	127.20	BEL
GRAPHITE	418.00	427.35	410.40	418.75	MFL
JETAIRWAYS	234.60	236.90	231.85	234.85	HAL
RPOWER	10.85	11.35	10.50	11.20	
M&M	639.00	639.00	625.00	633.35	
ASIANPAINT	1398.55	1407.75	1392.00	1397.75	
BANKINDIA	85.50	86.00	82.90	83.30	
ASHOKLEY	81.90	81.90	80.25	81.10	
JUSTDIAL	475.75	538.00	475.75	513.80	
EMAMILTD	392.95	410.00	386.25	395.85	
IOC	129.00	131.80	128.15	131.15	
DREDDY	2530.10	2599.80	2520.00	2585.50	
HFG	2135.00	2176.00	2117.15	2131.85	
INFY	739.00	739.00	728.95	733.35	
COBANK	29.00	30.60	28.60	30.35	
HCLTECH	1056.00	1061.00	1042.90	1053.50	
PFC	109.20	111.90	107.85	110.20	
UNIONBANK	73.00	73.25	70.80	71.50	
ZIOL	620.00	624.60	618.15	621.65	
BEECON	445.05	457.40	441.05	446.55	
BAJFINANCE	2621.80	2660.00	2595.00	2653.05	
ITC	276.00	277.00	274.10	274.90	
BOMDYEING	108.05	114.20	107.20	111.45	
STRTECH	238.55	248.00	236.50	246.00	
MARICO	334.00	338.80	332.25	336.55	
HINDUNILVR	1740.00	1756.55	1738.05	1753.60	
FERCEMOT	1344.45	1409.00	1334.65	1389.40	
IBREALT	72.60	75.10	72.35	74.40	ANFANTHARM
CANFINHOME	253.10	275.95	251.80	270.60	POWERGRID
ADANIPOWER	40.00	40.90	38.85	39.55	TITAN
MANAPPURAM	109.90	114.95	108.05	113.80	APOLLYTEC
AARTINDIA	1310.00	1431.45	1310.00	1381.05	BAJAJFINS
BANKBARODA	104.00	105.00	102.60	103.00	BELM
PGH	9940.05	10250.00	9916.00	10250.00	261.40
L&T	124.20	127.75	123.80	127.40	3.20
SAIL	47.50	49.20	47.30	49.05	1.15
BANDHANBANK	479.00	490.90	478.05	488.50	11.25
SHREEMET	15632.00	16240.60	15632.00	16047.00	340.80
PEL	2192.00	2255.00	2191.50	2243.90	46.45
SIEMENS	967.00	991.00	944.50	986.10	19.50
DLF					

81 PERISH IN DHAKA BLAZE

PTI ■ DHAKA

A fast-moving fire swept through apartment buildings and chemical warehouses in a historic part of the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, killing at least 81 people and injuring over 50 others, the latest such deadly blaze in the country.

Officials said the fire broke out at a chemical warehouse on the ground floor of a five-storey building named Hazi Wahed Mansion behind a mosque in Old Dhaka's congested Chawkbazar area on Wednesday night and the flames then quickly spread through four other buildings nearby, including a community centre where a wedding party was on.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) officials said the fire spread rapidly due to the mul-

tipple chemical godowns that were situated in the area.

The death toll in the massive blaze rose to 81, fire officials said, warning that the toll could rise further as dozens of people were trapped in the buildings and the fire fighters were yet to enter into the main spot where the fire broke out.

"Most of the bodies were retrieved from the houses around that building while fire fighters now prepare to enter into the building, the main spot in search of more bodies," a police official at the scene said.

Bangladesh's fire service chief Ali Ahmed said the blaze may have started with a gas cylinder before quickly spreading through the building where chemicals were stored.

"The flames raced through four adjoining buildings, which were also used as chemical warehouses. There was a traf-

fic jam when the fire broke out. It spread so quickly that people could not escape," he said.

TV images showed the main gate of one of the buildings was locked, leaving its residents trapped, unable to escape the blaze as it swept through its five storeys.

Witnesses said the victims also included passersby, some people who were eating food at a nearby restaurants and some members of a wedding party.

Over 50 people, including women and children, were also injured and admitted to nearby hospitals, including Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital.

Some of the residents were injured after they jumped off the building.

The officials said 37 fire fighting units were rushed to the scene but narrow lanes

made it difficult for the fire engines to reach the spot. The fire fighters used helicopters and long hose pipes to set off the blaze.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed her shock over the tragedy and conveyed condolences to those affected.

The blaze is under control but not completely doused because of flammable chemicals that were being stored in several of the buildings, AKM Shakil Newaz, director of Fire Service and Civil Defence told Bdnews24. The five-storey building where the fire started is at the risk of collapsing due to damage, according to local media reports.

The first floor of the building was being used as a warehouse of plastic goods, cosmetics and perfume. Some families lived on the upper floors, according to residents.



Locals and firefighters gather around buildings that caught fire late on Wednesday in Dhaka. The devastating fire raced through at least five buildings in an old part of Bangladesh's capital and killed scores of people

The ground floor of the building, where the fire originated, had several shops.

The fire from the building immediately caused an electric transformer to explode, which set ablaze several cars parked on the alley. The alley was packed with people because of a wed-

ding ceremony that was being held in the nearby community centre.

An investigation panel has been formed to identify the reason behind the fire.

The fire brings back the terrifying memories of another massive blaze in 2010 in an old

Dhaka building, which was also used as a chemical warehouse, that killed more than 120 people in one of the worst fire tragedies in Bangladesh.

It had sparked a public outcry, demanding the relocation of chemical warehouses and stores from the area, but lit-

tle has been done in the last nine years.

The lack of safety regulations in the country was highlighted in 2013 when over 1,100 people died and thousands more were injured when a building housing garment factories in Dhaka collapsed.

Trump threatens tariffs on EU if no trade deal reached

AFF ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump threatened Wednesday to impose tariffs on European auto imports if he is unable to strike a trade deal with the EU. "We're negotiating. If we don't make the deal, we'll do the tariffs," Trump told reporters in response to a question on new tariffs.

Trump's renewed threat against the EU auto industry takes on a new edge as it came two days after the Commerce Department delivered a report that sources said found European car imports constitute a national security threat to the United States.

The report could set the stage for the White House to impose tariffs within 90 days,



a move Brussels has vowed to parry with its own set of counter-tariffs.

Washington already has used the national security argument to impose steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, drawing instant retaliation from the EU, Canada, Mexico

and China.

In one of many aggressive moves against US trading partners, Trump, who boasts that he favours tariffs, has threatened 25 per cent duties on European autos, especially targeting Germany, which he says has harmed the American car industry.

Trump reached a truce with the EU following a meeting last July with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker but on Wednesday expressed frustration with the state of talks.

"We're trying to make a deal," Trump said. "They're very tough to make a deal with, the EU. They've been very difficult over a period of time, over many, many years."

However, negotiations with

the EU have not yet begun.

The European Commission must seek approval from member states on a negotiating mandate before it can enter into talks. EU trade ministers will meet in Bucharest on Thursday and Friday to review the proposal.

But the sides have differences over what is to be included: the US negotiating goals include agriculture, while EU officials insist that will be off limits, and talks will be restricted to industrial goods and regulatory issues.

The White House is also locked in tough, high-stakes negotiations with China to find a way to resolve the conflict that saw punishing tariffs exchanged between Beijing and Washington.

Democrat resolution against border wall emergency coming today

AP ■ WASHINGTON

House Democrats will file a Resolution Friday aimed at blocking the national emergency declaration that President Donald Trump has issued to help finance his wall along the Southwest border, teeing up a clash over billions of dollars, immigration policy and the Constitution's separation of powers.

Though the effort seems almost certain to ultimately fall short — perhaps to a Trump veto — the votes will let Democrats take a defiant stance against Trump that is sure to please liberal voters. They will also put some Republicans from swing districts and states in a difficult spot.

Formally introducing the measure sets up a vote by the full House likely by mid-March, perhaps as soon as next week, because of a timeline spelled out by law. Initial passage by the Democratic-run House seems assured. The measure would then move to the Republican-controlled Senate, where there may be enough GOP defections for approval. The law that spells out the rules for emergency declarations seems to require the Senate to address the issue too, but there's never been a congressional effort to block one and some procedural uncertainties remain.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., seemed to predict approval, telling colleagues in a letter that her chamber will



"move swiftly" to pass it and "the resolution will be referred to the Senate and then sent to the President's desk."

Should the House and Senate initially approve the measure, Congress seems unlikely to muster the two-thirds majorities in each chamber that would be

needed later to override a certain Trump veto.

Even so, Republican senators facing tough 2020 re-election fights in competitive states like Arizona, Colorado and North Carolina would have to take stances that could risk dividing the GOP's pro-Trump and more moderate voters.

Moderate Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said Wednesday she would back a resolution blocking the declaration, making her the first Republican to publicly state her support for the effort to thwart the emergency. With Republicans holding a 53-47 majority, three more GOP senators would need to vote with Democrats for the resolution to win initial approval.

US: Alabama woman who joined Islamic State is not a citizen

AP ■ WASHINGTON

An Alabama woman who joined the Islamic State group in Syria won't be allowed to return to the United States with her toddler son because she is not an American citizen, the US said Wednesday. Her lawyer is challenging that claim.

In a brief statement, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave no details as to how the administration made their determination.

"Ms. Hoda Muthana is not a US citizen and will not be admitted into the United States," he said. "She does not have any legal basis, no valid US passport, no right to a passport nor any visa to travel to the United States."

But Hassan Shibly, a lawyer for the woman, insisted Muthana was born in the United States and had a valid passport before she joined the Islamic

State in 2014. He says she has renounced the terrorist group and wants to come home to protect her 18-month-old son regardless of the legal consequences.

"She's an American. Americans break the law," said Shibly, a lawyer with the Florida chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. "When people break the law, we have a legal system to handle those kinds of situations to hold people accountable, and that's all she's asking for."

Muthana and her son are now in a refugee camp in Syria, along with others who fled the remnants of the Islamic State.

Shibly said that the administration argues that she didn't qualify for citizenship because her father was a Yemeni diplomat. But the lawyer said her father had not had diplomatic status at the time of her birth in Hackensack, New Jersey.

He released a copy of the woman's birth certificate, issued two months after her birth on October 28, 1994, to support his claim.

The lawyer also provided to The Associated Press a letter from the US Mission to the United Nations to what was then known as the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services attesting to the fact that the woman's father, Ahmed Ali Muthana, was a member of the Yemeni diplomatic mission to the UN from Oct. 15, 1990 to Sept. 1, 1994.

President Donald Trump said Wednesday on Twitter that he was behind the decision to deny her entry, tweeting that "I have instructed Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and he fully agrees, not to allow Hoda Muthana back into the Country!"

The announcement came a day after Britain said that it was

stripping the citizenship of Shamima Begum, a 19-year-old who left the country in 2015 with two friends to join the Islamic State and recently gave birth in a refugee camp.

It also comes as the US has urged allies to back citizens who joined IS but are now in the custody of the American-backed forces fighting the remnants of the brutally extremist group that once controlled a vast area spanning parts of Syria and Iraq. Muthana's lawyer said she was "just a stupid, naive, young dumb woman," when she became enamoured of Islamic State, believing it was an organization that protected Muslims.

Shibly said she fled her family in Alabama and made her way to Syria, where she was "brainwashed" by IS and compelled to marry one of the group's soldiers. After he was killed, she married another, the father of her son.



In this July 21, 2016, photo, Russian Dmitry Ukrainisky (right) and Uzbekistan's Olga Komova sit during a press conference at the Tourist Police Division in Bangkok, Thailand. A Thai court ruled Wednesday that Ukrainisky who allegedly was part of a gang that stole millions of dollars online from bank accounts can be extradited to the United States to stand trial, but the suspect could end up in Russia anyway. Komova had already been extradited to the United States.

Aus announces two-year ban on entry of citizens who fought for IS in Iraq, Syria

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Australia on Thursday announced a two-year ban on the entry of its citizens who travelled to either Iraq or Syria to fight for or support the Islamic State and now want to return following the fall of the terror group. The Australian government introduced a bill to amend the law in the Federal parliament.

The move comes days after US President Donald Trump asked Britain, France, Germany and other European allies to take back the captured IS fighters, who are citizens of these countries, and put them on

trial. Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton said over 230 Australians had travelled to either Syria or Iraq to fight or support Islamic extremists since 2012, but a number of them are now trying to return home that Islamic State's power is dwindling.

"The government is determined to deal with these people from as far away from our shores as is possible, to ensure that if they return, it is into the hands of authorities," Dutton said while introducing the bill in the lower house.

"It is vital for our national security that we deal with

Australians who travelled to the conflict zone in Iraq and Syria as far from our shores as possible," he was quoted as saying in a media report.

He said Australians who are involved in supporting terrorism, and who may have fought with terrorists in Syria or Iraq, pose a significant threat, especially since the military collapse of IS.

"That's why we are introducing Temporary Exclusion Orders, which would prevent Australians involved in terrorism overseas from legally returning to Australia for up to two years.

"A person could go to

prison for up to two years for breaching a temporary exclusion order," he added.

The minister said the exclusion order could be revoked to then allow someone to enter Australia under a return permit.

"The return permit can specify the conditions under which the person returns to Australia, such as date of return, specific flights and security arrangements, to further manage any potential threat," Dutton said.

The proposed 12-month return permit could also include conditions around using technology.

US sanctions on Indian man, parents for global drug smuggling network

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has slapped sanctions against a UAE-based Indian man and his parents for allegedly running a global money laundering and smuggling network for heroin. The US Department of Treasury on Wednesday said Jasmeel Hakimzada, who lives in the UAE, runs a global drug trafficking network that smuggles heroin, cocaine, ephedrine, ketamine, and synthetic opioids into the US, Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Since 2008, Hakimzada has laundered hundreds of millions of dollars of illicit proceeds using his UAE-based company

Maiwand General Trading Company LLC through financial institutions in the US, Brazil, India, Panama, the UAE and the UK, it alleged. The Department of Treasury also designated his parents and four entities registered in India or the UAE that form part of the narcotics trafficking organisation run by Hakimzada.

"Jasmeel Hakimzada's global drug trafficking and money laundering network has been involved in smuggling heroin and synthetic opioids around the world," said Sigal Mandelker, Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.

The Treasury said it desig-

nated Harmohan Hakimzada, Hakimzada's father, for him being primary partner in the drug trafficking and money laundering operation; and Eljeet Kaur, his mother, who serves as an officer in two front companies in India.

The four entities designated today include three entities based in India — Maiwand Exim Private Limited, Maiwand Tobacco Limited, and Maiwand Beverages Limited — and UAE-based Maiwand General Trading Company LLC, which operates as a front for an array of illicit activities to include shipping narcotics and illegal pharmaceuticals as well as laundering large sums of narcotics pro-

ceeds. On April 5, 2017, a federal grand jury in the US District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee indicted Hakimzada on 46 counts of drug trafficking and money laundering, the Treasury said in a media release.

Over the course of three years from 2014 through 2016, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) conducted an extensive investigation into Hakimzada's global narcotics and money laundering operation uncovering dozens of drug trafficking and money laundering-related transactions, as well as drug shipments directly to the US using commercial international courier services.

Terrorism, climate change biggest challenges before mankind: Modi

PTI ■ SEOUL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said terrorism and climate change are two biggest challenges mankind is facing now and Mahatma Gandhi's teachings and values can help the world to address both the pressing issues.

Prime Minister Modi, who arrived here on a two-day visit to strengthen India's strategic ties with South Korea, along with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the prestigious Yonsei University here.

"It is a matter of great honour and my good fortune to unveil the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Korea's premier university today," Modi said.

"This occasion assumes greater significance since we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of Gandhi and for the world he is the foremost messiah," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said today humanity across the world is facing two serious problems first terrorism and second is climate change. "If we look at the life of Gandhi, we can find solutions to both these problems. If we look at his teachings, values and the advice he gave we can find a path forward," Modi said.

"Terrorism has challenged the mankind, and at this time Gandhi's teaching, message of unity, values, his message of changing heart of those taken the path of vio-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Moon Jae-in (3rd R) after unveiling the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the Yonsei University in Seoul on Thursday

lence through non-violence can show us the way to fight against the scourge of terrorism," he said.

His remarks assume significance in the wake of the deadly Pulwama terror strike by Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

"During the tenure of my friend and former UN chief Ban the UN declared Gandhi's

birthday as the day of non-violence and with this declaration we got the strength to fight the terrorism," he said.

Modi said in the 20th Century, Gandhi was perhaps the mankind's biggest gift. "In the last century through his personality, through his life and values, Gandhi showed us what the future will be. In fact he used to say my life is my lesson."

"Gandhi used to say the God and nature have given everything for a human being's need but not for the greed and all natural resources will be lost if we go for greed. He said our lifestyle should be need based and not greed based," Modi said.

"During his lifetime there was no discussion on climate change and environment, but through his lifestyle, he did not

leave any carbon foot print. and showed what living in harmony with nature is. He showed that it is important to leave a clean and green planet for the future generations."

Modi is visiting South Korea on the invitation of President Moon Jae-in. This is his second visit to the Republic of Korea since 2015 and second summit meeting with President Moon Jae-in.

I was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's teachings: Ban

PTI ■ SEOUL

Former United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday said he was inspired by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and his bust, unveiled at the prestigious Yonsei University here, will serve as the source of inspiration for the people of South Korea.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who arrived here on a two-day visit to strengthen India's strategic ties with South Korea, along with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the prestigious Yonsei University here.

"It (Mahatma Gandhi's bust) is the most invaluable gift to the Korean people and the university students," Ban said, adding that from this day onwards, it will serve as the source of inspiration for com-



mon people.

He said he started his diplomatic career from India in 1972 and was inspired by the principles of Mahatma Gandhi.

"Gandhi's seven deadly sins, which are: Politics without principle, Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Commerce without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice. It is most inspiring even for all of

us," the former UN Secretary General said.

Ban was the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations. He held office from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2016. He was unanimously re-elected by the General Assembly for a second mandate in June 2011.

He said he felt honoured to be invited to serve as a member of international advisors to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi by the Indian Prime Minister.

"Indian government or India had decided to place the bust of this great figure on the campus of Yonsei University," he added.

Ban said as UN Secretary General, he found Prime Minister Modi as one of the "strongest and staunchest" supporter of the United Nation, world peace, human rights, climate change and overall sustainable development.

Perpetrators of terror acts must be brought to justice: UN chief

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

UN chief Antonio Guterres has said it is essential that there must be accountability under international law and the perpetrators of terrorist acts be brought swiftly to justice, as he reiterated his strong condemnation of the Pulwama terror strike by Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed.

The UN Secretary-General also "urgently" appealed to the governments of both India and Pakistan to exercise "maximum restraint" to ensure the situation does not further deteriorate.

"The Secretary-General has been following with great concern the situation in South Asia. He reiterates his strong condemnation of the terrorist attack against Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir on February 14 and the 'subsequent violence', a statement issued Wednesday by his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

He said it is "essential that there be accountability under international law and the perpetrators of terrorist acts be brought swiftly to justice."

"It is the belief of the Secretary-General that all difficult challenges can be resolved peacefully and satisfactorily through meaningful mutual engagement," the statement added.

When asked at the daily press briefing that Pakistan has asked for the Secretary-General himself to get involved



in the process to encourage dialogue between India and Pakistan and if he is going to take on that role, Dujarric said, "As a matter of principle...the Secretary-General believes that all difficult challenges can be resolved through peacefully and satisfactorily through meaningful mutual engagement."

He reiterated that both parties need to request for the Secretary-General's good offices, "no matter where you look at them."

On Tuesday, Dujarric had said that the UN chief is "deeply concerned" at the increasing tensions between India and Pakistan in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack that killed 40 CRPF personnel, stressing on the need for both to exercise maximum restraint.

"...Looking at the situation in general between India and Pakistan, we're deeply concerned at the increase in tensions between the two countries" in the wake of the February 14 attack, Dujarric had told reporters.

Responding to a question that Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said the UN must step in to defuse tensions and whether the Secretary-General will take that role, Dujarric had said the good offices of the UN chief are available only if both sides ask for it.

"The Secretary-General stresses the importance for both sides to exercise maximum restraint and take immediate steps to de-escalation, and his good offices are always available should both sides ask," Dujarric said.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet had also strongly condemned the attack against Indian security forces in Pulwama and called on authorities to bring those responsible to justice. The already sour relations between India and Pakistan have worsened over the past week as New Delhi blamed Islamabad for the Pulwama attack. Both countries have called back their envoys for "consultations."

Venezuela's Guaido to leave for Colombia as aid standoff hardens

AFP ■ CARACAS

Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido made plans to head for the border with Colombia to personally bring in US-supplied food and medicine in defiance of the military-backed government, raising fears of possible weekend confrontations.

Guaido, who has set a Saturday deadline for bringing in the aid, planned to depart at 6:00 am Thursday in a caravan of buses with members of the opposition-controlled National Assembly, forcing a high-stakes showdown with President Nicolas Maduro.

On Maduro's orders, the military has beefed up border security and barricaded a major border bridge to prevent the supplies from entering the country from Cucuta, Colombia, where tons of supplies are stockpiled.

Although it was unclear exactly what Guaido intends to do, he says he has enlisted hundreds of thousands of volunteers in recent days to help bring in and distribute the aid.

On Wednesday, he rallied bus drivers to go to the borders to collect aid for Venezuelans suffering shortages.

"Even though they point guns at us — and all of us have received threats, rubber bullets and even live ones — we are not afraid," Guaido said, standing on the back of a truck in a throng of supporters.

"We will stay out in the street with our chests bared, demanding freedom for all of Venezuela." Shipments of food and medicine for the crisis-stricken population have become a key focus of the power struggle between Maduro and Guaido.

The 35-year-old leader of the Venezuelan legislature proclaimed himself acting president January 23, and has since won the backing of more than 50 countries.

He wants to oust Maduro, set up a transitional government and hold new elections. "This could be very soon, between six and nine months, once Maduro's current usurpation ends," Guaido told Mexican television station Televisa.

Guaido, who says 300,000 people could die without an influx of aid, says he aims to rally a million volunteers to start bringing it in by Saturday.

Addressing supporters he listed the planned transit points

of entry at the Brazilian and Colombian borders, the island of Curacao and the seaports of Puerto Cabello and La Guaira.

However, the pro-Maduro military has already blocked the Tienditas bridge across the Colombian border, and Vice President Delcy Rodriguez shutting the government was sniffing down air and sea links between Curacao and Venezuela.

The military said in a decree that it was banning vessels from sailing out of Venezuela's ports until Sunday to avoid actions by "criminal" groups.

Amnesty International's Americas director Erika Guevara urged authorities to "not only recognize this serious crisis...but also to guarantee access" for those bringing in aid.

Underlining the swell of international support for Guaido, British entrepreneur Richard Branson plans to hold a pro-aid concert just inside Colombia on Friday, while Maduro's government stages a rival concert on its side of the border, around 1,000 feet (300 meters) away.

US officials say the aid will reach thousands of Venezuelans and last for a few

weeks. Further details of how the opposition aims to distribute it were scarce.

Private bus driver Jose Figueroa, 60, said he planned to leave Caracas in the coming days in a convoy of some 30 vehicles. "The government is leading us to war. It will be very difficult. The situation is extremely tense," he said, as drivers parked their buses and pick-up trucks at a rally in central Caracas.

"But a bullet will kill you more quickly than hunger," Wednesday's rally gathered just a couple of dozen buses and pick-up trucks in Guaido's support.

The pro-opposition drivers had planned to hold their rally at a major crossroads further west but found the avenue blocked by a far bigger demonstration.

Hundreds of state bus drivers rallied in the red shirts of the pro-government "Chavismo" movement, in a gathering convened by the authorities.

They yelled their loyalty to Maduro — himself a former bus driver — and the memory of his predecessor, the father of Venezuela's socialist "revolution," Hugo Chavez.

Netanyahu challengers announce poll alliance

AFP ■ JERUSALEM

The two main challengers to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in April polls announced an electoral alliance on Thursday in a bid to defeat him.

Benny Gantz, a respected former military chief of staff, and centrist politician Yair Lapid said in statements they would form a joint list for the April 9 elections and rotate as prime minister if they won.

Gantz heads his recently launched centrist Israel Resilience party, while Lapid leads Yesh Atid, which currently has 11 seats in parliament out of 120.

Opinion polls have shown the two as the main challengers to Netanyahu, who has been expected to win despite corruption investigations into his affairs.

Former defence minister Moshe Yaalon had previously joined Israel Resilience and another ex-military chief of staff, Gabi Ashkenazi, will also join the new alliance, their statements said.

'Concrete measures' on sex abuse needed: Pope

AFP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis opened Thursday a landmark summit at the Vatican on fighting child sex abuse, saying that the world expected "concrete measures" on tackling paedophilia in the Catholic Church.

The pontiff will dedicate the next three and a half days to discussing the Church's response to child abuse by members of the clergy with bishops from around the world.

"The Holy people of God are watching and waiting not for simple and obvious condemnations but concrete and efficient measures," he said as the summit opened, the first of its kind.

"Let us listen to the cry of the young ones who ask us for justice," he said.

The pope is aiming to tackle the continuing scandal, which again hit the Church in 2018 in countries across the globe, including Chile, Germany and the United States.

The 82-year-old hopes to raise awareness about abuse

through prayers, speeches, working groups and testimonies from victims.

"I ask the Holy Spirit to support us in the following days and help us to transform this evil into an opportunity for awareness and purification," Francis said.

"May the Virgin Mary enlighten us to try to cure the serious wounds caused by the scandal of paedophilia both in children and in believers," he added.

The summit aims to educate 114 top bishops who will then return home with clear ideas on how to spot and deal with abuse and paedophilia.

The task is made difficult by the fact that some churches, in Asia and Africa in particular, deny the problem exists. "My hope would be that people see this as a turning point," said American Cardinal Blase Cupich, one of the pope's trusted allies in the United States and one of the summit's four organisers.

The US Catholic Church has been shaken by one of the gravest crises in its history, with



the defrocking last week by Pope Francis of a former cardinal — American Theodore McCarrick — over accusations he sexually abused a teenager 50 years ago.

"It's not the end game, no one can ever say that... (but) we're going to do everything possible so people are held responsible, accountable and that there is going to be transparency," Cupich told journal-

ists ahead of the meeting.

Three themes — responsibility, accountability and transparency — form the backbone of the summit and will provide its participants with the keys to ensuring child safety, he said.

There are reforms in the pipeline, such as the "tweaking" of certain canon laws, according to another of the organisers, Maltese Archbishop Charles Scicluna.

But the suggestion that Church laws need only fine-tuning has angered many, including Anne Barrett Doyle, the co-director of BishopAccountability.org, a public database that documents cases of proven or suspected cleric sex crimes.

"Canon law has to be changed: not tweaked, not modified, but fundamentally changed, so that it stops prioritising the priesthood... over the lives of children, and vulnerable adults who are sexually assaulted by them," she said.

Scicluna insists that summoning Church leaders from all continents to Rome "is in itself a very important message".

The Maltese spent 10 years as the Vatican's top prosecutor on paedophilia cases, and was picked by Francis to travel to Chile last year to hear from victims whose voices had previously been silenced by an internal Church cover-up.

Scicluna has called for an end to the code of silence and culture of denial within the beleaguered centuries-old institution.

Advocacy groups urge US to act against JeM, Masood

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A Hindu-American advocacy group and an organisation of Kashmiri Pandits have urged the US to take action against the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror outfit and its leader Masood Azhar and to condemn the alleged role of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and China in providing physical and diplomatic cover to such terror organisations.

The move came days after a deadly terror attack on the convoy of CRPF personnel in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir. A suicide bomber from the Pakistan-based JeM drove his explosives-laden vehicle into a CRPF bus on February 14, killing 40 security personnel.

The two groups handed over a letter, jointly signed by them, to the US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback urging the Trump Administration to take action, both at the international as well as at the domestic levels, to censure the terrorist organisation.

"We call upon the US government to condemn in all international fora the role played by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China in providing physical and diplomatic cover to terrorists like Masood Azhar that have wreaked havoc in Kashmir," said the letter, signed

The move came days after a deadly terror attack on the convoy of CRPF personnel in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir.

jointly by the Indo-American Kashmir Forum (IAKF) and the Hindu American Foundation (HAF).

The IAKF represents the Kashmiri Pandit community residing in the US, while the HAF is a non-profit advocacy organization for the Hindu-American community.

The letter was read in full before Brownback and the participants of the International Religious Freedom held at the US Capitol on Tuesday, by Vijay Sazawal, the international convener of the IAKF.

Sazawal said "there is a cultural genocide happening in Kashmir". "The environment of intolerance at the grassroots level only feeds into the ecosystem which breeds terrorists like Masood Azhar who then carry out such transnational attacks in Afghanistan and

India," said Jay Kansara of the HAF.

Meanwhile, another organization of Kashmiri Pandits said it would host a virtual conference to highlight the paradigm shift which has occurred within the community globally. "The conclave will be an opportunity for the global audience to hear the perspectives of speakers' (from Jammu and Kashmir) and policy positions on the theme of the conference in the light of the present-day developments," the Global Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora (GKPD) said in a statement.

Former J-K finance minister Abdul Rahim Rather, Peoples' Democratic Party leader Muzaffar Hussain Baig, chairman of J-K People's Conference Sajad Gani Lone, president of J-K Bharatiya Janata Party Ravinder Raina, and former union minister and Congress leader Manish Tewari are likely to address the global multi-media event, to be attended by community members from various parts of the world, the media release said.

In a separate statement, the Kashmir Hindu Foundation condemned the February 14 terror attack, saying these attacks in Kashmir prove that the radical jihadi mind-set has penetrated deep into the psyche and polluted the minds of a major population of Kashmiri Muslims in the Valley.

Trend Blazer

Raveena helps martyrs' children

Actress **RAVEENA TANDON** says that her foundation will look into the education of martyrs' children. As per reports, Raveena, who is known for her philanthropic work and her association with various noble causes, is already committed to the education of the girl child and provides scholarships for the same. But she is now taking charge of children of all martyrs.

Talking about it, she said: "These are moments when everyone should come forward and contribute whatever it might be — whether it's a big or small amount. It goes a long way and I have taken over the responsibility of educating the girl children. I am not limiting it to just them but the children of the martyrs. It's not only of the Pulwama attack, it is basically for all our jawans."



'What can one do if they (industry) reach out to me asking for blessings? These are youngsters who have worked with me in the past. Should I have told them they don't have my blessings? The proper thing to do would have been to first for ask my consent before remixing Mungda.'
—Rajesh Roshan



Actor **BOMAN IRANI** will be essaying the role of business tycoon **Ratan Tata** in the forthcoming film **PM Narendra Modi**. "I have always received comments on social media that I resemble Ratan Tata. I always thought the day the character comes along, I will be more than happy to play it,"



Boman said. "So when Omung, Sandip and Vivek called me for the role, I immediately agreed to do it. The team is quite wonderful and Omung is doing a great job. We have already shot my part and it went very well," he added.

PURSUIT OF BALANCE

Actor **ANIL KAPOOR**, who will be seen next in *Total Dhamaal*, tells **SAIMI SATTAR** that all genres need a good script

Actor Anil Kapoor Kapoor is conversing with the chef and asks him to send some *meethi chutney* to accompany the really delicious Delhi *samosas*. Eating fried, oily snacks is quite contrary to the idea of the actor's diet, who seems to have drunk from the fountain of eternal youth, but he lets us in on his mantra. "The body is like a bank balance. It needs a certain number of calories to run. If you've burnt more calories and eaten less, then you have the bank balance which can be withdrawn when it is needed. Today is one such day when it is okay to indulge myself," says the actor, who, except the fine lines and creases here and there, looks not a day older to when he had made his debut in 1979.

Dressed in all black, he is promoting his new film *Total Dhamaal*, where he reunites with Madhuri Dixit, his popular co-star of the 90s. "It has been a long career. I have been quite lucky. And there is the bonus of being able to work with beautiful girls like Madhuri," he guffaws.

As to what kept him invested in the adventure comedy film, he tells us, "First of all, I laughed reading the script. That did it for me. This is an ensemble cast and the biggest advantage is that the entire film is not on your shoulder, which reduces the pressure. As a result, we enjoyed acting in the film more and did better. This is also apparent in the trailer and people are liking it," he says. And the subject of mature romance worked well for him and Madhuri. "When you are younger, you can take the pressure because you are fresh, the songs are great and as a pair you are also looking good together. We are not Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt. We should stay in our *auqat*."

Of course, he points out that there are other factors that prove to be clingers. "The script, director, co-stars, producers, distributors and the money make me decide," says the 62-year-old. But whichever genre he is working in, preparation is essential. "In today's time when the stakes are so high, every detail including performance, dialect design, art and clothes have to be prepared in advance. If you are prepared, your work will be faster, easier and better."

Having worked in comedy franchises quite a bit, Kapoor believes that the foremost role is played by the writers. "Only a few people can work on punches and understand them in a manner that it works pan-India, with people from villages to those in the cities, students, children, intellectuals. The dialogues should make everyone or at least 70 per cent of the population laugh. These days there is a surfeit of comedy for various categories of audience, be it TV, YouTube and even stand-up acts. So in a film, you need to add scale and adventure. We have got in an animal farm like scenario in *Total Dhamaal*, which is not possible in a TV show, for instance, to make sure that people feel that they've got their money's worth," he says.

Kapoor feels there are as many styles of comedy as there are directors, writers and actors. "*Chameli ki Shaadi* was situational. Indra Kumar does a combination of situational, gags and physical comedy. Similarly, Priyadarshan is different and so is Rohit Shetty or the old guard like Basu Chatterjee and Hrishida. Directors need to have a sense of humour inherently and that makes a difference. Their thinking, the way of writing and the editing can make a comedy work or fall flat. The physical comedy that Jim Carey does was fantastic. The way Ben Stiller works is different.

Steve Martin, Mehmood, Kishore Kumar traverse similar territory. Amitiji is more poker and physical while Govinda and Johnny Lever have their own street-smart way of executing it. Coming to the writers, the kind of comedy that was penned by Kader Khan was distinct."

Kapoor is categorical that if the writing is flat, then even a Charlie Chaplin or Laurel Hardy cannot make a script work. "Gags have to be well-written and thought out. When the writing is good, it is easier for the actors," he says and goes on to give the example of American show *Modern Family* as brilliantly written.

We rely on his experience to talk about the progression of content in cinema and inevitably talk revolves around *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga*. "The audience is evolving. The educated, sensible youth of the country are exposed through the internet and are engaging with sensible content." And he loves the next generation. While most actors do not like carrying work back home or vice versa even when they have spouses or parents from the industry, Kapoor has no qualms admitting that shooting with his daughter Sonam was a blast. "During the shooting of *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga*, we were preparing for marriage and in between shots we discussed everything related to it," he says of the film.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

which she suggested to him. Even earlier, while choosing his international outing *Slumdog Millionaire*, it was his son Harshvardhan, who pushed him. As for his much-acclaimed TV series *24*, he went with his wife Sunita's gut feel. "When we started *24* about seven to eight years ago, I had trouble explaining to people that there can be a season and a daily soap is not necessary. I had to convince the producers that we could pitch it well for TV and if the casting was good with mainstream actors like me, then people would accept quality content on Indian TV. I wanted a certain amount of money because I knew I couldn't make it in a lesser amount," he recalls as he keeps his fingers crossed for a third season of the show.

The fast-paced show won a lot of fan following. "Some people even said it should be slowed down because it was so edge-of-the-seat," he says. But there are other problems too while shooting in the series format as opposed to a film. "There are 24 episodes which represent an hour in one day. While the films are for two hours, the content that we needed for each episode is 40 minutes which adds up to 20 hours for the entire season. That means 10 films in a year! It was strenuous and a roller coaster ride. Sometimes we even worked for 18 hours."

Besides the content, another way that Kapoor has seen the industry change is the way it treats women. He believes that #MeToo has changed the work environment. However, he believes, "I was fortunate to work in films where there was a healthy atmosphere. Whether it was my Telugu debut as Bapu in *Vamsa Vruksham* (1980) or with MS Sathyu with whom I was a part of *Kahan Kahan Se Guzar Gaye*, our assistants and newcomers were women. In *Parinda*, Renu Saluja was the editor and she controlled everything. Much later in *Ayesha*, Rhea was the producer and she was 21. On the sets of *Veere di Wedding*, I had to look for a boy as there were 50 girls. In this film, the photographer is a Japanese girl. We are consciously creating an atmosphere."



KUSHAN MITRA



A Civic lesson

The new tenth-generation Honda Civic is certainly an attractive vehicle, with or without its front-end. But will it set the roads alight as the previous Civic did in India?

When Honda Cars India launched the first Civic here a decade and a half ago, it heralded a revolution. The car, which was the eighth-generation of the Japanese carmaker's popular sedan (and hatchback in European countries), was a sales success. But Honda was not able to continue the Civic's successful run in India for too long for a multitude of reasons. However, one has to admit that a major reason why sales of the Civic tailed off was India's growing love affair with oil-burners, that is diesel cars. Honda globally did not have a smaller diesel motor that they could bring to India back then and that played a role in the company ceding the segment to its rivals, first the Chevrolet Cruze and then further on the Toyota Corolla Altis and Skoda Octavia.

But now the Honda Civic is back and after skipping one global generation, Honda cars India has brought in the tenth-generation. This time, they have ensured that it has a diesel engine alongside a zippy petrol motor. So let us deal with the headline numbers first. The 1.6 litre turbocharged diesel engine, which shares duty on the other recently introduced Honda, the CR-V, produces a decent 120 horsepower. The company claims that thanks to their "Earth Dreams" technology, the Civic i-DTEC returns an astounding 26 km per litre under Indian test conditions. The Civic also comes with a 1.8 litre i-VTEC petrol that produces a fairly decent 140 horsepower. Disappointingly for Civic fans, Honda has not brought either of the powerful engines that do service on this particular sedan in the United States, which are a 158 horsepower 2.0 i-VTEC and the very impressive 200 horsepower turbocharged 1.5 litre engine. Of course, India is a fuel-economy obsessed market but Honda has bucked the trend in the past with cars like the Honda Accord V6, which all car nuts in India who drove, including myself, remember as a rocket, a thirsty rocket, but a rocket nonetheless. Even today, good second-hand examples of this car, like the original Honda City VTEC, which was another amazing car, command top dollar.

But can the new Honda Civic become a future classic like its illustrious predecessors? Well, it does certainly knock the door on the looks front. Yes, the snout of the car is a bit incongruous. In fact, the chrome slab across the front grille, which is apparently a Honda signature, does make the car look quite weird. Because from the side and particularly from the rear, it looks fabulous. In fact, the rear three-quarter look of this vehicle is among the prettiest I have seen on a car in India. This car looks as attractive as a supermodel sashaying down the ramp with some toilet paper stuck to her heel. Still very, very pretty but you know, something is off.

What I did find interesting is that despite the looks, particularly the coupe-shaped sloping roofline which makes you assume that the car would be very tight inside, it really is not. I will not say it is the most spacious car in its segment but it does not feel cramped. After all, the Civic sedan is designed for the American market, where people are not quite small or short. Headroom in the front is not bad at all, and I am 5'11". In the rear, even with the front seats pushed back, space is more than sufficient for myself and while three adults on the rear bench is a squeeze on any car, it will not feel so bad on the Civic. The only issue is possibly the fact that in order to get the space in the front and rear, the seats ride rather low and although the Indian Civic is 10 mm higher than the outgoing model, ingress and egress is a bit clumsy the first

few times until you get the hang of it.

But you never buy a car for its looks alone, you do care about the performance too. So how is the new Civic? Well, first a disclaimer, this is a first drive, not a detailed test drive where I drive and experience a vehicle over a few days during my commute. We drove the car around the highways near Bengaluru airport and up the twisty roads on Nandi Hills. Initially, I had the i-DTEC which comes with a six-speed manual transmission. Now, I have a strong opinion about six-speed manual transmissions in India because I still believe it is one gear too many on any car. That said, on the highway you can easily put the car into sixth and just cruise at 80-100 km per hour, the diesel purring along. What does not purr along are the tyres? Because of the need to derive higher fuel economy, the i-DTEC comes with low rolling resistance tyres and those are noticeably noisy. You can drown that out by pumping the volume on the smart infotainment system, which is similar to those on other new Hondas, and comes with support for Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, standard across variants.

Now, on the twisty sections you really do need to mash the gears to keep the motor in its narrow power-band. While the car does take the corners very steadily indeed, you do feel that it could do a bit more. Maybe with grippier tyres it could. Then again, even with enthusiastic driving, the Civic Diesel returned almost 15 km per litre. This is clearly a car designed to be an economical long-distance hauler, but a boy racer.

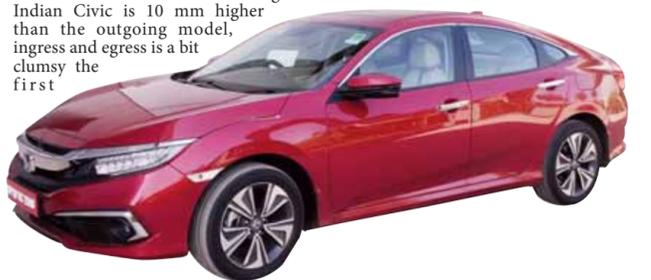
So on to the iVTEC, first things first, there is no manual version on this Civic. Nope. Nada. Nyet. What you get is Honda's very nice Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) with a Torque Converter and seven forward speeds as standard, as well as a paddle-shift system when you want to have fun. Now, Honda's CVTs are very smooth — I loved the CVT on the diesel Amaze for example — but they are not designed again for very enthusiastic driving. On regular day-to-day driving on the highway and in the city, gear shifts are brilliant and kick-down power when you need to get a move on gets delivered promptly. But you do start to sense some shift-lag when you start using the paddles a lot. Possibly I am saying this because dual-clutch gearboxes and their millisecond shifts have spoiled me. While this CVT is not what I would call lazy, it again feels tuned more to regular urban commuting.

And you know what? Urban commuting is what most buyers of the Civic will do, and once you begin to live with it, you can work your way around the CVT transmission and figure it out. As such both the iDTEC and iVTEC Civics are very well suited for that role and look fantastic as well.

The problem Honda India faces has actually less to do with the Civic and more to do with the segment, because the segment is moribund. India's love affair with the Sports Utility Vehicle continues, anybody buying a car in the ₹15-18 lakh range is looking lustfully at the Hyundai Creta. The Civic, which one expects to match the Corolla Altis for price, meaning it would be around the ₹18-24 lakh segment, will have people look at the Hyundai Tucson, or have people who want space just look at the Toyota Innova. There is no doubt the new Honda Civic is a good car and an excellent looking one at that, but I'm not sure it can make the Indian buyer start looking at sedans again.

But can the new Honda Civic become a future classic like its illustrious predecessors? Well, it does certainly knock the door on the looks front. Yes, the snout of the car is a bit incongruous. In fact, the chrome slab across the front grille, which is apparently a Honda signature, does make the car look quite weird. Because from the side and particularly from the rear, it looks fabulous. In fact, the rear three-quarter look of this vehicle is among the prettiest I have seen on a car in India. This car looks as attractive as a supermodel sashaying down the ramp with some toilet paper stuck to her heel. Still very, very pretty but you know, something is off.

What I did find interesting is that despite the looks, particularly the coupe-shaped sloping roofline which makes you assume that the car would be very tight inside, it really is not. I will not say it is the most spacious car in its segment but it does not feel cramped. After all, the Civic sedan is designed for the American market, where people are not quite small or short. Headroom in the front is not bad at all, and I am 5'11". In the rear, even with the front seats pushed back, space is more than sufficient for myself and while three adults on the rear bench is a squeeze on any car, it will not feel so bad on the Civic. The only issue is possibly the fact that in order to get the space in the front and rear, the seats ride rather low and although the Indian Civic is 10 mm higher than the outgoing model, ingress and egress is a bit clumsy the first



What's better than a tattoo? One in a foreign language, of course. If trend meters are to be believed, then tattooing phrases, quotes, words in a foreign language has caught the fancy of celebrities. Hollywood celebrities have often gone with Indian languages — Jessica Alba's wrist is inked with "*Padma*" and Brittany Snow's right ankle says "*Abhay*." Angelina Jolie has a verse in Pali emblazoned on her left shoulder. Closer home, our very own Sushmita Sen has a tattoo in Latin which reads *Aut Viam inveniam aut faciam* which translates as "I shall either find a way or make my own."

A tattoo definitely looks more attractive in another language form and can be a great conversation starter. It also adds a hint of mystery, according to Vikas Malani, founder of BodyCanvas Tattoos. But sometimes the results are not so desirable as was seen

Foreign ink

Before getting a tattoo in an unknown language, it is best to check its meaning or be prepared for disastrous results

with the Victoria tattoo on David Beckham's arm which was spelt incorrectly or Gillian Anderson's unknown Hindi word. Recently, pop singer Ariana Grande planned to get the title of her latest hit single, *7 Rings*, tattooed on her palm in Japanese, but after sharing a photo of the new ink on Instagram she got trolled and learned that it was misspelled and meant, "7 bbq grill" instead. When she attempted to get it fixed, it turned out to be an even bigger faux pas, as the tattoo now means "7 bbq fingers".

"If celebrities can wake up to the nightmares of a tattoo gone wrong, what are mere mortals like us? The countless instances of tattoos gone wrong with disastrous errors and weird translations happen because people fail to do their homework," says Malani.

His words of advice? "Never trust the Internet /Google. Try translating two languages that you know with its help and you know it can have errors — big ones. So, if you don't write/speak the language that your tattoo is



written in, find a qualified translator or native speaker to translate it for you. Then verify/cross check with one more person who knows that language too. We know the difference between you're and your but someone who doesn't know English might just end up getting a tattoo with a wrong meaning altogether." Malani feels that websites



may give us the words but the meaning can go out of context. The word "free" can denote freedom or something that has no cost. In English, we use the same word for both meanings, but in another language, it may be two different words. So do a thorough research beforehand to avoid any blunders and make your tattoo rock.

Eves aim high against England

After winning maiden series in New Zealand, Mithali and Co look to continue dominant run in home series

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India vs England
Live from 9:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

The aggressive Harmanpreet Kaur's injury-forced absence is likely to be felt but a confident Indian women's cricket team will look to make the home advantage count when it squares off against England in a three-match ODI series starting at Wankhede Stadium on Friday.

Fresh from a decent outing in New Zealand, where the team won the ODIs but were blanked 0-3 in T20 Internationals, the Indian team continues its ICC Championships engagements.

The team has to hold on to its position in the top-four of the world rankings till 2020 to get direct qualification for the 2021 World Cup.

All the three matches will be played at the Wankhede and India would be firm favourites. The Mithali Raj-led outfit had beaten England 2-1 the last time the visitors were here, in 2018.

Raj, whose position in the T20 squad has created quite a bit of controversy in the past few months, is still at the top of her game in the 50-over format. The 36-year-old became the first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs for India during the tour of New Zealand a few weeks back.

However, the hosts will miss her regular deputy and T20 captain Harmanpreet, who was ruled out of the entire series with an ankle injury. She has been replaced by Harleen Deol.

Although Harmanpreet was off-colour during the series against New Zealand, she remains crucial for India in its new-found aggression.

But ICC's woman cricketer of the year Smriti Mandhana and the young and sprightly Jemimah Rodrigues can



be banked upon to provide the requisite spark. Mandhana, especially, was in top form in New Zealand and would be aiming to continue the fine run.

The team has had middle-order issues in the past and newly-appointed coach W V Raman would be keen to sort those out.

The home team's bowling has an all-round look with the pace attack being led by redoubtable veteran Jhulan Goswami and also comprising the likes of Shikha Pandey and Mansi Joshi.

With spin being a key element on

Indian wickets, the role of slow bowlers Deepti Sharma, Ekta Bisht and Poonam Yadav in the middle overs would be crucial.

The England women, on the other hand, are no pushovers in the 50-over format. They have experienced campaigners in top-order batting, such as Danni Wyatt (746 runs in 61 matches) and 28-year-old Heather Knight.

Knight, with 2,331 runs to her credit in 86 ODIs, displayed good form in the practice game against the Board Presidents XI and would be expected to

anchor the innings for the visitors.

With all-rounders like Sophie Ecclestone, experienced pacer Anya Shrubsole and accurate medium pacer Nat Sciver in the mix, England have the bowling attack to trouble the hosts.

Anya would also take confidence from her four-wicket haul in the warm-up game.

SQUADS

India: Mithali Raj (Captain), Jhulan Goswami, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma,

Taniya Bhatia (wicket-keeper), R Kalpana (wicket-keeper), Mona Meshram, Ekta Bisht, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Shikha Pandey, Mansi Joshi, Punam Raut, Harleen Deol.

England: Tammy Beaumont, Katherine Brunt, Kate Cross, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Georgia Elwiss, Alex Hartley, Amy Jones, Heather Knight, Laura Marsh, Nat Sciver, Anya Shrubsole, Sarah Taylor (wicketkeeper), Lauren Winfield and Danni Wyatt.

Team focused on getting direct entry into 2021 World cup: Mithali

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian women's ODI team skipper Mithali Raj said the team is focussed on avoiding the qualifiers ahead of the 2021 World Cup but reckoned it will be a major challenge facing World Cup champions England in the absence of injured Harmanpreet Kaur.

Mithali said her team is focused on holding on to its position in the top-four of the world rankings till 2020 to get direct qualification for the 2021 World Cup.

"It's a very important series for us, being number three right now in points table. Points are at stake and I definitely want the team to get direct entry (into the next World Cup). It's important to get as many points as possible from the series," she said on the eve of the series.

India had beaten England 2-1 the last time the visitors were here in 2018 but Mithali said facing the visitors without Harmanpreet will show the team's depth.

"England are a formidable side, being the World Cup champions and they will come strongly at us. We should be playing a positive brand of cricket," said Mithali.

"They've got their senior players back into the squad, and we are without one of our senior players. But this series will also show how we meet this challenge. It will reflect the depth of our team."



On the absence of Harmanpreet, Mithali said the injured player will be missed but her absence also provides chance to the youngsters to come good.

"She is one of the main players in the team for a long time, but it is also an opportunity for young players in the team to rise up and use the opportunity to step up and perform," said the India captain.

"Harman is not there because of injury. I should emphasise that we, as a batting unit, should take the (added) responsibility and whoever gets the opportunity should play that role," she added.

For a direct entry into the World Cup, Mithali and company need to hold on to their position in the top-four of the world rankings till 2020.

The equation becomes a bit more complex in the wake of the terror attack by a Pakistan-based terror-outfit in Pulwama in Kashmir and the outrage it has given rise to all over the country.

Now there's a distinct possibility that the Indian team may not line up against Pakistan and Mithali said she is aware of this sort of scenario.

"It's always been in our minds that we probably won't play Pakistan, and that's why, whatever matches we play against whoever, we should be going in by keeping in mind that we need those points," she remarked.

India had defeated New Zealand 2-1 in the recent ODI series in different conditions and Mithali said they will take the confidence into the series against England.

"It was our first win on the New Zealand soil, so it feels great to win a series there, but to come home and play England is completely different," she said.

"The conditions are different. We'll take a lot of positives and confidence from that series win, but our preparation and strategy differs from what it was in New Zealand."

Want to make history in India: Knight

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reigning World Cup champions England want to create history by defeating India in their own backyard for the first time in an ODI series, said visiting team captain Heather Knight on the eve of the opening clash.

"Yes, we have talked about it. It's something we want to do as a team. We want to make history. When we came here last year, it was a slightly younger team. We weren't able to do that; we lost that series 2-1," said Knight.

The two teams had played a memorable World Cup final in 2017 when hosts England

pulled off a sensational win.

"We have had some amazing games; that World Cup final was an amazing game to be involved in. Obviously the enormity of the occasion: to be in a WC final, to be sold out at Lord's. We've played some good games, including last year in Indian conditions as well."

According to Knight, her team's strength is its depth.

"The ODI cricket we've played in the last couple of years, including the World Cup in England, that's been very good. We have got performances from different players. We have got inexperience and a group that has been around for a while as well.



"We've got quite a settled batting line-up and everyone of the batters in the top six or seven are match-winners. So hopefully a lot more players can step up, as they have done in the last two years," she added.

Knight agreed that India will miss the injured Harmanpreet Kaur.

"She has been a very good player for them. She has been playing in the leagues around the world. I know what sort of player she is. Any team in the world would miss her."

On how to stop the in-form Smriti Mandhana, with whom she has played in the BBL in Australia, Knight said

that the India opener has some weaknesses which her bowlers would look to exploit.

"I have obviously played with Smriti in Hobart (Hurricanes), very recently. She played in my team, so I know her very well. I know she's a very good player. And having seen a lot of her, obviously, it gives us the chance to look at her weaknesses as well and try and figure out how we're going to exploit them in the series," she added.

Meanwhile Mithali was of the view that spinners would hold the key although because of the early starts there would be some moisture for the medium pacers to exploit.

England post record chase Hardik out of Australia series

AFP ■ BARBADOS

Contrasting centuries by Jason Roy and Joe Root paced England to a comfortable six-wicket victory over the West Indies with their record one-day international run chase in a high-scoring opening game of a five-match series in Barbados on Wednesday.

Set what looked a daunting target after Chris Gayle's 24th ODI hundred anchored the home side to 360-8, Roy blazed 123 off 85 balls at the top of the order while Root cruised to a comparatively sedate 102 off 97 deliveries to take help the tourists reach their target with eight balls to spare.

In achieving the highest-ever ODI run chase in the Caribbean and the third-highest overall, England underlined their status as the top-ranked team in this format of the game and will be brimful of batting confidence heading into the second match at the same venue on Friday.

Fresh from a hundred in the lone warm-up match at the weekend, Roy was at his most ruthless against the hosts who missed key fast bowler Kumar Roach.

Roy set the pace in racing to a hundred off just 65 balls — the fastest-ever in ODIs in the Caribbean — and dominated an opening stand of 91 with Jonny Bairstow.

He maintained the charge through a 114-run second-wicket partnership with Root and by the time he fell in the 27th over to leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo, England were well on course.

Earlier, Gayle lit up the Kensington Oval with another display of power-hitting.

Playing his first ODI since the home series against Bangladesh last July and having



STOKES, BUTTLER RESTED FOR T20S

LONDON: Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler will be rested for England's Twenty20 series against the West Indies, selectors announced on Thursday.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Sam Billings and batsman David Malan return to the 14-man squad for the first time since last year's tour of Australia and New Zealand.

Stokes and Buttler were both involved in the Test series in the West Indies and are playing in the ongoing one-day international

series. Jason Roy will miss the series to return home for the birth of his first child after the final one-day international.

Squad: Eoin Morgan (capt), Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow, Sam Billings, Tom Curran, Joe Denly, Alex Hales, Chris Jordan, David Malan, Liam Plunkett, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, David Willey, Mark Wood.

announced that the upcoming World Cup will be his international farewell in the format, the big-hitting left-hander signalled his intentions for a lengthy grand finale with an innings of 135 off 129 balls with 12 sixes and three fours.

His tally of maximums dominated an innings in which 23 sixes were struck, a new

record for an ODI innings. Despite conceding 34 runs off his final two overs, leg-spinner Rashid played an important role together with Stokes in limiting the West Indies progress over the final 15 overs.

Stokes returned the best figures of three for 37, including the important wicket of Gayle in the 47th over.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India all-rounder Hardik Pandya was on Thursday ruled out of the upcoming T20 and ODI series against Australia due to "lower back stiffness" with Ravindra Jadeja replacing him in the 50-over squad.

It is a minor setback for the team and Pandya, who returned to action during the limited-overs series in New Zealand after being handed a provisional suspension.

"The BCCI Medical team decided to rest the all-rounder and



let him undergo strength and conditioning work for his lower back at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru. Pandya will begin his strength work from next week," said the BCCI in a statement.

"The T20I squad will now

consist of 14 members. Ravindra Jadeja has been named replacement for Hardik Pandya for the 5 ODIs," it added.

After returning from ban Pandya made instant impact in his comeback game, proving how crucial his presence is for the balance of the side.

The 25-year-old has so far played 11 Tests, 45 ODIs and 38 T20s.

His absence from the ODI squad gives Jadeja another opportunity to stake his claim in the squad for the World Cup to be played in the UK in May-July.

Iyer hits record-breaking ton Maharashtra beat Uttar Pradesh

PTI ■ INDORE

Young Shreyas Iyer hit a blazing 147 off 55 balls to help Mumbai defeat Sikkim by 154 runs in their Group C opening match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy on Thursday.

Iyer's 147 is the highest T20 score by an Indian. He surpassed the record of Rishabh Pant, who had scored unbeaten 128 for Delhi Daredevils.

His 147 is also the 12th highest score by a batsman in the T20 cricket history.

Test specialist Cheteshwar Pujara also hit an unbeaten 100 in 61 balls, but the effort went in vain as Railways chased down Saurashtra's 189-run target with five wickets in hand at the Holkar Stadium.

At the Emeralds Heights International School ground, it was all Iyer show, who took the Sikkim bowlers to cleaners hammering 15 sixes and seven boundaries as Mumbai posted

a mammoth 258/4 in 20 overs. The domestic veterans then restricted Sikkim to 104/7 to start their campaign on a winning note.

Mumbai lost openers skipper Ajinkya Rahane (11) and young prodigy Prithvi Shaw (10) cheaply and were reduced to 2-22.

But one-down Iyer and experienced Surya Kumar Yadav joined forces as they hammered the opposition bowlers and conjured a 213-run stand for the third wicket.

It was an absolute carnage with Iyer being the more aggressive of the two.

24-year-old Iyer raced to his 100 in just 38 balls.

Surya too played a handy knock of 63 in just 33 balls with eight boundaries and two other shots over the fence.

Sikkim was never in the hunt to chase the total and their innings ended at 104/7.

For Mumbai, spinner Shams Mulani and pacer Shardul Thakur picked two

wickets each, while Dhawal Kulkarni, Shubham Ranjane and Tushar Deshpande picked a wicket each.

In another Group C match, Pujara hit a stroke-filled unbeaten 100 off 61 balls, with 14 boundaries and a six, and his team, Saurashtra, to 188/3 in 20 overs.

But contributions from the middle order helped Railways overhaul the target with two balls to spare.

Meanwhile at Palam A Stadium, Maharashtra thrashed Uttar Pradesh by 12 runs.

Asked to take first strike, Maharashtra posted a decent 149-5, riding on some useful contributions by NS Naik (41), NS Shaikh (41) and RD Gaikwad (35).

In reply, Uttar Pradesh folded for 137 all out in 19.3 overs, despite a 61-ball 93 by Samarth Singh. Only skipper AD Nath (10) posted a double figure as rest of the batsmen were dismissed for single score.

LOCAL EVENTS



ALL LUCKNOW FINAL

Luck now region and Lucknow Hostel won their respective semi-final clashes to set up a final showdown in the State-Level Junior Girls' Hockey Tournament at Mohd Shahid Stadium on Thursday. Lucknow Hostel defeated Meerut 7-0 while Lucknow region beat Sports College Gorakhpur 3-1 to book the final berth.

CRAZY LAST QUARTER

Gimenez and Godin strike late to earn Atletico 2-0 victory in an entertaining first leg tie against Juventus

AFP ■ MADRID

Cristiano Ronaldo's Champions League mission with Juventus stalled on Wednesday as Atletico Madrid secured a deserved 2-0 victory from a thrilling first leg at the Wanda Metropolitano. Ronaldo returned to the Spanish capital, where he enjoyed unprecedented success in this tournament with Real, but it was their rivals celebrating at the final whistle as goals from Jose Gimenez and Diego Godin put Atletico within sight of the quarter-finals.

But this was a victory that Simeone's side fully deserved. Antoine Griezmann had hit the crossbar while VAR twice intervened, correctly, in Juve's favour, cancelling a penalty for a foul on Diego Costa and then ruling out an Alvaro Morata header just before Gimenez struck.

While Juventus tried to preserve the stalemate, Atletico were bold. Simeone introduced Morata, Thomas Lemar and Angel Correa, all around the hour-mark, and his daring paid off. "I showed balls," Simeone said.

Juve are certainly not dead and buried, particularly given Costa and Thomas Partey will both be suspended for the return in Turin after each picked up yellow cards.

But the failure to score an away goal, and their clear inferiority in the second half does not bode well for any hopes of a comeback. "They don't give you chances," said Allegri. "They make you play badly."

Defeat in the last 16 for either team would be unthinkable, for Atletico, who know the final will be played here, at their own stadium, on June 1, the perfect chance to wrestle the trophy off Real in the very city they share.



Jose Gimenez celebrates after scoring Atletico Madrid's opening goal against Juventus in round of 16 first leg clash at Wanda Metropolitano in Madrid on Wednesday. UEFA

RONALDO SUBDUED

And for Juventus, whose wait for Europe's premier prize has now entered its 23rd year, when expectations are higher than ever given they now boast the tournament's most prolific ever player.

Ronaldo, though, endured a disappointing night, suffocated from the outset by a typically relentless Atletico backline.

Perhaps it was frustration that made him wave five fingers in the direction of the baiting Atletico crowd, presumably to signify his five Champions League triumphs.

His best contribution was an early,

Ronaldo returned to the Spanish capital, where he enjoyed unprecedented success in this tournament with Real, but it was their rivals celebrating at the final whistle as goals from Jose Gimenez and Diego Godin put Atletico within sight of the quarter-finals

"We are not through yet. There is another match to play and we know we will have to suffer."
—Diego Simeone (Atletico Madrid coach)

"Fortunately we didn't concede a third. Because 2-0 is a result that can be turned around. We're not dead yet."
—Massimiliano Allegri (Juventus boss)

driven free-kick from 30 yards, that had to be pushed over by Jan Oblak, and the dummy-shot before it, that exposed Costa as encroaching, for which he received his yellow card. Costa was his bristling self and almost

won a penalty when referee Felix Zwayer thought he was tripped by Mattia de Sciglio. But VAR showed he had not only exaggerated the contact but also extended his run into the area.

The rest of the half was tighter but Atletico had two golden opportunities early in the second. First, Griezmann volleyed Costa in behind but the Spaniard sidefooted wide with only Wojciech Szczesny to beat.

Then, it was Griezmann's turn, this time Szczesny intervening, tipping the Frenchman's lob onto the crossbar before Giorgio Chiellini stopped Costa from reaching the rebound.

Atletico were pushing and it was Morata, on for Costa, who made the difference. He powered in a brilliant header only to see it chalked off for a push but he was not deterred, and when Juve failed to clear his knock-down at a corner, Gimenez was perfectly placed.

Juve were rattled and their failure to rally could cost them dear. Atletico scored again as Godin rose to head in at the near post, only to turn and find Mario Mandzukic had cleared the ball to his feet. The angle was tight but the net was open.

Juve might have snatched an away goal late on but Oblak pushed over Federico Bernardeschi's shot. They have it all to do.

Sterling winner caps late City comeback

AFP ■ SCHALKE

Raheem Sterling sealed a dramatic 3-2 Champions League win for 10-man Manchester City at Schalke on Wednesday as the English champions scored twice in the last five minutes.

Sterling tucked away the winner at the Veltins Arena in the 90th minute just after substitute Leroy Sane fired home a stunning free-kick for the Premier League leaders against his former club in the last 16, first leg.

Schalke led 2-1 at half-time as the VAR twice intervened to award penalties, both converted by Nabil Bentaleb, cancelling out Sergio Aguero's opener in Gelsenkirchen.

City were in real trouble with 22 minutes left when Nicolas Otamendi, who gave away the controversial first penalty, was sent off for a second yellow card before Sane's moment of brilliance and Sterling's winner.

However, City still have some work to do in the return leg on March 12 with Fernandinho, who was booked when conceding the second spot-kick, and Otamendi both suspended.

Schalke are just above the Bundesliga's relegation places and winless in their last four league games, yet they gave Premier League leaders City an almighty scare.

The hosts initially struggled to get out of their half as Man City dominated the opening 30 minutes, until the game swung dramatically Schalke's way with the two penalty decisions. Schalke shot themselves in the foot for City's opening goal on 18 minutes when a lazy pass from goalkeeper Ralf Faehrmann to Salif Sane was snapped up by David Silva.

The Spaniard drew Faehrmann and selflessly served up a simple tap-in for Aguero to claim his 10th goal in his last seven City appearances.

SCHALKE SPARKED INTO LIFE
However, falling behind sparked life into Schalke.

Schalke drew level after Daniel Caligiuri fired in a speculative shot which clipped Otamendi's arm.

Despite City's furious protests, the spot-kick was duly awarded, which Bentaleb tucked away to the delight of the home crowd on 38 min-



Figuratively

8 Leroy Sane has been directly involved in eight goals in his last seven appearances in all competitions for Manchester City (three goals, five assists).

1 Nicolás Otamendi has received his first red card for Manchester City in what was his 161st appearance for the club.

2 Manchester City have conceded at least two goals in six of their seven games in the Champions League knockout stages under Pep Guardiola.

7 Since the start of last season, only Cristiano Ronaldo (8) has scored more away goals in the Champions League than Sergio Aguero (7).

utes and they would be celebrating again soon after. The Germans took the lead when Fernandinho pushed Senegal defender Salif Sane when a free-kick flew into the box, and VAR again intervened and another penalty went Schalke's way.

Bentaleb stepped up to smash the spot-kick past Ederson and put Schalke ahead. The second half was a much more even affair with Schalke no longer intimidated to be playing star-studded City.

In turn, the visitors' problems were compounded on 68 minutes when Otamendi clattered Schalke's replacement forward Guido Burgstaller and was dismissed.

In a bid to turn the match with 13 minutes left, Leroy Sane came on for Aguero and the Germany international produced the goods against the club he left in 2016. Then Sterling latched onto goalkeeper Ederson's long clearance as the home defence hesitated and slotted in.

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Setting New Benchmarks with Many Firsts