

**OPINION 8**  
ALZHEIMERISH  
CHINA

**WORLD 11**  
TERESA MAY WINS TRUST VOTE  
BUT LOSES ON BREXIT DEAL

**SPORT 16**  
SHARAPOVA SETS UP  
WOZNIACKI CLASH

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## Sankranti fails to break cold spell SP may give RLD 3 seats in UP alliance

### Condition to prevail for 3 days in north India

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Cold wave conditions will continue to prevail over north India, particularly in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, north-west Rajasthan, north-east Madhya Pradesh and north Chhattisgarh. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast that the minimum temperature could drop on Thursday resulting in a cold wave in the National Capital Region (NCR).

In Delhi and NCR, cold wave condition is set to continue for two-three days, according to prediction and after that the minimum temperature could increase by 3 to 4 degrees over the weekend.

It has been seen that day and night temperatures start increasing after Makar Sankranti that marks the beginning of the arrival of Spring as sunshine increases, becoming more direct towards the Northern Hemisphere. Moreover, if there is a Western Disturbance, clouds block the increasing heat from escaping

from the atmosphere thus raising the night temperatures as well. However, this has not happened as yet.

Delhi witnessed a cold day as the minimum was recorded at 4.5 degrees Celsius, three notches below normal, while the maximum temperature settled at 21.3 degrees Celsius, a notch above normal.

The IMD said the minimum temperature would start rising again in Delhi and NCR because of an approaching western disturbance in Delhi and NCR in a week. "The night temperature could touch 10 degrees over the weekend in Delhi," said an IMD official. The weather department has also predicted light to very light rainfall on January 20 and 21.

According to a latest report of Climate Research and Services of the IMD, as many as 1,428 people died due to extreme weather events in 2018 with heavy rain and subsequent flooding, dust storms, thunderstorms and lightning claiming half the total number of toll.

The IMD said the annual



File Photo

mean temperature during 1901-2018 showed an increasing trend of 0.60C/100 years with significant increasing trend in maximum temperature (1.00C/100 years), and relatively lower increasing trend (0.20C/100 years) in minimum temperature.

The report said 2018 was the warmest year, with temperature for the country +0.41 0C above the 1981-2010 average, thus making 2018 the sixth warmest year on record since 1901. Similarly, 11 out of 15 warmest years were during the recent past 15 years between 2004 and 2018.

"The annual rainfall of 2018 over the country as a

whole was 85 per cent of Long Period Average (LPA) value for the period 1951-2000.

The 2018 northeast monsoon season (October-December) rainfall over the country as a whole was substantially below normal (56 per cent of LPA). This was the 6th lowest since 1901," it said.

"The country's average monthly temperatures were warmer than the normal during all the months of the year (except December) with mean temperatures exceeding the normal by around 10 degrees Celsius during the two months (Feb, 0.930C; March, 0.960C).

The report added that flood and heavy rain related

incidents reportedly claimed over 800 lives from different parts of the country, including northern, northeastern, central and peninsular parts during pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon seasons.

Uttar Pradesh saw 158 deaths due to flood and heavy rainfall, 166 deaths due to thunderstorm, lightning (39 deaths), dust storm (92 deaths) and cold wave took 135 lives.

According to the IMD, India has experienced 167 instances of cold waves, the highest in 13 years, across different stations in December last year. In 2017, December saw just 30 such instances.

In the past two decades, only 2005 had more reported instances of December cold waves at 177. During 2018, six cyclonic storms formed over the north Indian Ocean. Out of these six systems, three forming over the Arabian Sea during the pre-monsoon season and one during the post monsoon season, did not have landfall over the Indian region.

- **IMD forecasts that minimum temp could drop further**
- **Cold wave condition is set to continue for two-three days**
- **Minimum temperature would, however, start rising again in Delhi and NCR due to western disturbance, says IMD**
- **1,428 people died due to extreme weather condition in 2018**

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid speculation that Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav is ready to walk extra mile to accommodate the Rashtriya Lok Dal in the BSP-SP alliance, (RLD) vice-president Jayant Chaudhary on Wednesday met Akhilesh and held discussion on seat-sharing for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Sources said that Akhilesh may give one seat from the SP quota enabling the RLD to contest three seats.

"It was a good discussion on seat sharing with Akhilesh and you will know the outcome soon. The talks were positive and all issues were addressed," Chaudhary told reporters after the meeting at the Samajwadi Party headquarters.

On January 12, Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party had announced a tie-up and said that smaller parties would be accommodated. The SP and the BSP had decided to contest 38 seats each, leaving two seats for allies and two seats uncontested (Amethi and Rae Bareilly — held by Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi). The SP-BSP alliance left only two seats for other parties. This put a question mark on the electoral future of the State's next biggest regional contestant, the RLD, which wants to contest at least six seats.

"The numbers are not final, we are still negotiating



RLD vice-president Jayant Chaudhary meets SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow on Wednesday PTI

with the alliance leaders. Two seats are for 'others': the RLD is a partner, we fought with SP in Kairana. We will get more seats. Mayawati is unlikely to be flexible and give up any of her 38 seats, so we will reach out to Akhilesh. We may get more seats from SP's kitty," a RLD leader earlier said.

According to sources, the SP-BSP alliances was ready to give 2 seats to the RLD which

includes their sitting seat of Kairana and Baghat, the home turf of RLD president Ajit Singh. The Jat dominated outfit is likely to settle for one more seat — Mathura Lok Sabha seat — from where Jayant Choudhary would contest. Sources said that Mayawati had already conveyed to Akhilesh that the SP can give seats from his quota to the RLD.

Continued on Page 7

### K'taka upheaval: Cong, JD(S), BJP get into huddles

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/ BENGALURU

Amid the uncertainty prevailing over the fate of the HD Kumaraswamy Government in Karnataka, both the ruling Congress-JD(S) alliance and Opposition BJP have convened meetings of their party MLAs on Thursday.

While the Congress will meet its legislators in Bengaluru, the BJP has convened a meeting of party MLAs in Gurugram.

The Congress has strength of 80 MLAs, including Speaker, while the Janata Dal (S) has 37 legislators in its fold. The lone BSP member is also supporting the alliance government. The BJP has 104 seats in the 224-member Assembly.

The other two are Independents who have withdrawn support to the Kumaraswamy Government.

While the Congress asserted that the Congress-JD(S) alliance Government is "stable and strong", the BJP termed such an "unnatural" alliance was responsible for the ongoing political turmoil. Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge accused the BJP of trying to destabilise it.

Detailed report on P5

## Govt OK's Collegium picks, supersession sparks row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ignoring the huge controversy over supersession of several judges, the Government on Wednesday appointed Delhi High Court judge Sanjiv Khanna to the Supreme Court as recommended by the apex court's collegium.

President Ram Nath Kovind also appointed Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Dinesh Maheshwari as a judge of the apex court. With the two appointments, the strength of the top court will rise to 28, with three vacancies.

In December, the Collegium recommended Delhi High Court Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice Pradeep Nandrajog to be elevated as Supreme Court Judges. However, the recommendation was not sent to Government.

While holdings its own recommendation, a few days back the Collegium recommended Sanjiv Khanna, a junior judge of the Delhi High Court and Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Dinesh Maheshwari for the elevation.

This decision of ignoring its own recommendation by the Collegium has led to a huge controversy.

On Wednesday, Delhi Bar Council urged SC Collegium to elevate the Delhi High Court Chief Justice Rajendra Menon as Supreme Court Judge, whose name was earlier selected but later shelved.

The five-member SC Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on January 11 recommended to the Government the elevation of Justices Maheshwari and Khanna to the top court.

The appointment of Justice Khanna was announced on a day when the chorus of protests against the Collegium's recommendation to elevate him grew louder with Bar Council of India (BCI) saying it is "whimsical and arbitrary" and will lead to "humiliation and demoralisation" of the superseded judges.

A sitting Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul has already written a note to Justice Gogoi and fellow judges in the Collegium — Justices AK Sikri, SA Bobde, NV Ramana and Arun Mishra

— for ignoring the seniority of Chief Justices of the High Courts of Rajasthan and Delhi, Pradeep Nandrajog and Rajendra Menon, respectively.

Sources said Justice Kaul was of the view that a wrong signal would go out if the two Chief Justices, who are up in the seniority list than Justice Khanna, would be left out for elevation as apex court judges. Justice Khanna stands at Sl. No. 33 in the combined seniority of High Court judges on all-India basis.

Former CJI RM Lodha said the unprecedented January 12, 2018 Press conference by four senior-most judges, including Gogoi, before he became the CJI has not served the purpose for which it was held and instead the concerns raised, including the functioning of Collegium for appointment of judges for higher judiciary, have aggravated.

"Looking at the overall reaction and perception, it would be better if the matter (of Khanna) is recalled and considered threadbare but this seems to be unlikely to me," he said.

Continued on Page 7

### CAPSULE

#### PM-LED PANEL TO MEET ON JAN 24 FOR CBI PICK

New Delhi: The high-powered Selection Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to meet on January 24 to appoint the new CBI Director succeeding Alok Verma whose ouster has triggered a major political row.

#### AMRAPALI FRAUD: FIRMS FLOATED IN PEONS NAME

New Delhi: Skeletons kept tumbling out of the closet in the forensic audit of embattled Amrapali Group, as court-appointed auditors on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that posh flats were booked on sums as low as ₹1, ₹5 and ₹11 per sqft in the name of over 500 people. The audit found that 23 companies were floated in the name of office boys, peons and drivers and these firms were part of Amrapali consortium and were made fronts to divert homebuyers' money.

#### 48 BULL-TAMERS HURT IN PALAMEDU JALLIKATTU

Madurai: At least 48 competitors were injured, 14 of them seriously, in the bull-taming sport 'jallikattu' held at Palamedu near here as part of the Pongal festivities on Wednesday, officials said.

## BJP will win 74 LS seats in UP: Nadda

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Making it clear that it would be a fight between Narendra Modi and others in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, BJP in-charge of elections in Uttar Pradesh, JP Nadda, said that the opposition parties had united because of the towering image of Modi and his image would help the party win at least 74 seats in the state.

"Elections are now more chemistry and not physics. We very well knew that an alliance will happen in UP in fear of the BJP's strength. As we anticipated, this is going to happen hence a strategy is in place to counter it. We are confident about our strength and therefore we are targeting 50 per cent plus votes in the state in these elections," Nadda said, on his maiden visit to UP after being nominated as the Lok Sabha election in-charge of the state earlier this month.

"People of nation and Uttar Pradesh will give blessings to the BJP and we will emerge vic-

torious due to our hard work and Modi's development agenda. There is no question that Modi will not be retained as the Prime Minister for the second term," he said.

After introducing the three other deputy in-charges to the media who include Narottam Mishra (MP), party's vice-president Dushyant Gautam and Sunil Ojha (Gujarat), Nadda claimed that the BJP will go to the elections on the agenda of development and the works done by the Narendra Modi government during the past five years.

He also narrated in detail the achievements of the Modi government and how the Ayushman Bharat national health scheme had turned into the biggest social security scheme of the world and how Rs 4 lakh crore had been sent to 431 beneficiaries through DBT in different schemes.

When asked a pointed question about corruption in BJP governments at the Centre the BJP and we will emerge vic-

## India to buy \$5 billion oil, gas from US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India has committed to purchase \$5 billion worth of oil and gas from the US per annum and \$18 billion worth of defence equipment that are under implementation, a top Indian diplomat here said, highlighting the growing bilateral trade cooperation.

The US export to India has gone up by at least 30 per cent, India's Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla told the American business community, his first major public engagement on Tuesday.

In the last two years, the bilateral trade has increased from \$119 billion to \$140 billion, he said.

At a reception hosted in his honour by the US-India Business Council (USIBC), Shringla said India has been sourcing and buying much more from the US than ever in the past. In the field of oil and gas alone, he said, India has committed to purchase \$5 billion from the US every year.

Continued on Page 7

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# Popularity of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas rising, says Swaraj

5,802 people registered for event

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Claiming that the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, to be held at the country's cultural capital, Varanasi, from January 21 would be a historic event, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said that the three-time increase in the registration of foreign delegates this year showed the popularity of the event.

She claimed that it would also be for the first time that the Pravasi Bharatiya would have the glimpse of Kumbh at Prayagraj and Republic Day parade in New Delhi.

The three-day-long Pravasi Bharatiya Divas would be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22 while President Ram Nath Kovind would be the chief guest of the closing function on January 23.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has drawn a big attraction this time due to its link with Kumbh and Republic Day parade and till date 5,802 foreign delegates have registered themselves, confirming their attendance, which is three times more than the previous time, claimed Swaraj.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday along with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the External Affairs Minister said that the opening day of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas would be dedicated to Pravasi Youth Day and UP Pravasi Divas.

"Two young delegates, Himanshu Gulati from Norway and Charan Singh Bakshi from New Zealand, will be the anchors during the Youth Pravasi," she said adding that former President of Mauritius Anerood Jugnauth would be the chief guest on January 22,



External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing a joint press conference on Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Lucknow on Wednesday

## 'No talks till Pakistan stops cross-border terrorism'

Lucknow (PNS): External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Wednesday said that there was no question of talks with Pakistan over any issue till it stopped cross-border terrorism. "Terror and talks cannot go together," she said, stressing that it was the policy of the country that till Pakistan stopped cross-border terrorism, there would be no talks.

Replying to a specific question whether delegates from Pakistan would be invited for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and their assistance would be taken in development of the country, Swaraj told reporters here on Wednesday that such things only happened when there was a cordial relationship with a country. "When we don't talk to each other how is it possible to invite them here for any function?" she asked.

when the Prime Minister would inaugurate the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. "There will be several programmes during the three-day event, including cultural programme. BJP MP and cinestar Hema Malani and her troupe will perform in the evening of January 22," she said.

"This time the government is focusing on attracting the youths of the Bharatvanshi families, whose forefathers left

the country and settled in far-flung countries," she said, adding that while during the earlier Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, there were groups of 50 to 100 coming from other countries, this time there were two groups of 400 each, which showed the popularity of this event.

Swaraj said during the event, the delegates would be engaged in expert discussion on at least seven issues for

which suggestions and recommendations had been made during the past one year.

Talking about the elaborate arrangements for the guests, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said there would be three types of accommodation for the delegates in Varanasi — hotels and guest houses, Swiss cottages in the tent city and the innovative home stay.

After attending the Pravasi Divas, the guests would be taken to Prayagraj for Kumbh on January 24 and from there they would leave for Delhi by train in the night to reach the national capital. In Delhi, on January 25, the delegates will be have Delhi darshan and on the next day, they would be taken for the Republic Day parade.

"A cultural village has also been developed in Prayagraj to showcase our heritage starting from the Indus valley civilisation," Yogi said.

During their stay in Varanasi, the delegates will be taken for Kashi darshan, including Kashi Vishwanath temple, and watch the Ganga aarti besides visiting Saranath,

## Guv for police commissioner system

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After advocating implementation of a police commissionerate system in Uttar Pradesh during recent Police Week celebration, Governor Ram Naik on Wednesday wrote a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asking him to consider the issue.

Sources in the Raj Bhawan confirmed that Naik wrote a letter to the Chief Minister on Wednesday evening, reminding him of his request for introducing police commissionerate system on trial basis at least in districts having more than 20 lakh population, including Lucknow and Ghaziabad.

The Sources further confirmed that soon after receiving the letter, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, Shashi Prakash Goyal, forwarded it to Principal Secretary (Home) Arvind Kumar for necessary action. The sources said that Naik's move had upset the powerful IAS lobby, which is against the police commissionerate system as it will give entire executive power of the police to IPS officers.

It may be mentioned that earlier also, the IAS lobby got a letter dispatched empowering the district magistrates' direct involvement in posting of police station incharges in districts. However after a strong opposition by the IPS Association, Chief Minister intervened and got the order revised.

## Marriage with non-Muslim for halala null and void: Cleric

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Darul Uloom Deoband has issued a fatwa declaring that marriage by a divorced Muslim woman with a non-Muslim was null and void. The fatwa said the remarriage of the divorced Muslim woman with her former husband was also not valid as per the Islamic law.

Maulana Mufti Arshad Farooqui, head of the on-line fatwa department of Darul Uloom Deoband, said the marriage by a divorced Muslim woman with a non-Muslim for the purpose of nikah halala was invalid.

He said if a Muslim woman was divorced and wanted to remarry her former husband she would have to marry another Muslim man for halala and then get divorce to marry the first husband.

The issue was brought before Maulana Farooqui by a resident of Mumbai, Munawwar Ansari who said a Muslim woman, after she was divorced by her husband, married a Hindu person and later separated from him and now wanted remarry her former Muslim husband.

Meanwhile, All-India

Muslim Women Personal Law Board chairperson Shaista Amber condemned the fatwa, saying the clerics were in the habit of the issuing meaningless fatwas.

Saying that Darul Uloom Deoband had become a fatwa factory, she said that instead of issuing unwarranted fatwas, the Islamic seminary should concentrate its efforts and resources on the overall well-being of Muslims and their social and educational uplift.

Amber said a "dirty practice" like halala could never be part of Islam and its jurisprudence.

## Woman falls from terrace after monkey attack, dies

Lucknow (PNS): A 60-year-old woman died and another was injured on Tuesday as they fell from a terrace after being attacked by monkeys in Balrampur district. Police said the incident took place in the Mathura Bazar area. Savitri Devi was sitting on the terrace with her daughter-in-law Renu when monkeys attacked them. As they rushed to save themselves, both fell from the terrace. Savitri Devi died on the spot while Renu suffered serious injuries and was rushed to a hospital.

Meanwhile, four persons were killed in road accidents in Shamli district. The driver and conductor of a truck were killed when their vehicle collided with another near Lank village. In another incident, two cousins were crushed to death by a car at Thanabhawan.

## Rape victim ends life

Lucknow (PNS): A 35-year-old rape victim allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her home in Gonda district, a police official said on Wednesday.

Two policemen have been suspended in connection with the incident which took place on Monday, said Gonda SP RP Singh.

The woman's husband has blamed police for inaction in the rape case. "Police did not conduct a thorough investigation, she did not get justice," the husband said.

The woman had accused Shankar Dayal and his brother Shyam Kumar of raping her

in February and August last year.

Both the accused belong to Kernalganj and are absconding, the SP said, adding that further investigation was underway.

In a separate incident, a 30-year-old man was shot at by two unidentified men at a village in Muzaffarnagar district.

Two motorcycle-borne men fired a shot at Nazer Ali, while he was walking home on Tuesday evening. Ali was taken to the hospital where his condition is stated to be critical. A case has been registered in this connection at Kakrauli police station.

## YBKD merges with RLD

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Yuva Bharatiya Krishak Dal (YBKD), an associate of Bharatiya Janata Party, announced its merger with Rashtriya Lok Dal in a function held at RLD office here on Wednesday.

YBKD national president Rajvardhan Singh Parmar along with all his office-bearers and members took the membership of RLD in the presence of party's state president Masood Ahmad and other senior leaders.

Speaking to newsmen, Parmar said the BJP's policies were anti-farmer and anti-youths. "Even though the BJP is in power at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh, it has done nothing for farmers and youths. Instead, the BJP governments at the Centre and in UP have implemented faulty policies which have adversely affected the interests of farmers," Parmar said.

Speaking on the occasion, the RLD state president said UP farmers were facing hardships while youths had no jobs. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi made hollow promises to gain power during the previous Lok Sabha and UP assembly elections but after coming to power, Modi forgot his promises," he charged.

# Cong willing to give a few seats to other players in UP: Azad

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Leaving the party cadre demoralised by admitting that the Congress is lying 'defunct' in the state for the last few years, Congress in-charge of Uttar Pradesh, Ghulam Nabi Azad on Wednesday asked the district leaders to gear up and activate workers till the booth level within a fortnight before party president Rahul Gandhi kicked-off campaign for the 2019 parliamentary elections by holding a rally in Lucknow.

Azad also dropped hints of accommodating more smaller parties, saying the Congress was willing to give a few seats to those who wanted to forge an alliance with the party for the Lok Sabha polls.

Interestingly, to ensure a good turnout at Rahul's rally, Azad reportedly tried to send out a message among the office-bearers of the Uttar Pradesh unit of the party that there would be no change in the state organisation.

It may be mentioned here that majority of the state leaders had turned hostile following reports that Azad and Congress state president Raj Babbar could be removed anytime.

Besides Azad and Babbar, the meeting was also attended by Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh and other senior leaders including Pramod Tewari, Rani Ratna Singh, Rajaram Pal, CLP leader Ajay Kumar 'Lallu', MLA Aradhna Mishra 'Mona', Brij Lal Khabri and others.

"You all have been inactive for the last five years but now since Congress has to go it alone in the next parliamentary elections, you all should be on your toes and form district, block and booth level committees within a fortnight before Rahul Gandhi kicks-off cam-



Major (Retd) JP Singh and former IPS officer Kush Saurabh joined the Congress in the presence of party in-charge of Uttar Pradesh Ghulam Nabi Azad and UPCC chief Raj Babbar on Wednesday

campaign for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections," Babbar said while interacting with district presidents and other local leaders hailing from eastern Uttar Pradesh region here on Wednesday morning.

Azad asked the party office-bearers to ensure that maximum public and workers came from the respective districts to attend Rahul Gandhi's rallies, particularly in Lucknow as it should be a mega event to send a strong message across the state that Congress was as strong as it was three decades back.

Talking to some media persons on Wednesday afternoon, Azad said the party would welcome smaller political parties if they wanted to fight parliamentary elections in alliance with Congress.

"On two to four seats, there could be 'give and take', but at present, we are making preparations for contesting on all the

80 seats in the UP," he said.

It may be mentioned that in a significant move, Bahujan Samaj Party and Samajwadi Party, part of opposition alliance, had recently announced their tie-up in UP for the Lok Sabha polls, sharing 38 seats each and keeping the Congress out of the alliance.

On reports that the Congress was kept out of the BSP-SP combine as it was "weak", Azad hit back, "When elections are held, it will be known who is strong and weak".

The Congress had on January 13 declared that it would contest on all the 80 Lok Sabha seats from the political-crucial state on its own.

On whether the Congress would forge a coalition with other political players, Azad said, "If any political party is willing to accompany the Congress, and the Congress feels that it can fight the BJP, it will be definitely accommodated".

Two times BJP MLA from Moradabad (West), Major (Retd) JP Singh, and former IPS officer Kush Saurabh joined the Congress on Wednesday.

Besides Azad's meeting, the Congress Backward department headed by national coordinator Anil Saini, also held a meeting at UPCC office to further strengthened its base amongst the OBC communities.

Babbar, who chaired the meeting, claimed that the Congress had done the maximum for the OBC communities while the BJP as well as SP and BSP had so far cheated the OBCs by making false promises.

## CPI-M slams UP govt

Lucknow: Criticising the state government, the state secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxist), said the Gonda incident in which a rape survivor ended her life after the perpetrators of the crime were given clean chit and the Bareilly incident in which a Dalit was forced to drink urine by rowdy group of men had exposed the government and proved that it had failed to control law and order.

He also criticised the Governor for saying the government was performing well on law and order front and had successfully controlled the crime.



NOTICE

Be it known to all that my High School original mark sheet ICSE Board Year 2016, Roll No. 6163106, Index No. 1162665/168 have been lost. Abdullah Khalid S/o Mo. Khalid, 418/189, Baba Hazarabagh, Thakurganj, Chowk, Lucknow.

# Dharna by jawans chokes Ganj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The dharna staged by PRD jawans created traffic snarls at Hazratganj on Wednesday afternoon. ACM Praful Tripathi said that the snarls occurred for a period of half an hour when they had taken representatives of jawans for a meeting with officials concerned. He said that thereafter the protesters went to the Eco Garden in the evening.

Meanwhile, commuters not only in Hazratganj but also those coming from the Cantonment area faced a lot of problem. "I did not take the flyover near Loretto Convent because it was choc-a-block with cars," said a commuter.

A large number of PRD (Prantiya Rakshak Dal) jawans, demanding acceptance of their four demands, staged a massive protest at Gandhi statue, here on Wednesday. The protest continued till late evening as agitators refused to leave the place till their demands were accepted by the Chief Minister.

The jawans were assured by district administration officials that the Chief Minister would meet them on Thursday. The jawans even tried to move to the CM's residence as per their announcement, but were stopped by security persons and were directed to remain within the park. They indulged in slogan-shouting but were pushed back into the park.

Their demands included appointment of an IPS officer as its head, payment of pending salaries, promotion of five candidates to state employees' post and their regularisation.



**THE PROTEST CONTINUED TILL LATE EVENING AS AGITATORS REFUSED TO LEAVE THE PLACE TILL THEIR DEMANDS WERE ACCEPTED BY THE CHIEF MINISTER**



## Banned manjha still being used for kite flying

Lucknow (PNS): The Chinese manjha is being used in the city despite ban. Coordinator, Wildlife Institute of Sciences, Amita Kanaujia said that teams from the city had visited different parts of the city on the occasion of Makar Sankranti and found the Chinese manjha being used by the kite flyers.

Institute of Wildlife Sciences, ONGC, University of Lucknow in association with Centre for Biodiversity and Wildlife Research and Conservation, organised a bird rescue camp. They also arranged for mobile teams to visit and rescue injured birds and spread awareness about not to use Chinese or glass-coated manjha and also save birds by taking proper measures during kite flying. Kanaujia said that the banned manjha was still being used in areas of Aliganj, Jankipuram, Daliganj, Kudiaghant, Chowk and Balaganj," she said. "Kites flown these days are known to use a strong special string which is made by applying glass powder on it (known as manjha) to provide it a cutting edge. This practice of using manjha for kite flying has posed a great threat to birds, fruit-bats, macaques and even humans. The impact on birds, however, is much larger. Birds, when in flight, fail to notice the fine glass-coated thread, get entangled and injured even causing fractures, mutilation of wings and nerve injuries," she said. She added that at times minute glass pieces used in manjha got embedded in their bodies adding to the misery and eventual death.

## Traders plan own security as police look hapless

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Alarmed over the spate in Acrima incidents in which traders proved a soft target for criminals, traders are mulling the option to ensure their security by deploying security guards at their own expense.

"We have heard and read about the murder of garment trader Amanpreet in Alambagh, murder of a garment seller Rakesh, in PGI, attack on an Aminabad trader Dabish Qureshi in Hasanganj and attack on ice-cream factory owner Lalit in Naka during the last week. The police failed in arresting the miscreants in any of these cases, rather it looked hapless. Now we plan to ensure security on our own," some of the traders in Alambagh said.

They said the police had started questioning traders to get a clue about attackers of Amanpreet. "We are ready to cooperate with the police and also had met the SSP on Tuesday. But interrogation of innocent traders and that too without any rhyme and reason is not justified," they said.

Meanwhile, the Alambagh police failed to get any clue about the prime suspect Raju Sardar aka Kaliya and his aide Sonu Khand aka Habib Khan a week after the grisly murder of Amanpreet in Chandernagar market in Alambagh. The victim was shot seven times from a close range. The attackers walked away from the crime scene easily and the Alambagh police got the information of the murder after about a half an hour. Interestingly, the crime scene is not far away from the

**"We are ready to cooperate with the police and also had met the SSP on Tuesday. But interrogation of innocent traders and that too without any rhyme and reason is not justified"**

Chandernagar market police outpost.

In the PGI case, the police initially had termed the incident a case of road mishap. The police registered a case of loot after Rakesh's family and his kin staged a protest and blocked the road for traffic movement. In this case too, the police are yet to find any clue. In Naka case, the police are yet to get a wind of attackers. In this case, the SSP had sent the incharge of a police outpost to reserve police lines and had ordered a probe against Naka inspector and Kaiserbagh CO. In Hasanganj case too, the police failed to find any clue.

On the other hand, traders of trans-Gomti locality decided to install CCTV cameras at their establishments and deploy security guards at their own expense. They decided the same in a meeting which they held in Aliganj. The traders had also invited police officers in the meeting. Former mayor Suresh Chandra Awasthi convened the meeting. The traders pointed out that cases of theft, loot, chain snatching and eve-teasing were witnessing a high in Aliganj and Madaion these days.

## Loader driver, aide charred to death

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident, the driver of a loader and his assistant were charred to death in Vibhuti Khand police station area on Tuesday night after their vehicle was hit by a speeding truck and it caught fire.

Those killed were identified as Rakesh (driver) of Bazaarkhala and his assistant Vinod of Mahanagar. The police had to make strenuous efforts to extricate the loader which got stuck between two trucks, including the one which hit it from behind.

As per reports, Pintu of Siddharth Nagar was going to Kamta via the flyover and the loader was behind it. "Around 11 pm, when I reached near Viraj Tower on the flyover, another speeding truck hit the loader from behind. Due to the heavy impact, the loader got sandwiched between both the trucks and caught fire," Pintu told police at the time of lodging an FIR in this connection.

Vibhuti Khand SHO Rajeev Dwivedi said the speeding truck hit the loader from behind and in the process the loader hit Pintu's truck, which

was ahead. "The impact caused the fire to break out in the loader which got compressed between the two trucks," he said. The SHO explained that a fire team was summoned at the spot soon after the police reached the scene.

"By the time the fire was doused and the loader was taken out, both the victims were charred to death," he said. The SHO added that a case was registered in this connection and police were investigating the case.

The commuters said the police and fire team reached

the scene late and that caused the victims to get charred inside the loader. "The impact was so intense that a loud sound drew attention of each of us. Pavement-dwellers and kiosk-owners from the surrounding area also rushed to the scene," they said. They said the loader was moving at a slow speed and the speeding truck hit it from behind with a big force.

"The driver of the truck which hit the loader probably did not apply brakes otherwise the impact would have been less," they said.

## DM reviews Smart City project

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma held a review meeting of the Smart City project on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by municipal commissioner Indramani Tripathi, officials from the Smart City project and Public Works Department.

The officials from the Smart City project disclosed that the work costing Rs 64.40 crore had been completed including the surveillance system costing Rs 40 crore, Lal Baradari restoration costing Rs 2.48 crore, Lucknow smart mobility card worth 0.16 crore, underground electricity distribution cabling work costing 20.06 crore, solar roof top costing Rs 1 crore and Wi-Fi in parks costing Rs 10 crore. The officials informed the DM that most of the work had been stopped because PWD had not given an NOC for several projects.

The DM directed PWD officials that they should carry out a joint survey with the Smart City officials and give the NOC to expedite the work under the Smart City project.



The Smart City officials apprised the District Magistrate that 40 bus shelters had to be constructed in the city but the department had not provided the NOC for the same. The DM directed officials to give NOC for five bus shelters immediately so that work could be expedited. He also directed officials that they should send

a proposal to PWD and ensure that the work on the zebra line was completed on time.

The officials also informed the District Magistrate that the work for the Daliganj Smart City was pending for long and the detailed project report has already been shown to the PWD and the tender was advertised. The DM directed

officials to submit the NOC and get the work started.

The DM was also informed that trials had begun for remote trafficking at Indira Gandhi Pratishtan and Hazratganj and that they needed some experienced traffic inspectors. The DM directed SP, East, to provide experienced inspectors.

## East West corridor under LMRC review

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC) is reviewing the East West corridor as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Urban Development. A senior official of the LMRC said that the report would be submitted to the state government after the review.

The official said that they were working on the detailed project report to make it more cost-effective. "The underground stations in the project can make the project expensive and hence the review work is being done," he said. Officials had earlier said that the East West corridor had been envisioned as a 12-km-long corridor which would have seven underground stations and five elevated stations. LMRC had updated the detailed project report which had been earlier prepared in 2013 keeping in view the changes at the ground level. The LMRC had then sent the report to DMRC for incorporating the changes.

The stations of the East West corridor have been made smaller and the trains will have only three cars in order to reduce the cost of the project. The East West corridor which is also known as the Blue corridor extends from Charbagh to the Vasantkunj. "The construction of large underground construction as proposed by the former DPR of the project was not feasible in this congested area. We cannot construct an underground station in this section as compared to the one that we are constructing in the North South corridor," the official had earlier said. He said that they had also worked out the peak hour traffic which was less in this corridor. "We have decided that we can manage the traffic on this corridor by increasing the frequency of trains. The capacity of each of the car is of 800 passengers which is the maximum capacity," he added.

## Dacoity at jeweller's house at Gossainganj foxes police

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two weeks after the daring dacoity at the house and shop of city jeweller Daya Khandelwal in Gossainganj, the police failed to get any lead of the miscreants exposing police feeble network in the crime world.

On the day of incident, the SSP, Lucknow, had claimed to solve the case in a couple of days trusting his tech savvy police teams. In the due course of time, the team proved an utter failure.

Taking as a challenge, SSP Kalanidhi Naithani had engaged a jumbo-sized team consisting of cops having a wide exposure in surveillance and those who had a good network in the underworld to crack the case.

The police had initially disputed the claim of the jeweller to cover up their failure but boomeranged. Later, the

police registered a case of dacoity.

In the incident, the miscreants had held Khadelwal's elderly parents Basant Lal and Vimla Devi hostage, thrashed them and decamped with Rs 2.10 lakh in cash and ornaments worth several lakh in the wee hours on January 3.

The residents had strongly criticised the Lucknow police and had termed the incident a chilling reminder of previous winter season dacoity incidents which took place in PGI and Gomti Nagar areas.

The SSP himself had visited the crime scene to oversee the ongoing investigation. The residents had expressed their unhappiness with the police patrolling.

"No action was initiated against cops for the laxity in the case while there are several instances in which cops were

shunted out for the laxity.

On the other hand, Gossainganj police failed to live up to the expectation even though it was given a free hand and time to solve the case," sources in police department said.

They said the Lucknow police network in the underworld started weakening after the cops took to surveillance and other electronic methods to solve cases.

"It is strange that the police had no informer in the underworld to tip them off about the gang which executed the crime," they opined.

A police spokesman said the police were conducting raids and collecting details about the miscreants involved in the case.

"A number of suspects were interrogated as of now and some more are on radar. We hope to crack the case," the spokesman said.

## UPSRTC board meet to decide on bus stations

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation will be holding its board meeting on Thursday. UPSRTC managing director P Guru Prasad said that the board will take up for approval the RFP (Request for Proposal) for the construction of the 21 state-of-the-art bus stations in the state.

UPSRTC had recently showcased its future plans for bus stations which it is planning to construct on the PPP model in 21 cities across the state. The 21 bus stations are planned at Ghaziabad in an area of 36500 square metres, Ghaziabad city in an area of 10036 square metres, Cantonment in Varanasi in an area of 23876 square metres, Civil Lines in Prayagraj in an area of 18000 square metres, Gomti Nagar in Lucknow in an area of 58800 square metres, Charbagh in an area of 6784 square metres, Gorakhpur in an

**UPSRTC HAD RECENTLY SHOWCASED ITS FUTURE PLANS FOR BUS STATIONS WHICH IT IS PLANNING TO CONSTRUCT ON THE PPP MODEL IN 21 CITIES ACROSS THE STATE**



area of 20000 square metres, Iggah in Agra in an area of 8000 square metres, Agra Fort in Agra in an area of 4046 square metres, Central bus station in Kanpur in an area of 45400 square

metres, Bhainsali in Meerut in an area of 45400 square metres, Sohrabgate at Meerut in an area of 175800 square metres, Bareilly in an area of 29000 square metres, Faizabad in an area of

10530 square metres, Mathura in an area of 6790 square metres, Rae Bareilly in an area of 10885 square metres, Bulandshahr in an area of 10300 square metres and Garh Mukteshwar in an area of 52000 square metres. A substantial part of the project shall be dedicated on the DBFOT model which is Design, Build, Finance Operate and Transfer. The UPSRTC will set up a single window which will take up queries from builders and a dedicated cell will look into the issues. On being asked whether some of the stations which are being constructed will be commercially viable, he said that they had carried out a feasibility report for the stations and most of them were feasible. The managing director said that the board would also take up the issue of installation of CCTV cameras in the first phase in the Nirbhaya buses. He said that they would also put forth the sanction plan for the buses for Kumbh.

## Proctorial board meets, takes vital decisions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A meeting of the proctorial board was held on the main campus of Lucknow University on Wednesday in view of the Tuesday incident when a student of BA-Part II was thrashed.

Lucknow University media spokesperson NK Pandey said that various aspects of the incident were discussed at the meeting and crucial decisions were taken.

"Various discipline-related aspects mentioned in the State Universities Act, 1973, were discussed and it was decided

to implement them, with some modifications, from January 17 onwards. The proctorial board members, in cooperation with the security guards and police personnel, will regularly check identity cards of the students in the campus," he said. He added that no student of the university should bring any outsider to the campus otherwise disciplinary action would be taken against them.

"The security guards of Lucknow University will periodically inspect the whole campus and provide reports to the proctor's office. It will be the responsibility

of the proctorial board members to take care of any incident happening in their departments or around themselves. They will act promptly in such cases," he said.

He added that students were being informed that during their stay on the campus for studies if they faced any problem then for its solution they should contact the proctor's office on the telephone number 0522-2740401.

"The University of Lucknow has requested the LIU and IB officials to share any information they get in relation to it," he added.

FORM NO. - 5  
**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW**  
 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007

(Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh & Uttranchal)  
**SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION**  
 O.A. No. 394/18 Date: 08.01.2019  
 (Summons to defendant under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debt due to the Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)

**BANK OF INDIA** .....APPLICANT

**VERSUS** .....DEFENDANTS

**M/s DUROSTICK INDUSTRIES & ANOTHER**

To,  
 1. M/s Durostick Industries, a proprietorship concern of Shri Dinesh Tirpathi having its principal place of business at LS 2/659, Sector F, Jankipuram, Lucknow-226021.  
 Factory Address : C-69 (Basement), Sector-8, Jankipuram Extension, Lucknow.  
 2. Shri Dinesh Tirpathi son of Late RP Tirpathi, resident of 2/174, Sector 2, Jankipuram Vistar, Lucknow-226021.  
 3. Shri Rakesh Kumar Tirpathi son of Late RP Tirpathi, resident of 2/174, Sector 2, Jankipuram Vistar, Lucknow-226021.

DEFENDANTS

In the above noted application you are required to file reply in paper Book Form in Two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his Counsel/ duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 13.02.2019 at 10.30 A.M., failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar  
 Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

# Bid to provide affordable stay to pilgrims in Kumbh Mela area, other parts of city

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

In order to provide an affordable stay in the Mela area as well as in different parts of the city, especially near different bus stops, the Kumbh Mela administration has prepared a Kumbh Avasiya Yojana under which devotees will be provided beds at an affordable price. According to sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), Kumbh, Rajiv Rai, in a first-of-its-kind initiative the Mela administration had set up over 90 Yatri Nivas in 14 sectors with the

nominal price tag of ₹100 and ₹200 per day. According to the official, the devotees will be charged ₹100 per bed on normal days while on the main bathing days the rate will be doubled to ₹200. Booking for them had already commenced and booking counters at all the Yatri Nivas will remain open round the clock. Arrangements had been made there for 20,000 beds, he pointed out. Meanwhile the control tower set up at the Allahabad Junction for crowd management during the Kumbh Mela

became operational on Monday itself. The General Manager, North Central Railway (NCR), Rajiv Chaudhry, inaugurated the tower in the presence of the Additional General Manager (AGM) and DRM, Allahabad Division, and other senior railway officials. The officials also apprised Chaudhry about the arrangements made at the junction in view of Kumbh like medical booths at all platforms and ambulances at the city and Civil Lines side of the junction.

# 'Main Bhi Ardhangini is a unusual love story'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Web series cannot impact television shows because they are made for the masses. These views were expressed by actor Avinash Sachdev, who was in the city on Wednesday for the promotion of his show, 'Main Bhi Ardhangini'.

The actor said that the show was primarily a love story which had all the ingredients such as supernatural, comedy and drama.

He said that the show was realistic but was made keeping other elements in mind which small screen shows generally had. "The television shows have to still cater to the masses unlike the web series which have to cater to the classes. 'Main Bhi Ardhangini' is a romantic drama of true love that lives beyond eternity and transcends even death. It showcases the power and strength that an Ardhangini has for her husband and how she shields him from all evils even after her death. It is often said that a man's life can never be complete without a wife i.e. his 'Ardhangini' or his better half. She is a friend, a confidante and a person who constantly encourages her husband to be the best version of himself. She

plays the protector and nurturer just not to him but to his family as well besides being the epitome of eternal selflessness and love," he said.

Talking about his character, Avinash Sachdev said, "My character Madhav is an extremely righteous man who doesn't carry any sort of malice in his heart. Shy and reserved, he is respectful to his elders, especially his mother, Nilambari, even though she is his stepmother. Madhav is torn between the memories of his dead wife, Chitra, and the unconditional love received from his childhood friend, Vaidehi. 'Main Bhi Ardhangini' is a beautifully-written romantic tale and it gives me immense pleasure to be a part of this story."

He said that the challenges of being a part of the show was that they had to shoot in a new place such as Jaipur. "Also I wanted to make sure that the character which I played was different from the one which I had played in the last show. I took the show because primarily men do not have a major role to play in television while this show gave me the opportunity to be able to play a major part," he said.

Speaking about his visit to the City of Nawabs, Avinash said, "I have visited Lucknow



once before and it is the food which I like to relish the most. Although my trip will be a short one I will try to make the most of it and have some Tunday ke kebabs."

Playing the role of Madhav's childhood friend Vaidehi, Aditi Rawat said: "Vaidehi is a young and naive girl yet an extremely grounded soul who believes that every person is good at heart. She is full of life and is adored by everyone. Her selfless love for Madhav and her dedicated efforts as his friend to bring back joy in his life again is inspiring and rare. She will play a pivotal part in his life and I am excited to essay this role."

Elaborating on her visit to Lucknow, Aditi said, "This is my first visit to the City of Nawabs and I am extremely excited as I have heard so many great things about Lucknow. From the mouth-watering delicacies to the rich cultural heritage that resonates beauty in every corner of the city, I am eagerly waiting to explore it as much as I can."

A unique and rare, yet unusual love story, 'Main Bhi Ardhangini' will portray the sacredness of marriage, the undying love of a wife for her husband and the complexities that tear them apart.

**DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI**  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NW) III  
OVER HEAD TANK ASHOK VIHAR DELHI  
PRESS NIT No. 57 (2018-19)

Item No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement
1.	Improvement of water supply by replacement of old water line at Haiderpur main road from Ramliya Complex to Haiderpur Bus Stand AC-14 under EE (NW) III	Rs. 30,35,450/-	Tender ID No. 2019_DJB_165775_1 on 14.01.2019 at 12:29 PM	30.01.2019 Up to 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurementdelhi.gov.in>  
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 678/2018-19

Sd/-  
EX. ENGINEER (NW) III

**U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD. OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION, OBRA SONEBHADRA (U.P.) E-TENDER INVITING NOTICE TENDER NO.: T-46/OCO&MC/CR&MD/2018-19** Online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Providing & Fixing A.C. Sheet for the walling of tipper and boiler area in Unit No.12" of Obra thermal Power station under R&M scheme" e-tender has been uploaded on 15.01.2019 on the tender portal <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Online last date of submission of tender will be up to 14.02.2019 at 18:00 Hrs and technical bid (Part-I) will be opened on 18/02/2019 at 16:00 Hrs or later. Estimated cost of work is Rs. 6,87,092.00 + GST Extra only. Period of completion of work is 02 Months. The E.M.D and Tender cost for e-bid submission is Rs.14,000.00 and Rs. 236.00 respectively. Last date of submission of Tender Fee & Earnest Money in original in this office is 16.02.2019 up to 14:00 Hrs. Total Quantity of work, tender specification and other terms & conditions is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. Superintending Engineer, OCO&MC, OTPS, Obra reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids without assigning any reason. It may please be noted that this is online bid and shall be accepted online only on website <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Information related to extension in due dates and corrigendum if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves update. **S.E. (CIVIL) Short Term Tender Notice Inviting e-Bid Tender NO.: T-06/SE-III/BTPS/EMD-II/18-19** Tender ID: 2019 RVUNL 292088.1 Online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Dismantling, Shifting, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of old & used breaker panel from 'ATPS to Air Conditioning MCC plant of 'BTPS, Obra. E-tender has been uploaded on 07/01/2019 at 18:00 Hrs on UP Govt. e-tender portal <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Technical Bid (Part-I) will be opened on 24/01/2019 at 16:00 Hrs. Estimated Cost of work will be approximately Rs. 3.65 Lacs only. The E.M.D and Tender cost for e-bid submission is Rs. 7500.00 and Rs. 296.00 respectively. Total Quantity of work, tender specification and other terms & condition is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. It may please be noted that this is online bid and shall be accepted online only on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Information related to extension in due dates and corrigendum if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves update. **S.E. (CIVIL) Short Term E- TENDER INVITING NOTICE E-TENDER NO: 48/SE (CIVIL)/OTPS/OCO&MD-I/2018-19** Online e-Bids are invited for the work of "M&R of Qtr. No. 3-IV-22 & 3-AE-S4 of Obra Project Colony" Sonebhadra (U.P.). e-tender has been published on 10.01.2019 at 09:00 Hrs on the e-tender portal <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Last date of submission end date of bid will be up to 18.01.2019 at 17:00 Hrs, last date and time for submission of hard copy of requisite documents will be up to 19.01.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. and technical bid (Part-I) will be opened on 21.01.2019 at 16:00 Hrs. Estimated Cost of work is approximately Rs. 2,95,598.11 only. The E.M.D and Tender cost for e-bid submission is Rs. 6,000.00 and Rs. 236.00 respectively. Total Quantity of work, tender specification and other terms & condition is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. Superintending Engineering (Civil), OTPS, Obra reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids without assigning any reason. It may please be noted that this is online bid and shall be accepted online only on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. 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It may please be noted that this is online bid and shall be accepted online only on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Information related to extension in due dates and corrigendum if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves update. **S.E. (CIVIL) Short Term E- TENDER INVITING NOTICE E-TENDER NO: 49/SE (CIVIL)/OTPS/OCO&MD-I/2018-19** Online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Trimming of trees of

# Shehnai maestro Krishna Ram passes away

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Krishna Ram Choudhary, a Padma Shree recipient and a well-known exponent of shehnai from Varanasi, passed away at the Trauma Centre of KGMU on Wednesday. The well-known artiste from Varanasi was conferred the Padma Shree in 2017 and had also been awarded many national awards such as the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Special President's Award, a gold medal and many more.

Media spokesperson from KGMU Santosh Kumar said that Krishna Ram Choudhary had been brought there about a week ago to the Gastro department where the artiste underwent an operation after which he was brought to the ICU and was put on the ventila-

tor. He passed away in the afternoon.

The city artistes and musicians expressed their grief at the demise of the well-known musician. Vice-Chancellor of Bhatkhande University Shrutu Sadolikar said that the death of the great artiste would cause a void in the field of shehnai and the same would be hard to fill. "There are very rare musicians and artistes who have contributed in a major way in taking this form of instrument to the classical level because shehnai vadan is an area wherein the instrument is used only during the weddings. It will be difficult to fill the void which was created by the death of this artiste," she said.

She said that she had the rare privilege of attending programmes where he had performed. "There were times

when he inaugurated the same programme where I had to perform. This happened several times across the country and hence in a way we have shared the platform," she said. Sadolikar said that what was different about the artiste was his approach or style in which he performed with the instrument. "He would delineate from the traditional style of presenting raags in a beautiful manner," she said.

Kamlesh Dubey, a faculty at the same institute, said that Krishna Ram Choudhary was an artiste *par excellence* and his way of presenting the raags was very appealing. He had relatives in the Bollywood industry, he said.

**DEATH OF NADVI MOURNED**  
A condolence meeting was held on

the passing away of Maulana Waze Rashid Hasni Nadvi on Wednesday at the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu, Arabi-Farsi University. A large number of university officials, including its finance officer Mahendra Kumar Bhatt, faculty members, staff and students attended it and prayed to God for the peace of the departed soul. Vice-Chancellor of the university Mahrukh Mirza also expressed his grief and sorrow over the sad demise of Maulana Waze Rashid Hasni Nadvi. In his condolence message, the Vice-Chancellor prayed that the Almighty would provide courage to members of the bereaved family and the whole community to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude and the departed soul may rest in eternal peace.

**कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत जानपद खण्ड, केसको, आर०पी० एच०, कानपुर ई-निविदा तिथि विस्तारण सूचना** ई-निविदा सं०-35/सी/2018-19, जिसकी खुलने की तिथि 11.01.2019 प्रकाशित की गई है। अपरिहार्य कारणोंवश यह निविदा दिनांक 25.01.2019 तक विस्तारित की जाती है। विवरण [etender.up.nic.in/www.kesco.co.in](http://etender.up.nic.in/www.kesco.co.in) पर उपलब्ध है। निविदा की अन्य शर्तें यथावत् रहेंगी। (गगन बिहारी श्रीवास्तव) अधिशासी अभियन्ता पत्रांक-43/वि०जा०ख० के० (का०) दिनांक 15.01.2019 'राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाएं'

**दक्षिणवर्त विद्युत वितरण निगम लि.** CIN : U31200UP2003SGC027460 कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, बांदा

**अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा विधिटीकरण सूचना**  
अधिसूचनाओं द्वारा निम्नलिखित विवरणानुसार दो भागों में दिनांक-28.01.2019 तक प्रतिदिन एवं योग्य केन्द्रों पर/कर्म से निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है। विस्तृत जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> एवं <https://dvvn1.org> पर उपलब्ध रहेगी।

- ई-निविदा संख्या-68/SE/EDCB/2018-19** : कार्य : विद्युतशक्ति, बांदा (नगर) के अनर्गत स्वीकृत फेज सं०-82, 83, 85, 122, 123, 124, 125/BND/BP/2018-19 etc. के तहत विद्युत संचालन से विनिर्णयित स्थानों में 11 केबी उपकेंद्रों में अतिरिक्त परिवर्तक स्थापित करने, क्षमतावृद्धि, लाइनों के जर्जर तार बदलने व विस्तार सम्बन्धी इत्यादि कार्य। **बरोहर राशि** : ₹० 4,000/-, **प्रारंभ मूल्य** : ₹० 236/-
- ई-निविदा संख्या-69/SE/EDCB/2018-19** : कार्य : विद्युतशक्ति, बांदा (नगर) के अनर्गत फेज सं०-01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 15/BND/ BP/2018-19 etc. के तहत सुगम योजना से विनिर्णयित स्थानों में 11 केबी उपकेंद्रों की क्षमतावृद्धि, लाइनों के जर्जर तार बदलने/ मरम्मत व विस्तार/ निर्माण सम्बन्धी इत्यादि कार्य। **बरोहर राशि** : ₹० 4,000/-, **प्रारंभ मूल्य** : ₹० 236/-
- ई-निविदा संख्या-70/SE/EDCB/2018-19** : कार्य : विद्युतशक्ति, बांदा (नगर) के अनर्गत फेज सं०-08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 106, 13, 14/BND/ BP/2018-19 etc. के तहत सुगम योजना से विनिर्णयित स्थानों में 11 केबी उपकेंद्रों की क्षमतावृद्धि, लाइनों के जर्जर तार बदलने/ मरम्मत व विस्तार/ निर्माण सम्बन्धी इत्यादि कार्य। **बरोहर राशि** : ₹० 4,000/-, **प्रारंभ मूल्य** : ₹० 236/-
- ई-निविदा संख्या-71/SE/EDCB/2018-19** : कार्य : विद्युतशक्ति, बांदा (नगर) के अनर्गत नरैनी/कालिंजर उपकेंद्रों में दिनांक-02.05.18 एवं 05.05.18 को दैनिकी आधार से क्षतिग्रस्त लाइनों/अन्य पोलों की मरम्मत एवं पुनर्निर्माण सम्बन्धी कार्य। **बरोहर राशि** : ₹० 8,000/-, **प्रारंभ मूल्य** : ₹० 472/-
- ई-निविदा संख्या-72/SE/EDCB/2018-19** : कार्य : विद्युतशक्ति, बांदा के अनर्गत फेज सं०-55B/BND/BP/2017-18 से विनिर्णयित स्थानों के तहत प्रस्तावित कार्य। **बरोहर राशि** : ₹० 6,000/-, **प्रारंभ मूल्य** : ₹० 354/-

**पत्रांक : 1400/वि०सि०/पी-1(फाकान)/वि०वि/2018-19/08-72 दिनांक: 11.01.2019 अधिशासी अभियन्ता, बांदा**

# Muslim fraternity displays Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Displaying the noble gesture of being a Good Samaritan during the ongoing 49-day-long Kumbh, Muslim fraternity was leaving no stone unturned in exhibiting the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb (composite culture) here. In the same context the members of the Muslim community are not only holding *bhandaras* (community meals) but also acting as volunteers to help the pilgrims arriving from all over the world.

This group has set up a stall near the Parade Ground adjacent to the new Yamuna bridge where refreshments and drinking water were being served to the pilgrims on a regular basis. A social activist and general secretary of the City Congress Committee, Irshad Ullah, said that Muslim men in their skull caps and burqa-clad women welcomed the pilgrims coming to the Sangam from the direction of the Old Yamuna Bridge here.

The group also provided all possible assistance to the pilgrims most of whom belonged to the rural areas and were not aware about the routes leading to the ghats. The men and women in groups also made free calls from their mobile phones in case the pilgrims needed to talk to their kin or locate those who might have been behind or may have already reached the Sangam, he added.

The pilgrims were also provided assistance in reaching the railway and bus stations, camps and hospitals if an emergency cropped up, Ullah said and added that a group of Muslim men and women had offered namaz last week on the banks of the Sangam after performing *wazu* with the holy Ganga water and prayed for the peaceful conclusion of the mega event.

# SCHOOLSCAN

**STUDENTS BELL CAT**

Three students of City Montessori School have qualified the most prestigious Common Admission Test (CAT) and brought laurels to the institution. These meritorious students of CMS comprised Pranjal Srivastava (99.97 percentile) of Station Road campus, Pulkit Sachan (99.90 percentile) of Gomti Nagar campus I and Prateek Garg (90.60 percentile) of Chowk campus. They are now eligible to get admission to top management colleges of the country. The success of these students has added yet another feather to the CMS cap of glory. They have given credit to their parents, teachers and the peaceful atmosphere of CMS for their exemplary success.

# CITYBRIEFS

**CULTURAL FEST BEGINS**

The annual cultural fest of Avadh Girls' Degree College, Nazrana-e-Avadh, is known for being a cultural gala. Distinguishing by its unique mix of cultural events which include an English debate, a nukkad natak, dances (group and solo), a quiz, a play etc, it always has something for everyone. The first day of the cultural fest 2018-19 was inaugurated on Wednesday with the lighting of the lamp by Chief Information Commissioner Jawed Usmani. The students presented the Ganesh Vandana. Thereafter, principal Upma Chaturvedi formally welcomed chief guest Jawed Usmani and the manager of the college Nishi Pandey. Pandey addressed the participating teams and wished them good luck. The chief guest, while addressing the participants, encouraged them to exhibit team spirit and sportsmanship. Co-head of Students N Sinha proposed the vote of thanks and the inaugural ceremony ended with the national anthem sung by all. The first day of the inter-collegiate cultural meet witnessed a huge participation from different colleges like Amity University, BBD NIIT, Lucknow University (Old Campus), IT College, Shri Guru Nanak Girls' Degree College, JNPG College, KKV College, and the Institute for Integrated Learning and Management.

**PNB ANNOUNCES CASH INCENTIVES**

The Uttar Pradesh government has identified Punjab National Bank as the digital partner for Kumbh Mela, 2019, at Prayagraj. Being the digital partner for Kumbh Mela, PNB is committed to promote digital transactions and popularise the usage of digital products amongst devotees visiting the Kumbh and showcase the benefits of digital mode of payments, namely, elimination of the requirement to carry cash or count the exact change required for making purchases.

**INAUGURATED**



The new branch of Gramin Bank of Aryavart at Mati was inaugurated by chairman SB Singh on Wednesday. On this occasion, a loan distribution and free health check-up camp were also organised by the bank. Chief Manager AK Mishra distributed loans worth over ₹1 crore to 54 beneficiaries.

**ONGC TEAM VISITS LU**

The ONGC team visited Lucknow University on Wednesday. The members of the team included director, Coordination, Manoj Bharthwal, GM, Finance, Manmen and chief chemist, Corporate Social Responsibility, Monu Bhatnagar. The team promised ONGC chair at the Lucknow University, museum showcase items, campus placement for students, training at ONGC for students of MSc in Applied Geology. "They were very happy to see the interaction of the ONGC centre with ONGC Academy at Dehradun and the faculty exchange programme," a member said.

# Mishra, YC Modi, Jha in race for CBI top post

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The high-powered Selection Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to meet on January 24 to appoint the new CBI Director. The two other members of the Committee are Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge.

As the race for the top post at CBI begins, BSF DG Rajnikant Mishra is learnt to have met NSA Ajit Doval earlier this week even as NIA DG YC Modi and Gujarat DGP Shivanand Jha are also in the reckoning. Presently, the CBI is headed by an interim Director M Nageswara Rao following ouster of the incumbent Alok Verma following an adverse report against him by the Central Vigilance Commission.

While Mishra is a 1984 batch IPS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, Modi is Assam-Meghalaya cadre of 1984. Both

**After mutual consultations between the stakeholders, the Government has finalised January 24 as the date for the meeting to select the new CBI Director**

have served significant terms in the CBI. Jha is a 1983 batch Gujarat cadre officer now heading the State police. 1983-batch IPS officer OP Singh, serving as DGP of Uttar Pradesh and Special Secretary Internal Security Rina Mitra of Mafhya Pradesh cadre (1983-batch) may also be considered for the appointment of the top post in the CBI.

Sources said the Government had proposed the meeting for selection of the new CBI chief on January 21 earlier but Kharge wanted the meeting on January 24 or 25.

After mutual consultations between the stakeholders, the Government has finalised January 24 as the date for the

meeting to select the new CBI Director.

On October 10, the panel had removed Verma and transferred him as Director General Fire Service.

CJI's nominee Justice AK Sikri had during the panel meeting on January 10 insisted that the panel should finalise a new CBI Director within two weeks, sources said.

The panel had named Rao as the interim director of the CBI, a move criticised by the Congress for not appointing a regular CBI Director.

Kharge had also written to the PM demanding early meeting of the high powered committee to appoint a regular CBI Director.

Meanwhile, Supreme Court on Wednesday deferred the hearing on a petition challenging the appointment of additional director of the CBI M Nageswara Rao as the interim chief of the premier investigating agency following ouster of Alok Verma.

# Sinha for more power to 'toothless' Rly forces

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

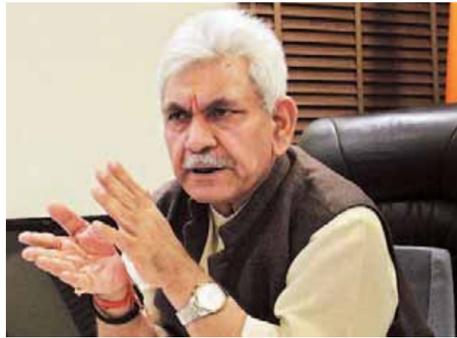
Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha on Wednesday pitched for more powers for the Railway Protection Force (RPF) by calling it a toothless organisation with Railway Minister Piyush Goyal saying a law in this regard is just a "technicality".

A bill to amend the Railway Act to empower RPF is awaiting clearance from Cabinet.

Speaking at a conference on security of railways, both Sinha and RPF Director General Arun Kumar pushed for handing over the registration, enquiry and detection of passenger-related crimes on board running trains to the railways' security force.

Currently, even if a crime is detected by the RPF, it has to hand over the case to the Government Railway Police for further enquiry.

"RPF is a toothless organisation. It is involved in security, but has no powers. Despite ability and efforts, the RPF has not got the powers it deserves. However, it is blamed for everything that happens on railway



**'Whether the law is changed or not, whether the GRP does it or the RPF, these are all technicalities. We have to do decide together to secure passengers. Then law will not come in the way'**

premises. But the reality is that other than taking care (of railway property), RPF has no real powers.

An amendment in the law, I personally feel, is the need of the hour," Sinha said.

Goyal urged the RPF and the Government Railway Police to work together to secure railways and said that the amendment to the law was a "technicality".

"Whether the law is changed or not, whether the GRP does it or the RPF, these are all technicalities. We have

to do decide that we need to work together to secure passengers. Then law will not come in the way," he said.

The RPF DG highlighted how his force can leverage its inherent advantage of having an all India jurisdiction to prevent and detect crime in moving trains.

He said that since the jurisdiction of an RPF posts cuts across jurisdiction of many police stations it puts it in a position of advantage for identification of place of occurrence, quick registration

ther legislative action," he said.

Kumar also said that the issue of reporting and registration of crime against passengers is a weak link in the security apparatus which affects the service delivery to the passengers.

The victim has to run pillar to post to get his FIR registered without which the criminal justice system would not set in motion, he said.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who was part of the conference, suggested to Goyal to start a facility by which passengers can file FIRs online.

"There is no facility for a passenger to file an FIR online. If somebody is travelling by train (and something happens), he need to visit Government Railway Police (GRP) police station to get an FIR registered.

It will then go to the state, to the district and eventually to the Police Station concerned. There is no guarantee that he would get the desired justice," he Minister said.

He said there has to be a provision for the passengers to file the FIR electronically.

# Tobacco firms, vendors selling products near schools: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vendors and tobacco firms are selling cigarettes and other tobacco products and advertising them near schools, targeting children as young as eight years old, according to a study conducted in 20 cities across the States.

Titled "Tiny Targets", the study which was released here on Tuesday at an event said nearly half of the vendors surveyed around 243 schools were found selling tobacco products while tobacco advertisements at 34 per cent of the 225 tobacco points of sale were observed.

During the study which was conducted in cities including Hyderabad, Indore, Morbi, Jorhat song others to determine the extent of tobacco products being marketed and sold around educational institutions, the investigators found that single sticks sales was as high as 90.9 per cent of the 225 points of sale.

"Vendors displayed tobacco products in the ways that they are appealing to children and youth. In other words, of the 225 tobacco points of sale observed, 91 per cent of displays were at 1 meter-a child's eye level, 54 per cent of the points of sale had no visible health warnings while 90 per cent of displays were besides candy, sweets and toys-items marketed to children, said the



study jointly conducted by Consumer Voice and Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI).

Calling the study results as 'alarming', Rajya Sabha member, MV Rajeev Gowda "young people are vulnerable to the temptations of tobacco and alcohol even before they are able to make informed and mature decisions. For some these become a gateway to drugs. Hence, it's important to protect our kids from these harmful products." Various reports say that nearly 37 per cent children in India initiate smoking before the age of ten while 5,500 children begin tobacco use and become addicted, leaving them exposed to various tobacco related diseases.

Bhavna B Mukhopadhyaya from VHAI said, "It is not that the first time the tobacco

industry has been found targeting children and neither it is unique to India. However, the data is alarming because it documents a very systematic and widespread pattern of activity by tobacco companies to get young people addicted to tobacco."

Asim Sanyal from Consumer Voice added: "We have seen the industry use this tactics time and again which is endangering the lives of our young generation."

He said it was high time that the Union Health Ministry's advisory letter observing that "the shops permitted to sell tobacco products cannot sell non-tobacco products such as toffees, candies, chips, biscuits, soft drinks, among others so that children do not get attracted to these vendors," is implemented in right earnest.

# Top BJP leaders to hold 50 Press meets across country in four days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the party's two-day recent national council meet, all top BJP leaders have been asked to address media in 50 places across the country in four-days, beginning Thursday, to drive home the message of the meet and counter campaign of Congress and Opposition parties against the Modi-Government in the run up to the Lok Sabha polls.

Most of the senior central and state ministers, BJP Chief Ministers, Deputy Chief Ministers, top office bearers of the party at all levels have been asked to travel to different places and apprise people through media about the "falsehood" spread by the Congress and other opponents and "expose their lies", according to a statement issued by the party.

The efforts is to effectively communicate with the people on the "achievements" of the Modi-governments in last four and half years and spread the "success" of welfare policies of the government.

With the Lok Sabha polls only months away and alliances being formed up, particularly the recent SP-BSP seat sharing tie-up in Uttar Pradesh with 80 LS seats at stake, the party seeks to

create confidence and dismiss opposition's attempt to portray it as underdog in the coming crucial elections.

BJP General Secretaries Ram Madhav would brief the press in Jammu, Bhupendra Yadav in Patna, Anil Jail in Agra and Arun Singh in Varanasi. Union Minister and election-in-charge J P Nadda addressed media in Lucknow on Thursday.

Central ministers lined up for addressing the press within four days include Nirmala Sitharaman, Prakash Javadekar, Dharmendra Pradhan, Thawarchand Gehlot, Dr Jitendra Singh, Narendra Singh Tomar, Smiriti Irani, (Gen.) V K Singh, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Rajyavardhan Rathore. Women wing head Poonam Mahajan would also be part of the drill.

Besides, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnis, Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani, Jharkhand's CM Raghubar Das, Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat, Haryana CM Mohan Lal Khattar and Himachal CM Jayram Thakur would also address press at different cities or towns. Party's media-in-charge Anil Baluni is to do his briefing in Rohtak, Haryana.

# Cabinet OK's ₹4,242 cr for income tax e-filing project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved ₹4,242 crore worth project for the e-filing process for Income Tax and ₹6,000 crore worth recapitalisation of Exim Bank. The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi also approved ₹22,594-cr expansion of Numaligarh refinery in Assam.

IT major Infosys has been selected to implement the next generation system for processing income tax return filings, with the Union Cabinet sanctioning an estimated ₹4,241.97 crore for the project. The move will help in bringing down the income tax return (ITR), said Union Minister Piyush Goyal, briefing media.

Goyal said this approval is for creating an Integrated E-filing and Centralised Processing Centre 2.0 Project of the Income Tax Department. Minister said the processing time at present for ITR is 63 days and it will come down to one day after implementation of the project. The project is expected to be completed in 18 months and will be launched after three months of testing. Goyal also informed that tax refunds worth ₹1.83 lakh crore have been issued so far in the current fiscal.

Cabinet approved an increase in the bank's autho-



rised capital from ₹10,000 crore to ₹20,000 crore.

Goyal said it has been decided to issue recapitalisation bonds by the Government of India to the tune of ₹6,000 crore for capital infusion in Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).

"The equity will be infused in two tranches of ₹4,500 crore in 2018-19 and ₹1,500 crore in 2019-20 respectively," he said. Established by the Government of India in 1982, Exim Bank is the apex financial institution for financing, facilitating and promoting the country's international trade.

The Cabinet also approved ₹22,594-cr expansion of Numaligarh refinery in Assam for increasing the capacity by 6 million tonnes per annum to meet the fuel demand of north-eastern India. The central government will provide a ₹1,020 crore

viability gap funding for the project, said the Minister.

Numaligarh Refinery Ltd, in which 61.65 per cent is owned by Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), currently refines 3 million tonnes of crude oil a year. The refinery was set up in 1999 following the Assam Accord. Goyal said the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave its approval to the expansion of the refinery to 9 million tonnes per annum.

"It (the project) involves setting up of a crude oil pipeline from Paradip (in Odisha) to Numaligarh and product pipeline from Numaligarh to Siliguri (in West Bengal) at a cost of ₹22,594 crore. The project is to be completed within a period of 48 months, after approval and receipt of statutory clearances," he said.

# Govt proposes new Emigration Bill 2019

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new Emigration Bill will replace the existing one in view of a paradigm shift in the nature, pattern, directions and volume of migration over the last 35 years.

According to the proposal made by the External Affairs Ministry, the Emigration Bill 2019 proposes to constitute an Emigration Management Authority (EMA) by the Centre to ensure the overall welfare and protection of emigrants. According to the proposed Bill, two new bureaux - the Bureau of Emigration Policy and the Bureau of Emigration Administration will be set up in this connection.

The bureaux will take care of day-to-day operational matters. These will be responsible for all emigration-related issues as well as the welfare and protection of Indian nationals abroad.

The Bureau of Emigration Administration will have offices in different parts of the country.

According to the proposal, nodal authorities will be setup by the respective states and Union Territories that will be chaired at the principal secretary level and will have representation from the home, NRI, labour and skill departments.

These authorities will work in close coordination with other competent authorities of the Central government to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration and address various aspects related to migrants who return.

It will also have represen-



tion from the states and the recruitment industry on a rotation basis.

These bureaux will be led at the joint secretary level and will take care of day-to-day operational matters and will be responsible for all emigration-related issues as well as the welfare and protection of Indian nationals abroad.

The Bureau of Emigration Administration will have offices in different parts of the country.

It proposes to provide for stringent punishment, in particular for categories classified as aggravated form of offences with regard to women and children.

The External Affairs Ministry has sought comments from the general public latest by January 20 before it being tabled in Parliament.

The Ministry statement proposing the new Bill stated that the Emigration Act 1983 was enacted in a specific context of large scale emigration of Indian workers to the Gulf region.

The proposed Bill makes mandatory registration and intimation of all categories of Indian nationals proceeding for overseas employment as well as students pursuing higher studies abroad.

The Bill has comprehensive provisions including insurance, pre-departure orientation, skill up gradation, legal assistance, migrant resource centres, help desks, migration and mobility partnerships, labour and manpower cooperation agreements aimed at strengthened the welfare and protection of the Indian work force abroad.

The proposed Bill also takes into account the increasing incidents of human trafficking, illegal recruitment, illicit trafficking of drugs, harbouring offenders under the garb of recruitment or those offering emigration services without due process.

It proposes to provide for stringent punishment, in particular for categories classified as aggravated form of offences with regard to women and children.

The External Affairs Ministry has sought comments from the general public latest by January 20 before it being tabled in Parliament.

The Ministry statement proposing the new Bill stated that the Emigration Act 1983 was enacted in a specific context of large scale emigration of Indian workers to the Gulf region.

# CBI registers case against 2 more shelter homes in Bihar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered two fresh FIRs relating to the alleged abuse of children in two shelter homes in Bihar—Bhagalpur-based Boys' Children Home run by Rupam Pragati Samaj Samiti, and House Mother another children home in Gaya and their office bearers for alleged abuse of the minor inmates.

A Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) report had stated that House Mother of Children Home, Gaya ill treated children by using abusive language, physical assault, forcing them to write lewd messages and exploiting by then by taking manual labour.

Office bearers of these shelter homes are under the probe of the CBI even as the agency did not name any of the NGO functionaries.

TISS report stated that House Mother, Children Home, Gaya allegedly ill treated chil-

## ABUSE OF MINORS

**'The boys were mentally and physically abused in the shelter home. There were no educational recreational or vocational facilities...'**

Last year, there was national outrage following the alleged abuse of minor girls at a shelter home run by one Brajesh Pathak in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar.

The Supreme Court had directed the CBI to probe alleged abuse of inmates at 17 shelter homes listed in a study conducted by TISS.

The TISS report stated that House Mother, Children Home, Gaya allegedly ill treated chil-

dren by using abusive language, physical assault, forcing them to write lewd messages and further exploiting them by forcing them to take manual labour.

According to the allegations, there were no proper arrangements for medical treatment, study, recreation and food for the minor inmates at the shelter home.

The agency also alleged that the director and other officials were running Boys' Children Home in violation of provisions of Juvenile Justice Act.

"The boys were mentally and physically abused in the shelter home. There were no educational recreational or vocational facilities..." according to the TISS report, now part of the FIR.

The agency registered both the FIRs on Tuesday.

# BJP gets 12 times of total high value donations received by other national parties: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The ruling BJP has declared high value donations totalling more than ₹437 crore for the last fiscal, which is 12 times of the sum total of donations declared by all other national parties including the Congress, in the last financial year, an electoral think-tank said Wednesday.

The maximum amount of donations to both the BJP and the Congress came from Prudent Electoral Trust, which is backed by some big corporate houses, including major players in the realty and telecom sectors, according to ADR or Association for Democratic Reforms.

Prudent Electoral Trust donated a total of ₹164.30 crore to the BJP and the Congress combined. Of this the

BJP got ₹154.30 crore, which is 35 per cent of the total funds received by the party, and the Congress got ₹10 crore, which is 38 per cent of its total funds.

High value donations or any donation above ₹20,000 declared by the national parties were ₹469.89 crore for the year 2017-18. Out of this, BJP received chunk of the funds at ₹437.04 crore, while Congress got ₹26.65 crore.

"The donations declared by BJP is 12 times more than the aggregate declared by Congress, NCP, CPI, CPM and Trinamool Congress for the same period," ADR said in a statement.

Nearly 90 per cent of the total donations to the national parties were made by corporate houses, while 10 per cent were by individuals.

# Students future ambassadors of environment: Javadekar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar on Wednesday said students are the future ambassadors of our environment. Appreciating their efforts in understanding the environment related issues, Javadekar said the students intelligence, knowledge and awareness will bring out a positive change in our society in

protecting nature like forest, biodiversity, wildlife, etc.

Realising the fire consequences of the environmental pollution and its future impact on living beings, Javadekar appealed that citizens must work together in a mission mode for the protection of environment.

He said that it is everyone's responsibility to conserve and preserve the surrounding envi-

ronment by changing mindsets which can give a good atmosphere to live a sustainable and healthy life.

Javadekar was speaking at an event to felicitate students at the 4th edition of TERRE Olympiad, a national level environmental awareness online quiz competition conducted by organisation TERRE Policy Centre.

Congratulating the win-

ners of the competition and also the organizers for organizing the Olympiad, the HRD Minister stated such efforts will encourage and inspire the youth to get closer towards natural surroundings.

He said that the quiz competition will provide a unique and exciting platform for students to be more aware, as they are preparing themselves to become future manager.

This year total 2,49,218 students participated in the exam at national level and numbers of students received prizes in Top 5, TOP 10 and TOP 100 from all over India were into three categories as Saplings, Plants and Tree.

The online exam is very popular in the school students as its totally free of charge and can participate any time even on cell phone.

LEWD FACEBOOK POST

# Professor barred from duty, entering campus

**Kolkata:** Jadavpur University on Wednesday divested professor Kanak Sarkar of teaching duties and barred him from entering the campus with immediate effect, pending inquiries, following outrage over his Facebook post in which he likened a virgin woman to a "sealed bottle".



In view of the recommendation of the department of International Relations, Prof Kanak Sarkar is divested of his teaching duties with immediate effect. Substitute arrangements will be decided in the meeting of the Board of Studies on January 18, a university notification said.

Vice-Chancellor Suranjan Das told reporters that Sarkar won't be allowed to "take classes or enter the varsity campus with immediate effect" till the inquiries of the university-

appointed committee, the State Women's Commission and National Women's Commission are over. "We took the step after talking to students and department of International Relations and the internal code of conduct committee of the institute on the issue," he said.

Sarkar, a professor of International Relations department, had likened a virgin woman to a "sealed bottle" or "packet" in his post on Sunday.

Though he had deleted the post, screenshots of it went viral.

A top university official said, "The university is taking stringent measures in consultation with legal experts against Sarkar in sync with the statute of the institute."

Facing criticism, a defiant Sarkar had appeared to justify his comments, asserting that it was intended for "fun" among a social media group of friends and "not for public consumption".

"Someone took a screenshot of the post and forwarded it, which triggered the response. I did not intend to hurt anyone's sentiment or insult any woman," he said.

He also said according to a Supreme Court order every individual is entitled to express his opinion. **PTI**

## Bengal: Leopard snatches 3-yr-old from mother's lap

PTI ■ ALIPURDUAR

A leopard snatched away a three-year-old girl from her mother's lap after entering their home at a tea garden in West Bengal's Alipurduar district, officials said on Wednesday.

Parts of her body were found scattered in the Garganda tea garden in Madarihata area of the district this morning.

The leopard sneaked into the house in the labour line on Tuesday night and grabbed Pranita, who was on her mother's lap, the officials said.

Pranita's mother Puja Oraon fought the leopard but failed and it fled with the baby. "I tried my best. It was so large... I could not save her," said a crying Oraon.

Locals searched for the girl the entire night but could not find her, the officials said, adding that parts of her body were found in the tea garden this morning. **PTI**

## KERALA NUN RAPE CASE

# Four agitating nuns get marching orders

**Kochi:** Four of the five nuns who led an agitation against rape-accused Bishop Franco Mulakkal in Kerala have been directed to leave their convent in Kottayam district in compliance with a transfer order issued last year, sources said here on Wednesday.

Their congregation — Missionaries of Jesus under Jalandhar diocese of the Roman Catholic Church — has directed the nuns to join the convents they were assigned previously as per the transfer orders issued between March and May in 2018.

However, the nuns, who have been staying with their colleague, allegedly subjected to rape and unnatural sex by Mulakkal, stated they would not leave the convent in Kuravialangad.

The protest led by the nuns and Catholic reformist forums here in September had led to a public outrage and demands for action against the bishop. Bishop Mulakkal, a senior



Representational image

member of the Roman Catholic clergy in India, was arrested in September last following allegations by the nun that he repeatedly raped and sexually assaulted her in the convent at Kuravialangad between 2014 and 2016, a charge denied by him.

The 54-year-old clergyman was "temporarily" relieved of all pastoral responsibilities as the bishop of the Jalandhar diocese by the Vatican.

Three weeks after his arrest, the bishop released on bail in October by the Kerala High Court.

Reacting to the latest church directive, one of the nuns alleged that the decision was aimed at splitting the group and sabotaging their colleague's case against Mulakkal.

The nuns — Alphy, Anupama, Josephine and Ancitta — were served notice by Superior General of the congregation Regina Kadamthottu urging them to take up their assigned responsibilities as befitting members of the Missionaries of Jesus congregation.

Sister Nina Rose, who also fought for justice for the sur-

vivor nun, has not been asked to leave the convent.

The congregation had issued their transfer orders last year much before the outbreak of protests but the nuns had then refused to accept them.

In her recent communique, Superior General Regina said it was a "matter of serious concern" for her to note that they have not yet joined their convents assigned previously.

"You have, however, chosen not to pay heed to my repeated instructions and orders, throwing to the wind your avowed religious vows and commitments," she said in the letter.

While Sister Alphy has been transferred to a convent in Pakartala in Bihar, sister Ancitta and sister Josephine have been directed to join their convent in Lalmatia, Jharkhand.

Sister Anupama, who led the nuns in their protest against Bishop, has been asked to report at the MJ congregation in Punjab. **PTI**

# TDP calls KCR, Jaganmohan 'Modi's

**Amaravati:** The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) on Wednesday called Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu and YSR Congress president YS Jaganmohan Reddy 'Modi's puppets' and dubbed the proposed Federal Front as a 'puppets front'.

In a strong reaction to the meeting Jagan had with TRS working president K T Rama Rao in Hyderabad to discuss the Federal Front, Andhra Pradesh Finance Minister and TDP politburo member Yanamala Ramakrishnu said the relationship between the TRS and the YSRC that so far remained secret has now come out in the open. But the YSRC debunked TDP's charge and maintained that the meeting between the two leaders was only related to the Federal Front and not for a tie-up between TRS and the YSRC.

"All those who did injustice to Andhra Pradesh are now ganging up. The meeting between KTR and Jagan happened under the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Both Jagan and KCR are Modi's puppets," Yanamala said in a statement. The YSRC chiefs claim that he would secure Special

Category Status to Andhra Pradesh with the help of the TRS exposed a conspiracy, he said.

"The Federal Front proposed by KCR is, in fact, a puppets front. These are puppets in the hands of Modi, the TDP veteran leader alleged. Yanamala said the proposed front was only a ploy to prevent the coming together of all anti-BJP parties across the country.

At separate press conferences, State Ministers D U Rao and N Anand Babu also found fault with YSR Congress for seeking to 'align' with the TRS that had been working against the interests of Andhra Pradesh.

The TRS, they pointed out, always opposed Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh and had also made no effort to resolve pending issues in accordance with the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014.

"Jagan never questioned the Centre about the funds that were to be given to the state, nor did he speak against KCR, though many contentious issues between the two states remained unresolved. Jagan owes an explanation to the people on this," the Ministers said. **PTI**



A man steps down from a snow covered stairs during snowfall in Srinagar on Wednesday

PTI

# Snowfall hits lives in Kashmir

KHURSHED WANI ■ SRINAGAR

A moderate snowfall disrupted normal life in Kashmir on Wednesday as flights from Srinagar were cancelled and traffic movement on all major routes encountered hitches and delays. Even as the one-way traffic plied on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway throughout the day, the authorities have cautioned the commuters against embarking on the journey

without weather updates. The divisional administration issued fresh avalanche warning for nine avalanche prone districts in the Valley.

The snowfall occurred three days before the Meteorological department had predicted heavy snowfall in the region between January 19 and 23.

"The air traffic to and from Srinagar airport has been hit because of the low visibility due to continuous snowfall," an

official said. Later in the day, the flights were cancelled and passengers were asked to leave the airport until improvement in weather system.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan issued avalanche warning for avalanche prone areas of Anantnag, Kulgam, Budgam, Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Kargil and Leh districts. The provincial chief bureaucrat directed the Deputy Commissioners of

all these districts to advise the people living in avalanche prone areas not to venture out to avoid any untoward incident.

A police spokesman said that due to fresh snowfall, all roads in Srinagar city turned slippery. "Commuters are advised to drive slow, avoid sudden brakes, fast turning and overtaking, follow traffic rules, minimise use of two-wheeler and keep distance between vehicles."

# Swords, guns, knives seized in Maha; BJP functionary arrested

**Thane:** A large haul of weapons, including over 170 guns, swords, machetes and knives, was recovered from the shop of a local BJP functionary in Maharashtra, police said on Wednesday.



Dhananjay Kulkarni, deputy chief of BJP's Dombivli city unit in Thane district, from whose store the seizure was made, has been arrested, police said.

The weapons were recovered in a raid conducted by the Kalyan Crime Branch, police said.

Kulkarni was arrested after police raided his fashion accessories store and recovered around 170 weapons, including air guns, swords and knives, an official said.

The raid was conducted at the shop located in Tilak Nagar area in Dombivli on Monday night and Kulkarni, 49, who owns the shop, was arrested Tuesday morning, police said.

A local BJP leader said Kulkarni is the vice president of the party's Dombivli unit. "Following a tip-off, the raid was conducted at Tapasya House of Fashion, which sells fashion accessories and cosmetic products," a police officer said.

"Around 170 weapons, including eight air guns, 10 swords, 38 press button knives, 25 choppers, nine kukris, nine guptis (bladed weapon con-

cealed in a wooden case), five knives, three axes and a sickle were recovered from the shop," he added.

These weapons were kept on sale at the shop, he said.

"The seized weapons are collectively worth ₹1.86 lakh. The outlet has been in operation since seven months," the official said.

"Kulkarni had procured the arms from Crawford Market in south Mumbai, and from Punjab and Rajasthan," he said.

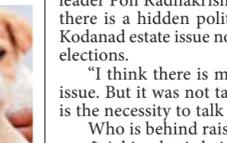
Kulkarni was Tuesday produced before a local court, which remanded him in judicial custody, police said.

The NCP demanded an explanation from Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis over the arms seizure from the BJP functionary's fashion accessories store.

State NCP president Jayant Patil said the incident showed the manner in which the BJP wanted to rule. **PTI**

# Two nursing students held for killing 16 puppies granted bail

**Kolkata:** Two nursing students who were arrested after confessing to their involvement in the killing of 16 puppies at a state-run hospital premises here, were granted bail by a city court on Wednesday.



Animal lovers were seen shouting slogans and waving placards outside the chief judicial magistrate court at Sealdah in the city, where the two were produced, demanding exemplary punishment for the culprits.

Carcasses of 16 puppies were found in plastic bags in front of a hostel at the state-run Nil Ratan Sircar Medical College and Hospital on Sunday. Preliminary reports had said the puppies were beaten to death.

Acting on an FIR lodged on Monday, the police had identified and interrogated some students and security guards on the basis of CCTV footage. Of them, two nursing students had admitted to their involvement in the crime and they were arrested, the police said.

Meanwhile, Kolkata Municipal Corporation Deputy Mayor Atin Ghosh on Wednesday announced that the civic body would conduct vaccination and sterilisation programme in all hospitals and Government establishments premises. **PTI**

# Hidden political agenda behind raising Kodanad issue now: Radhakrishnan

**Kanyakumari (TN):** Union Minister for State and BJP leader Pon Radhakrishnan on Wednesday alleged that there is a hidden political agenda behind raising the Kodanad estate issue now, months before the Lok Sabha elections.

"I think there is mystery regarding the Kodanadu issue. But it was not talked about all these days. What is the necessity to talk about it now?"

Who is behind raising the Kodanadamystery issue now? A big plot is being woven behind the kodanadu mystery. There is a hidden political agenda and ulterior motive behind it," he alleged.

The issue pertains to a former magazine editor Samuel Mathew releasing a 16-minute video clip in Delhi on January 11, alleging that Chief Minister K Palaniswami had links to a break-in at Kodanad estate in 2017. **PTI**



A pair of buffaloes lock horns during a traditional buffalo fight held as part of Magh Bihu festivities at Boidyabori village in Guwahati on Wednesday

PTI

# Bru refugees in Tripura camps to get free ration, allowance till March 31

**Aizawl:** Around 35,000 Bru refugees living in relief camps in Tripura would continue to receive free ration and cash allowance till March 31, officials said on Wednesday.

A senior Mizoram Government official said inmates of the six relief camps at Kanchanpur sub-division in North Tripura district were in uncertainty as the Centre was scheduled to discontinue the assistance from Tuesday.

The Home Ministry has conveyed to the State Government that the assistance would be available to the Bru refugees till March 31, Mizoram additional secretary for home Lalbiakzama told PTI.

The Bru community in the relief camps were happy about the decision,

said R Laldawngliana, vice-president of the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF), an umbrella organisation of the refugees.

Laldawngliana, who is now in Delhi along with other leaders of the MBDPF, said they were informed of the decision by officials of the Home Ministry.

The Centre had earlier decided to close the relief camps and stop the assistance in October last year in accordance to an agreement signed in July on repatriation of the Bru refugees to Mizoram, where they originally belong.

The agreement was inked on July 3, 2018 in Delhi among the Centre, the state governments of Mizoram and Tripura and the

MBDPF.

All the stake holders had agreed to complete the repatriation of Brus to Mizoram by the end of September.

However, out of 5,000 refugee families, only 150 members of 42 families returned to Mizoram during the repatriation exercise between August 25 and September 25.

MBDPF leaders said the repatriation process could not take off as many heads of families could not obtain necessary documents like Aadhaar and ration cards and were yet to open bank accounts to fulfil the provisions of the agreement.

The Centre had stopped the assistance from October 1, but resumed it on October 22 with the condition that it would continue

only till January 15.

The MBDPF recently said that it hoped that the newly-elected Mizo National Front (MNF) Government in Mizoram initiate talks on the repatriation issue.

Official sources, however, said resumption of repatriation process is unlikely in the near future in view of the upcoming Parliamentary polls.

Thousands of Bru refugees from Mizoram fled to Tripura during an ethnic violence in 1997. The clashes broke out after a forest official was killed by Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) militants.

The Centre, in association with the Governments of Mizoram and Tripura, was repatriating the displaced Brus in phases. **PTI**

# Cong, JD(S), BJP call MLAs' meets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Karnataka crisis



JD(S) workers protest in front of BJP MLA Ashwath Narayana's residence over his alleged attempts to destabilise the Government in Bengaluru on Wednesday. PTI

Amid the uncertainty prevailing over the fate of HD Kumaraswamy Government in Karnataka, both the ruling Congress-JD(S) alliance and Opposition BJP have convened a meeting of party MLAs on Thursday. While the Congress will meet its legislators in Bengaluru, the BJP has convened a meeting of party MLAs in Gurugram.

The Congress has strength of 80 MLAs, including Speaker, while Janata Dal (S) has 37 legislators in its fold. The lone BSP member is also supporting the alliance Government. The BJP has 104 seats in the 224-member Assembly. The other two are Independents who have withdrawn support from the Kumaraswamy Government.

While the Congress asserted that the Congress-JD(S) alliance Government is "stable and strong", the BJP termed such an "unnatural" alliance was responsible for the ongoing political turmoil. Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge accused the BJP of trying to destabilise it.

BJP sources said all the 104 BJP MLAs, who have been in New Delhi to attend the party's national council meeting and then extended their stay, would remain confined in the resort.

The party's Karnataka unit chief B S Yeddyurappa is like-

ly to hold a meeting with the party MLAs who are camping at the resort and discuss the prevailing situation in the State. They said the BJP legislators will stay put in Gurugram till the party top leaders give the green signal to return to Karnataka.

The Congress too has convened a meeting of its flock and AICC sources said a few Ministers from the party have even offered to step down in the larger interest and to accommodate the rebels. The Central party leadership is considering this option.

Congress general secretary K C Venugopal asserted that none of his party legislators were going to quit.

"It would be a big slap on the face of the BJP as it is going to fail in its endeavour to bring

the Government down. Their shameless motive to destabilise the Government is going to be a big failure. It will be a national shame for them," he said.

On five Congress MLAs, who are in Mumbai allegedly under the BJP's control, Kumaraswamy said, "I have been saying for the past three days that they are in touch with me, I'm in the know of all the developments. They may not be reachable to others, but they are reachable to me," he said in response to a question whether the five MLAs were accessible.

State Minister B Z Zameer Ahmad Khan, considered a "trouble shooter" for the Congress, said Kumaraswamy-led Government faced no threat and Yeddyurappa was "daydreaming" about becoming

Chief Minister once again. He on his part claimed seven to eight BJP MLAs were in touch with them.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara and CLP leader Siddaramaiah met Venugopal and held discussions. The Congress has convened a meeting of its MLAs here on Thursday to take stock of the ongoing political developments.

The coalition Government suffered the first major setback when two MLAs, an Independent and a member of the Karnataka Pragyanavantara Janata Paksha, withdrew support to the Government on Tuesday. There was no immediate threat to the Government with the withdrawal of support but speculation was rife that many other disgruntled Congress MLAs could follow suit by resigning from the Assembly, though the party has maintained that its flock is intact.

The grand old party also alleged that the BJP has a bigger plan behind its moves "to topple" the coalition Government in the State as it wants to show that any grand alliance against it at the Centre will meet the same fate. Meanwhile MLAs who went "missing" from both the parties—Congress and BJP—kept making news throughout the days.

# Amrapali floated firms in peons' name to cheat homebuyers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Skeletons kept tumbling out of the closets in the forensic audit of embattled Amrapali Group, as court-appointed auditors on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that posh flats were booked on sums as low as ₹1. ₹5 and ₹11 per sq ft in the name of over 500 people.

The audit found that 23 companies were floated in the name of office boys, peons and drivers and these firms were made fronts to divert homebuyers' money. The two forensic auditors told the apex court that they have issued notices to 655 people on whose names 'benami' flats were booked but no one was found in 122 such locations.

The interim report of forensic auditors which was submitted before a bench of justices Arun Mishra and U U Lalit said that chief financial officer (CFO) Chander Wadhwa had transferred Rs 4.75 crore to "unidentified people" just three days before he deposed before the top court on October 26, last year.

"He (Wadhwa) had in his account ₹12 crore till March 2018. Then he had transferred ₹1 crore in the name of his wife. Just three days before he appeared in the court for the first time on October 26, 2018, he had transferred ₹4.75 crore to some unidentified people," forensic auditor Pawan Kumar Agarwal told the bench.

The submission of Agarwal irked the bench which pulled up Wadhwa who was present in the court and warned him of

contempt action.

"You (Wadhwa) are putting spoke in the wheels of justice. You very well know that questions will be asked by the court and hence you transferred the money. We want the entire tranche of money back in seven days time. You had no business to transfer the money on October 23, 2018. You have obstructed the course of justice and we may haul you up for contempt of court," the bench said.

The court also asked the forensic auditors to produce the orders of Income Tax department which during its search and seizure conducted in 2013-14 had recovered ₹200 crore bogus bills and vouchers besides Rs one crore from Amrapali Group CMD Anil Kumar Sharma and ₹one crore from director Shiv Priya.

Another forensic auditor Ravi Bhatia told the court that Amrapali Group had appealed against the IT order which had deleted the paragraph which mentioned of ₹200 crore bogus bills and vouchers raised on account of purchase of raw materials.

"You submit us both the orders of IT department and the appellate authority. We would like to see them," the bench said.

The top court also brought under its scanner multi-national firm JP Morgan Real Estate fund, which had invested ₹85 crore in Amrapali Zodiac in 2010 by purchasing its share and later selling those shares to the sister companies of reality firm.

The forensic auditors pointed out that shares purchased and agreement of JP Morgan Real Estate fund and Amrapali

Group were in violation of the provisions of law.

"After investing ₹85 crore in purchasing the shares of Amrapali Zodiac with an agreement which was impermissible in law they again sold those shares for Rs 140 crore to little known companies Neelkanth and Rudraksh which were owned by Chandan Mittal and Vivek Mittal who worked in the office of Amrapali statutory auditors. These two companies were sister companies of Amrapali Group," the forensic auditors said.

To this, the bench told the counsel for JP Morgan and its India in-charge that the company needs to explain lot of things and they need the reply within one week.

"You have to explain within a week when did this transaction took place, what documents had you seen, when did you appointed your chief financial officer, who took the decision to sell those shares to companies like Neelkanth and Rudraksh, whether any study was conducted to see the standing of these companies in market, who signed the documents and lastly who signed the cheques. We want each and every details in one week," the bench said.

It also warned that if their were no satisfactory reply to the questions then the court may direct Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) to look into the matter.

The counsel for JP Morgan, however, said that they would explain everything to the court and urged the bench not to get prejudiced with the findings of forensic audit. PTI

# Don't take political mileage from JNU sedition case: Sena to BJP

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena on Wednesday said the BJP has no moral right to criticise student leader Kanhaiya Kumar, who has been charged with sedition, after teaming up with the PDP in Jammu & Kashmir.

The Sena also asked the ruling BJP to refrain from taking political mileage from the sedition case against Kumar, a former president of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Students' Union.

"The BJP committed a 'sin' by aligning with People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti, it said, claiming that she considered

Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru as a martyr.

The BJP was part of the PDP-led Government in Jammu & Kashmir but pulled out of the coalition last year.

The Delhi Police had on Monday filed a charge sheet in a court against Kanhaiya Kumar and others, saying he was leading a procession and supported seditious slogans raised on the JNU campus in February 2016.

"The BJP committed the biggest sin of aligning with Mehbooba Mufti, who considers Afzal Guru a freedom fighter and a martyr. Now the BJP,

for its own benefit, should not try and take political mileage out of the sedition case filed against Kanhaiya," the Sena said in an editorial in party mouthpiece 'Saamana'.

A terrorist like Ajmal Kasab, convicted in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case, was given a chance by court to defend himself, it said, and expressed hope that Kumar would also be given a chance to present his case.

If the allegations against him are not true, they will not stand in court, said the Uddhav Thackeray-led party, which is an ally of the BJP at the Centre and in Maharashtra.

# SP may...

From Page 1

As the SP-BSP alliance is keen to have RLD in the alliance due to its influence over the Jat community voters in western UP, it is expected that SP, may accommodate the party even by sacrificing one seat from its quota of 38 seats.

On the other hand, Congress is also making overture to the RLD. The lone RLD MLA in Rajasthan is a Minister in the State Government after contesting the Assembly polls in alliance with Congress.

Speculation is rife that RLD candidates could contest the elections on SP symbol or vice-versa as done in the Kairana by polls when a SP leader contested on RLD symbol. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh RLD president Dr Masood Ahmed has announced that his party will a partner of the SP-BSP alliance.

# Nirupam alleges lakhs of bogus voters registered in Maha

Mumbai: Mumbai Congress chief Sanjay Nirupam alleged on Wednesday that there were lakhs of bogus voters registered in Mumbai and Maharashtra.

"There are several (genuine) voters who are claiming not to have received their voter IDs. These are either Congress voters or belong to the minority community," he said.

Of the 638 voter IDs from the Magathane assembly constituency which he scrutinised, only 182 belonged to genuine voters, while of the 552 voter IDs he got from the Dindoshi constituency, only 290 were genuine, the Congress leader claimed.

"There are around 15,000 to 20,000 bogus voters registered in every assembly segment and around 1.25 lakh to 1.5 lakh bogus voters in every parliamentary constituency," he alleged.

"These voters are only present on paper. Mumbai should be protected from these voters in the upcoming polls," he said.

Voter IDs should be delivered at the voter's doorstep so as to check genuineness of the ID, he said. PTI

# Modi statements on Sabarimala contempt of court: Yechury

Bhopal: CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Wednesday lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for criticising the party-led Government in Kerala over the Sabarimala row and claimed his statements amounted to "contempt of court".

Addressing a gathering of BJP workers in Kollam Tuesday, Modi had said the conduct of Kerala's CPM-led LDF Government on the Sabarimala issue would go down in the history as one of the "most shameful behaviours

by any party and Government". Modi had also said the Congress and Communists were talking about gender justice in the Sabarimala issue but their actions were "just opposite".

Yechury condemned Modi for his remarks. "He charged the elected Government in Kerala with not paying attention to public sentiments. The issue was that the Supreme Court has ordered that women (of all ages) be given equal rights as far as entry in Sabarimala temple is concerned," he told reporters here. PTI

# India to buy \$5 billion oil, gas from US

From Page 1

Commercial Indian airlines, Shringla said, have placed orders of 300 airplanes worth \$40 billion. "We're looking at importing products that we've never bought from the US before," he said, adding that some of the consumer products from the US are increasing in demand in India. In the defence sector, India is looking at \$18 billion worth of orders that are under implementation. Not only this, the large number of Indian students — numbering 227,000 currently — contribute \$6.5 billion to the American academic sector, Shringla said, giving an example towards India's contribution to the US economy.

Addressing representatives from the American corporate sector, he said that the progress made by India and the US in the last few years has been unpar-

leled. "What amazes me is that in the last few years, the amount of progress that our relationship has made is unparalleled in many senses. The United States is India's largest trading partner. We are among the top 10 trading partners in terms of sheer volume of business," Shringla said.

Referring to the pro-business initiatives of the Indian government, the Indian Ambassador urged the American corporate sector to take benefit of the new business-friendly atmosphere in India and invest in the country. In his remarks, the US Chambers of Commerce president Tom Donohue said there are many issues in common, many challenges that the two countries have to deal with collectively.

"Our promise (is that) we will put all the attention and energy it takes to make this relationship

successful," Donohue said. The US-India relationship has gone from being a bilateral relationship to be both global and local. USIBC president Nisha Desai Biswal said, observing that the two countries have boundless opportunities in partnership. "We're partnering across the Indo-Pacific. But we're also deepening the ties between our cities and states. In fact, throughout the year, you will see more and more engagement between our states in our cities, more and more governments, mayors going to India, chief ministers and legislators coming here," said Biswal, the former Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia.

Noting that the US-India relationship is strong, Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said it transcends politics.

# More than 150 people diagnosed with scrub typhus in Mizoram

Aizawl: At least 152 people have been diagnosed with the scrub typhus disease at Thenzawl town in Serchhip district, Mizoram health department officials said on Wednesday.

Scrub typhus, also known as bush typhus, is a disease caused by a bacteria called Orientia tsutsugamushi and the bacteria is carried and spread by mites, they said.

The officials said that the scrub typhus outbreak began in November 2018.

The Nodal officer of the State Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, Dr Pachauu Lalmasawma and a team of experts visited Thenzawl, organised a free clinic for the patients and people suspected of being infected by the bacteria, officials said. PTI

# Political who's who to join Didi rally at Brigade

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has sprung a surprise which is difficult to digest for the BJP getting senior saffron leader and former Arunachal Chief Minister Gegong Apang to join her grand rally scheduled to be held on January 19 at the historic Brigade Parade Ground.

Not only this, a number of other BJP leaders including former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, Shatrughan Sinha, Arun Shourie, are also likely to join her rally apart from former NDA allies like Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

According to Trinamool Congress sources Apang a five-time Chief Minister of his State who resigned from BJP writing to its president that it was not the same party as it used to be will also join the Brigade rally that could break all previous records of attendance.

The TMC is expecting a 20-

lakh-plus footfall 4-5 lakh more than the largest turnout ever in 1977 when former Chief Minister late Jyoti Basu had called a similar all-party rally.

Banerjee earlier said that leaders from "Kashmir to Kanyakumari" would join the rally to which BJP State president said "let us wait and see how many of them come."

"On January 19 you will see a huge representation from all regions of the country. Heavyweight national leaders, including former Prime Minister and several ex-Chief Ministers will attend the rally," Banerjee said while her party leaders called the effort a prelude to Banerjee's emerging as the face of the opposition and — "albeit the prime ministerial face" — after the elections. "You will see national leaders from Kashmir to Kanyakumari — like ex-Prime Minister HD Deve Gowdaji, his son and Karnataka Chief Minister Kumaraswami, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwalji, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav coming to join the rally," Banerjee said adding Congress Lok Sabha leader Mallikarjun Kharge would also come in the rally.

# BJP will win 74 LS seats in UP: Nadda

From Page 1 as well as in UP, Nadda said the allegations were made just on perception and the government had no tolerance to corruption.

Commenting on the allegations made by BSP president Mayawati, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and the Congress about non-fulfilment of the poll promises made by the BJP, he said these parties and their leaders were speaking about their own records.

"Mayawati and Akhilesh are speaking about performance of their governments. We are ready to debate with figures on any platform. The BJP election agenda is nation's development," he said.

When asked about the bickering within the alliance in UP, particularly the criticism by Apna Dal (Sonelal) and Suheldeo Bhartiya Samaj Party, Nadda said, "There was some problem

with the Apna Dal but now everything has been sorted out."

"Running an alliance is a hard game and sometimes dispute occur. But now everything has been sorted out," he added.

Commenting on the defeat of the BJP in the three Lok Sabha bypolls in UP, the Union minister said, "One cannot compare bypolls with general elections. Different strategies are adopted for these elections."

The BJP's Lok Sabha poll in-charge in UP claimed that the new 10 per cent reservation to the upper caste poor was an attempt to give equal representation to them. "Marginalised section of society has been given reservation without disturbing the quota of the backwards and Dalits," he said, adding that very soon the 10 per cent reservation for upper caste poor would be implemented in UP.

# Govt OK's Collegium picks...

From Page 1

"The concerns remain the same. Rather, they seem to have aggravated by this exercise (recent recommendations). I don't think there is any change. At least it is not visible to the public at large. It has not served its purpose because we don't find the changes which the Press conference wanted to have really taken place," Justice Lodha told.

Justice Kailash Gambhir, a former Delhi High Court judge, also wrote a letter to President Kovind on January 14 expressing concern over the Collegium bypassing the seniority of several judges. The BCI, which is an apex body of lawyers, said the decision of the Collegium was viewed by the Bar and the common man as "unjust and improper".

In a statement, BCI Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra said the supersession of several senior Judges and Chief Justices of the country cannot be tolerated by the

people and the revocation of the earlier decision recommending the names of Justices Nandraj and Menon is viewed as "whimsical and arbitrary". "They are men of integrity and judicial competence; nobody can raise a finger against these judges on any ground. The decision will certainly lead to humiliation and demoralisation of such judges and also of several other deserving senior judges and Chief Justices of high courts," Mishra said.

The Bar body said it was watching the "strong resentment and reaction of the Indian Bar" as well as keeping a tab on the comments of intellectuals, social activists and general public "which shows that the faith of the people has abruptly eroded from our collegiums system in recent past".

While maintaining that the BCI was hard-pressed to raise these issues, it said even the Bar Council of Delhi also adopted a resolution against

the decision of the collegium. Further, the statement said that several state Bar Councils, high courts, Bar Associations and other Bar Associations of the country have written to the BCI, pressing it to raise this issue and agitate the matter before the government and the Collegium judges.

"We have no grievance against Justice Khanna. But he can wait for his turn. There is no hurry to elevate him ignoring the merit and seniority of several Chief Justices and puisne Judges of the country," it said.

"The Bar will request the collegiums and the Government not to encourage such supersession. The appointments, in complete derogation of seniority principle, have evoked strong reactions from all corners of the society," the BCI said.

The decision on elevation of Justices Maheshwari and Khanna that was put on the apex court website noted that the issue of elevation of judges

was deliberated on December 12 last year when Justice MB Lokur was also a member of the Collegium. Justice Mishra became a member of the Collegium after Justice Lokur retired on December 30.

According to the website, after extensive deliberations on January 5-6 this year, the newly-constituted Collegium deemed it appropriate to have a fresh look on the issue of elevation of judges in the light of the additional material that became available.

"While recommending the names of justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna, the collegium has taken into consideration combined seniority on all-India basis of Chief Justices and senior judges of high courts, apart from their merit and integrity," the Collegium said.

The Collegium added that it has also kept in mind the desirability of giving due representation on the Bench of the Supreme Court, as far as possible, to all the high courts.

# Shah suffering from swine flu, admitted to AIIMS

New Delhi: BJP president Amit Shah was on Wednesday admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here for swine flu treatment.

"I have been diagnosed with swine flu for which the treatment is underway. With God's grace and good wishes from all of you, I will recover soon," Shah tweeted in Hindi.

According to sources at AIIMS, the BJP leader was admitted following complaints of chest congestion and breathing issues. He reached the hospital at around 9 pm and is admitted in the old private ward of the hospital. A team of doctors are monitoring his condition under the supervision of AIIMS director Randeep Guleria, they said. Union Minister Piyush Goyal visited Shah at AIIMS. PTI

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD						
No.: 230-Elect-OP-ET Notice- 37-2019		E-Tender Notice		Date: 14.01.2019		
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (OP), North Central Railway, Allahabad, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites the following E-Tender on prescribed form. The detail of the tender is as under:						
Tender No.	Name of Work	Approx. Cost of Work ₹	Earnest Money ₹	Cost of Tender Form ₹	Completion Period	Date of Opening of Tender
37	Hiringof2Nos.fourwheelerDieselroad	2036016.00	40700.00	3000.00	24 months	14.02.2019
vehicle i.e. Tata Sumo/ Travera/Sumo Grande model 2017 or later in good condition for crew management and loading, unloading of line boxes of crews at ALD for COI round the clock for 02ears.						
Note: 1. The complete information along with tender booklet of above E-Tenders will be available on website www.ireps.gov.in up to 14:30 hrs on due date 14.02.2019 of tender opening. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tender. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certified issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightway ignored and shall not be considered. 4. Document being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. 5. This tender notice have also been uploaded on www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in 6.Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Document Cost (TDC) in respect of e-Tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. 7. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached.						
					60/19(I)	
North central railways		www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in		@CPRONCR		

## Quota push and a drag

HRD Ministry hikes seats for EWS students but educational institutions are clearly not ready



Now that the ten per cent quota for the economically backward sections of society, irrespective of caste and class markers, is law, the grandeur of announcement and the idealism of ensuring a just social order have made way for the practicalities of implementation. But much like the law, which saw the light of day without much deliberation, the NDA government is on a speed run with HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar announcing 25 per cent additional seats in higher education institutions, both government and private, to accommodate new aspirants for the 2019-2020 academic session. That means a sweeping arc of creating around 10 lakh seats in 40,000 colleges and about 900 universities at an investment of thousands of crores, the specifics of which are yet nebulous. Who will be footing the bill, considering the present government will soon become lame-duck? Not only that, the government is also keen to pass a hurried piece of legislation in the budget session to make sure private institutions implement the SC, ST, OBC and EWS quotas, never mind that most of them honour state quota criteria, considering education is predominantly a state subject, and could technically wait for state governments to ratify the Central quotas. Is it wise to burden an already distressed education system, suffering serious infrastructural deficiencies and vacancies? It is a known fact that around 40-50 per cent of faculty seats are already vacant in Central universities and adding numbers will only skew the teacher-student ratio further. Leave aside teachers, even the reserved seats for SC/ST and OBCs are not filled hundred per cent. Nor can they be filled by others. Can we afford to increase seats only to under-utilise them? Even routine budgetary spends have remained unspent at Central varsities. Would there be enough available talent to qualify for meritorious institutions, where the quota seats are going abegging? As for institutions that confine themselves to the states they operate in, there is no work-book yet on reconciling both the imperatives of the Centre and the state.

The rushed approach to appear like a messianic regime may be appreciated but without factoring on-ground realities, the EWS quota will end up being a drag on the system rather than being an exceptional legislation of affirmative action. As it is, the quota law has opened up a war on many fronts, saying it will encourage more discrimination. There's already talk that the EWS quota is not proportional enough, less than 50 per cent as the 10 per cent quota covers just about 21 per cent of the population. It is much higher for SC, ST and OBC categories, who, in turn, are complaining of encroachment. Does this then encourage a sense of entitlement and complacency than the competitive spirit of excellence and compromise efficiencies? Of course, there is the bigger issue of finding jobs. Though our economy can pull up a decent growth rate, job creation is still at its lowest with a manufacturing push hardly delivering the result. There is not much wisdom then in pushing more educated youth into the morass of disenchantment and lock ourselves in the trap of a demographic disaster. Besides, more than job creation, the real issue is of ensuring higher wages and salaries. We may have a skilled workforce but then there should be an equally strong template of their readiness and aptitude for new sunshine sectors, one that might help them migrate from the informal to formal sectors. Micro entrepreneurs will need to be encouraged as will new service sectors. Till we figure out the beneficiary map, the law will remain just a statistic, introduced by a regime which threw empty promises without ever intending to see them through as a legacy worth emulating.

## What next for Britain?

As Britain's time in the EU draws to a close, it has to decide to leave without a deal or not leave at all



The problem with "yes" and "no" questions is that they leave out the greys, the "but" that almost every single one of us uses to qualify our statements. And when you give voters a stark "yes" and "no" choice and build up both positions with hyperbole and loose facts alongside a media storm, they can make some very poor decisions in the moment. And that is what seems to have happened in the United Kingdom when that nation voted by a narrow margin to leave the European Union which allowed the term 'Brexit' to enter the lexicon. The

Brexiters, those who wanted to leave the Union, rightly surmised that an appeal to Britain's "glorious" past, when it ruled half the world, would appeal to those in the areas left behind by the success of London and its suburbs. The problem is that many elements of that "glorious" past, which voters were led to believe would rush to make trade deals with Britain, did not want those deals, India being the biggest case in point. With the process of getting a British tourist visa for an Indian being unnecessarily complicated and expensive for Indians, let alone work permits, the Modi government, quite rightly, rejected British advances. And the same happened across the world, including self-described deal maker extraordinaire Donald Trump.

But if it was only about trade deals, the British have tried and failed to strike a divorce deal with the EU. Simply put, the Brexiters believed that they could keep the house, the car, the pets and the children and the EU would let them. But divorce does not work that way in the real world as Amazon's Jeff Bezos can testify. The EU was quite correct in telling the British that the East India Company style of deal-making does not happen anymore and stood united. The British unfortunately, to this day, are still drunk on the legacy of their colonial past, a past that celebrates difficult figures such as Winston Churchill. The world has moved on and so has Europe. Britain is not "great" anymore, no matter what the British advertising campaign tries to sell. It is a small yet still influential cog in the global economy. But this is not the mid-1800s and this small cog will become even smaller and less important, particularly if it leaves without a deal. Maybe it is time to consider the unthinkable for British politicians, now that their voting public have seen the truth. Maybe it is time to give them another say. If they still want to leave in chaos, so be it. But the British public and their politicians have to appreciate that the good times are over. For good.

# Alzheimerish China

Beijing will celebrate the emancipation of the serfs in Tibet on March 28. Ironically, the communist party has forgotten what happened at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989



CLAUDE ARPI

Cary Huang, a senior columnist with the *South China Morning Post*, wrote recently: "In 2019, China ushers in a year full of both festive jubilation and political trouble. Its communist leadership places enormous emphasis on the anniversaries of important historical events... China has a lot to celebrate in 2019 but it also has old wounds to heal." He noted that with its packed 2019 calendar of commemorative events, Beijing may "forget" some of them, "many of which are politically charged or divisive. For a nation moving forward, it's time to acknowledge the difficult past."

But today, in Xi Jinping's China, who is ready to analyse the past? Huang gave the example of March 28, the day when Beijing will commemorate the 60th anniversary of Serfs Emancipation Day. What is this "emancipation"? March 28, 1959, marks the end of the massacre of the Tibetan population in Lhasa and Beijing's taking of rigorous control over the Tibetan capital; 18 days earlier, the Dalai Lama had fled the Roof of the World to take refuge in India. On March 28, the revered Dalai Lama was sacked as chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region and was replaced by a (then) more pliant Panchen Lama.

Incidentally, will Beijing observe the 30th anniversary of the death of reformist party chief Hu Yaobang and the subsequent student-led pro-democracy protests, which resulted in thousands of casualties during the military crackdown in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989? An Alzheimerish communist party is bound to have forgotten what happened on the Square after the demise of Hu Yaobang as well as the thousands who died in Lhasa but the Emancipation Day is still celebrated.

Several non-Tibetan accounts of the events of March 1959, including the popular uprising, the flight of the Dalai Lama, the massacre of the Tibetan population and finally the so-called 'emancipation' — all this in less than three weeks — are available.

In his 'Report for the months of March, April and May 1959' sent to the Ministry of External Affairs, Maj SL Chibber, the Indian Consul General in Lhasa said: "In the history of movement for free Tibet, the month of March, 1959, will be most historic... during this month Tibetans high and low, in Lhasa, capital of Tibet, openly challenged the Chinese rule... the might of [the] Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), who on March 20, 1959, started an all-out offensive against the ill-organised, ill-equipped and untrained Tibetans with artillery, mortars, machine guns and all types of automatic weapons, was short-lived."

The Dalai Lama left Lhasa secretly three days earlier. Chibber continued: "On March 28, 1959, the State Council of the Peoples Republic of China dissolved the local Tibet Government and transferred all its functions and powers to the Preparatory Committee for



the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR)."

Another recent publication, "The 1959 Tibetan Uprising Documents — The Chinese Army Documents, released last year using documents from the PLA's Military Intelligence, corroborated Chibber's version of the 1959 bloody events.

Yet another account was given by Jianglin Li in her book, *Tibet in Agony*. She also used Chinese sources to describe the crackdown in Lhasa. Jianglin wrote: "In March 1959, a series of critical events played out in Lhasa. From March 25 to April 5, the CPC's Central Committee held an enlarged politburo meeting, and the seventh plenary session of the Eighth Central Committee in Shanghai. Pacification of rebellion in Tibet and relations with India were two of the issues discussed. Wu Lengxi, who was then head of *Xinhua* news agency and chief editor of *The People's Daily*, revealed a glimpse of Mao's thinking on the China-India relationship in his memoir: "Let the Indian Government commit all the wrongs for now. When the time comes, we will settle accounts with them."

The accounts were 'settled' three years later on the slopes of the Thagla ridge and in Ladakh. Jianglin added: "Mao was brooding on 'settling accounts' with India as early as March 1959. Yet on May 15, in a letter

SEVERAL NON-TIBETAN ACCOUNTS OF THE EVENTS OF MARCH 1959, INCLUDING THE POPULAR UPRISING, THE FLIGHT OF THE DALAI LAMA, THE MASSACRE OF THE TIBETAN POPULATION AND FINALLY THE SO-CALLED 'EMANCIPATION' — ALL THIS IN LESS THAN THREE WEEKS — ARE AVAILABLE

from the Chinese Foreign Ministry to the Indian Government, he wrote: "Pacification of rebellion and implementing democratic reform in Tibet would pose no threat to India whatsoever."

RS Kapur, another Indian official posted as Indian Trade Agent in Gyantse, wrote in his Annual Report for the Year 1959: "The year 1959 will go down as the most important year in the history of Tibet. It marked an end to the way of life of the Tibetan people. The Dalai Lama, who felt that he could no longer function effectively, left his country in March. ... With Opposition out of the country, Chinese got a free hand and they went all out to subjugate the country. People have been deprived of their movable and immovable property."

He further asserted: "While the heart of Tibet was bleeding, the free world only made speeches. With the end of the debate on Tibet in the United Nations, Tibetans lost all hopes of their survival, stared at the sky with blank eyes and asked: Where is God? Where is Buddha?"

During the 1950s, the Chinese had time and again used the same propaganda argument; once the Tibetans would be ready, the PLA would leave the Land of Snows. Some members of the Communist Youth League were told:

"Tibetans should work hard to become capable of shouldering the responsibility of the administration of their country." They were given the example of Inner Mongolia where the Chinese personnel withdrew when the local people were able to run the administration in an efficient way.

Che Dalha, the TAR Chairman, announced that everything was fine now. "High-tech and digital industries, together with agriculture, tourism and culture, green industries and modern services, have become major industries, contribute to high-quality growth in the region," he declared. Tibet's GDP in 2018 was estimated at more than \$21 billion, up about 10 per cent from 2017.

However, during a session of the 11th TAR People's Congress, Che spoke again and again about poverty alleviation. His Government, said Che, had lifted 50,000 people out of poverty in 2018 and would eradicate absolute poverty by 2019; he promised that he would create new jobs for 50,000 people in cities and towns. Once could ask: what was the point to 'liberate' Tibet and then 'emancipate' the Tibetans if there are still so many poor 60 years later?

(The writer is an expert on India-China relations and an author)

## SOUNDBITE

Elevation of junior judges ignoring seniority left me surprised. Collegium should act in a transparent manner. Reasons must be forthcoming why the decision was an upturn.



Former CJI — RM Lodha

We want to create such a narrative that people do not take to guns. We are tightening the administration, so that there is no atrocity or injustice to any innocent person



J&K Governor — Satyapal Malik

I always take up interesting work. In a way, it's like an investigative work because we get to explore so many things in our life while acting.



Actress — Radhika Apte

Government should educate more people in order to control the population of the country as illiterate people have more children.



Bihar Deputy CM — Sushil Kumar Modi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Political drama

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Karnataka drama" (January 16). Once again, political drama has erupted in Karnataka where huge money is being spent to save/protop the State Government. Fearing poaching, MLAs have been hiding in costly resorts far away from the State. Evidently, the heavy amount of money being spent for political games will be recovered indirectly from the public. It's high time that a mechanism be evolved to put an end to such nuisance and ensure the efficacy of governance.

Chief Ministers must be elected secretly and all MLAs must compulsorily vote through Electronic Voting Machines on nominations filed by at least 34 per cent of the MLAs. Members not participating in such an election may lose their voting right in the State Assembly though they may retain their membership.

Further, any such elected Chief Minister may be removed following the same process but with the compulsion that s/he will have to name an alternate

### Makara Jyothi brings enormous relief

The sighting of the celestial light, Makara Jyothi, at Sabarimala has brought down the curtain for the tumultuous Mandala-Makaravilakku season. Temple authorities heaved a sigh of relief with the peaceful end of the festival. Tens of thousands of pilgrims from different parts of south India thronged to the sacred grove of Lord Ayyappa to witness the Makara Jyothi which appeared in the eastern horizon of the temple. For the temple authorities and for the Government, the peaceful end of the festival season was a great relief as the issue of the young women's entry to Sabarimala had been raging across the entire country with sporadic incidents of violence at Sabarimala and elsewhere. Also, it will be pertinent to note that the Supreme Court played down the urgency of the State Government and other organisations to bring the case to the court on an urgent basis.

Now that the festival season is over, pressure on the court has come down considerably. Simultaneously, various women's organisations have been highlighting their



issue and mounting pressure on the Government to implement the Supreme Court's verdict of allowing young women to enter Sabarimala. The 'Huray Menstruation' campaign by young women has attracted wide attention and it has snowballed into a movement in Kerala. Now with the Mandala-Makaravilakku season over, tension on the issue has been defused.

TK Nandanam Chennai

### Insufficient roads

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Beefing up borders" (January 15). The editorial gives an appalling picture of what Beijing could do in case a conflict erupts between India and China. Of late, the Middle Kingdom has undertaken a lot of infrastructural projects along

the borders of Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. The counter action taken by India, too, has been commendable but remains insufficient. India needs to speed up its pace of development. It needs to construct more roads and build necessary infrastructure projects to face China.

Ashutosh Garg New Delhi

### Different ball game

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "The Bua-Bhatija dare" (January 14). The BJP's loss of political ground after the three State Assembly elections appears to have emboldened regional parties with sufficient standing. Despite its political pedigree, the Congress' power to negotiate stands diminished. While the Congress seems to think it can go it alone after tasting political success, this stance could prove to be its Achilles heel.

R Narayanan Navi Mumbai

### Divide votes

Sir — The Congress is surely to play the role of vote divider in Uttar Pradesh. The party is sure to have a respectable share of votes in most constituencies. The division of votes will hurt the *gathbandhan* too and not just the BJP.

Sweta Via email

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Getting off the ground

The Indian aviation industry is facing turbulence. An implementation push in the ground handling space can help matters



BONNY MUKERJEE

Low air fares and punctuality are certainly crucial but not the only factors that determine if one would want to fly with an airline again. The flying experience rests on a host of other factors like did your bags reach the belt before you did and was it received in good condition? Did you board the flight to find a spotless seat or were there leftovers of the previous flyer languishing around? All of these factors rest on the efficiency of the ground handling staff. It is a behind-the-scenes service, albeit essential with an immense potential. Done right, it can help airlines effortlessly cut down costs while ensuring the airports save on premium space. Undoubtedly, the aviation sector plays an important role in India's economy, and generates over two lakh crore rupees in revenues and more than 2.4 million jobs, directly and indirectly. The sector has seen phenomenal growth — 16 per cent, annually — in the last decade and is currently the third largest in the world.

India's airports currently handle 183.90 million passengers a year. Reportedly, at least 20 cities will need a second airport by 2030 and by 2035, more cities are expected to join this list. With an investment of one lakh crore rupees lined up in the next five years and a target of a billion passenger trips a year, the Government, too, is committed towards building airport capacity and regional connectivity through initiatives like Nabh Nirman and UDAN. However, the aviation industry needs to handle multiple challenges to be able to fly really high. Growth of this sector has been marred by volatile fuel prices, depreciating rupee and cut-throat competition. For most airlines, it is a tightrope walk with the danger of slipping back in the red. As a result, most airlines are price-sensitive and scrap the bottom for profits. The situation is further compounded by infrastructural constraints. According to data tabled in Parliament on August 2, 2018, nearly one-third of the 7,200 complaints received in the last 20 months against domestic air carriers were related to flight delays, arising mostly due to congestion at airports. One of the key issues that can prove to be a lifeline for the aviation sector is the labour and capital-intensive specialised function of ground handling.

Ground handling services include passenger and baggage handling, aircraft cleaning and servicing, providing specialised equipment required by a plane and movement of cargo and passengers. Airlines want these activities to be completed quickly and cheaply for better turnaround. An airline, that opts to do self-handling, will have to hire people on its rolls and invest heavily on infrastructure required for the ground handling operation, that too, at every airport in its network. Even a single high loader can cost over three crore rupees and this does not include equipment maintenance and insurance costs. Outsourcing ground handling to informal labour contractors involves security hazards as it would entail a large number of floating non-bonafide manpower operating in sensitive zones of airports. On the other hand, if ground handling is done by a certified agency, it will hardly account for two per cent of an airline's total expense and save them from investing in expensive equipment and taking manpower on their rolls. It makes sense for the airlines to outsource this activity to certified agencies and deploy savings as capex for further expansion. They can even be passed on to the flyers. Moreover, think of the amount of premium space an airport will have to spare to accommodate ground handling resources of all the airlines operating on its base. It is at best a wasteful exercise. A certified ground handling agency minimises an aircraft's turnaround time, eases air traffic as well as decongests the airports. Armed with standard operating procedures and specialisation, they bring economies of scale to the table by deploying the same manpower and equipment to serve multiple airlines. It is win-win for all.

At a time when airlines are cash-strapped, the risk of quality and safety being compromised at the hands of non-professional players hired to cut costs, is a threat to the well-being of the sector. Enabling policies to promote the use of certified ground handling services exist on paper. The delay, however, lies in implementation. The Ministry of Civil Aviation (Ground Handling Services) Regulations, 2017, state that airlines can either do self-handling or engage certified agencies for ground handling. They are not permitted to hire contractors that are non-bonafide and non-certified for the task. Regulations had given a lead time of eight months to airlines to dispense with hiring contract labour. However, the latest notification by Airports Authority of India has extended this deadline till June 30, 2019. Most domestic airlines either continue to outsource the function to non-certified private contractors or are self-handling. Barely one-third of the overall ground handling business (domestic and international) is, therefore, currently available to certified private agencies, making it a challenging business proposition despite the benefits that accrue to the sector as a whole. The need of the hour is to create an enabling ecosystem to nurse the aviation sector back to health.

(The writer is a retired Air Commodore, Indian Air Force)

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**

EVEN WHEN THE BJP WON A STRONG MAJORITY ON ITS OWN, WE PREFERRED TO RUN THE GOVERNMENT WITH OUR ALLIES. OUR DOORS ARE ALWAYS OPEN.

—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



MODI MAY KEEP THE DOOR OPEN. BUT NO PARTY IS PREPARED TO GET INSIDE. BE IT IN TAMIL NADU OR IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.

—TAMIL NADU CONGRESS PRESIDENT SU THIRUNAVUKKARASAR

# The pulse of Indian agriculture

Government policies for the pulses sector have helped overcome multiple challenges. Effective implementation of an integrated module can solve most farm problems



DEVESH CHATURVEDI

Agricultural transformation is high on everybody's agenda today. Various stakeholders, including experts, policy-makers and political executives, have expressed their views on how to move forward with agricultural policies so that our farmers can prosper. However, performance of policies and strategies that are already in their implementation stage will provide valuable guidance for the future. It is in this connection that it is imperative to analyse the results of India's achievements in the pulses sector in the last two to three years that has surprisingly gone unnoticed. The annual production of pulses in India was stagnating at around 15-18 million tonne for several years while its domestic demand increased steadily. In 2015-16, against an estimated domestic demand of 23 million tonne, production stood at 16.35 million tonne. To meet the demand gap, India had to import pulses every year. It can, therefore, be concluded that the earlier policies were not successful in this important sub-sector of agriculture.

Domestic consumption in India forms a substantial share of the global demand. Hence, even a slight variation in the world's pulses production leads to significant increase in its prices in the domestic market. A similar trend was witnessed in 2015 when there was a sudden spurt in the market prices of pulses, which caused hardships to the consumers and became a matter of serious concern for policy-makers. As an immediate relief, this challenge was met by increasing the import of pulses. But to ensure that such a situation does not arise again, it became necessary to implement a coordinated strategy. Based on the Prime Minister's directives, the formulation and implementation of this comprehensive strategy was initiated at the level of the Cabinet Secretary. The key aspects of this strategy were to increase production/productivity, provide remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce, strengthen market mechanism and make pulses affordable for the economically and socially backward households.

As a first step, action was initiated in collaboration with the States under the National Food Security Mission to increase the production of pulses. Adoption of quality seeds and model agricultural practices through extension programmes were given priority. The overall objective was to reduce the gap between domestic demand and production as quickly as possible. Due to sustained and coordinated efforts, the area under pulse cultivation, which was 23.10 lakh hectares in the financial year 2014-15, was increased to 24.91 lakh hectares in the financial year 2015-16, 29.44 lakh hectares in the financial year 2016-17 and 29.99 lakh hectares in the financial year 2017-18. Due to the adoption of best practices, the productivity of pulses, which was 656 kg per hectare in 2015-16, increased to 786 kg in 2016-17 and to 841 kg per hectare in 2017-18. As a result, the annual production of pulses, which was stagnating and stood at 16.35 million tonne in 2015-16, jumped to 23.13 million tonne in 2016-17 and 25.23 million tonne in 2017-18.

While the increase in the production of pulses was encouraging, it was also necessary that the farmers, who were engaged in its production, got remunerative prices for sustained growth in income. High production in the absence of a strong price support mechanism can lead to



depression of prices and fear of distress sales. Therefore, the Government decided to procure pulses through Central agencies at minimum support price (MSP). For the financial year 2018-19, the MSP of 21 major crops, including pulses, was fixed at one-and-a-half times the weighted cost of production. As a result, the support price of moong, which was ₹4,600 per quintal in 2014-15, was increased to ₹6,975 per quintal for 2018-19. Similarly, the price of gram was increased from ₹3,175 to ₹4,620; masoor from ₹3,075 to ₹4,475; arhar from ₹4,350 to ₹5,675; and urad from ₹4,350 to ₹5,600 per quintal.

Major procurement of pulses at MSP was undertaken. Earlier, the average annual procurement of pulses stood at around one lakh tonne. This was increased to 12.84 lakh tonne in 2016-17, 20.23 lakh tonne in 2017-18 and 37.02 lakh tonne in 2018-19 till date. Due to an increase in procurement, a direct benefit of ₹34,957 crore has accrued to nearly 41 lakh farmers. It was also decided that a minimum buffer stock of 20 lakh tonne of pulse will always be maintained.

Two positive outcomes are distinctly evident. First, farmers were able to sell their produce at remunerative prices and second, due to the strong buffer stock pulse, consumer prices of pulses have also remained stable and at reasonable levels since 2016.

Sustaining high production of pulses requires a continuous emphasis on ensuring remunerative price to farmers. Keeping this in mind, the Government recently launched a scheme, 'Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA). Under this scheme, States have been given the option to provide price support to the farmers through procurement of pulses at MSP on behalf of the Union Government. Central agencies will be able to procure up to 25 per cent of the total estimated production. Necessary provisions for

“ WHILE AN INCREASE IN PULSES PRODUCTION IS ENCOURAGING, IT IS NECESSARY THAT FARMERS GET REMUNERATIVE PRICES FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH. HIGH PRODUCTION IN THE ABSENCE OF A STRONG PRICE SUPPORT MECHANISM CAN LEAD TO DEPRESSION OF PRICES AND FEAR OF DISTRESS SALES ”

budget and Government guarantees have been made for this purpose.

States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have started procurement of pulses under this scheme. In view of the encouraging production of pulses, the trade policy has also been oriented to encourage exports. A high production, coupled with successful procurement, will lead to the building up of stock of pulses. It was decided that while maintaining the minimum buffer required for price stability, the balance stock will be released to the States to be distributed under various welfare programmes run by the Government. The States have been given the option to distribute pulses at subsidised rates through welfare schemes, such as mid-day meals operated in primary schools, nutrition under Anganwadi centres and targeted public distribution system. The Union Government has been providing a subsidy of ₹15/kg for this purpose. States of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have decided to distribute pulses at subsidised rates.

This initiative will also contribute in achieving nutritional security and prevent malnutrition-based trends like stunting and wasting. The multiple challenges of attaining self-reliance in pulses, providing MSP to the farmers, stabilising consumer prices and providing pulses at affordable/subsidised rates to the socio-economically weak families are being met through this coordinated strategy. The case described above illustrates how an effective implementation of an integrated policy can solve multiple problems.

(The writer is Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare)

# Alternative fuel dream remains elusive

In spite of the Government pushing the case of biofuels, the sector is simply not reaching the scale that is required to offer a mainstream energy source. General public awareness and an image makeover of biofuels will help make it a reality



KOTA SRIRAJ

Spiralling levels of pollution, emanating from the use of fossil fuels, have been a worrying problem across the world in general and India in particular. As our nation grapples with this problem and the aftermath in the form of deteriorating air quality index (AQI), alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and biofuel are yet to provide the clean substitute that one is looking forward to.

In spite of the Government pushing the case of biofuels, the sector has simply not been able to reach the scale that is required to offer a mainstream energy source. The lack of traction for biofuel can be understood by the fact that even after a decade of Government pushing

general public awareness and use is much less than the desired levels.

Last year, on the World Biofuel Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi fuelled a hope that India can save ₹12,000 crore in foreign exchange in the next four years due to ethanol blending with petrol. This was in the backdrop of the country's crude import Bill that had touched eight lakh crore rupees. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, too, has been pushing the case for alternative fuels. During a recent visit to Charoda in Chhattisgarh's Durg district, he observed the immense potential of the State for biofuel. This was in reference to India's first biofuel-powered flight from Dehradun to Delhi on August 27, 2018, that used oil from jatropha or *Jatropha curcas* seeds from Chhattisgarh.

But ground realities tell a different story. Touted amid much hype as 'green gold', Chhattisgarh was supposed to be the hub of biofuel, attaining self-sufficiency in its production and creating at least a mil-

lion jobs by 2014. None of these came true. Expectations of the local people and environmentalists at large, who hoped for the country's alternate fuel dream to take off, were dashed to the ground to say the least. The Government's ineffective planning seems to be the root cause for the debacle. It had planted jatropha on 20 hectares of land that in turn affected paddy crops as the plantations cut off sunlight and did not let the rice grow.

Both the Centre and States had identified jatropha as the most suitable tree-borne oil seed for biodiesel in view of its ability to thrive under a variety of agro-climatic conditions, low gestation period and higher seed yield. However, this optimism was based on misunderstandings. As jatropha is a resilient crop, it was planted on unproductive soils. Though the plant can survive droughts and infertile soil, it can't produce many seeds under those conditions. To get a good harvest, it needs nutrients and water, just like any other crop. The lack of the same

meant that sufficient harvest and scalability became a casualty.

Under the National Biodiesel Mission (NBM), launched in 2009, jatropha and pongamia (*Millettia pinnata*) were planned on 500,000 hectares of land over a period of five years with a cost of ₹1,500 crore. Though petroleum companies signed memoranda of understandings with States to establish jatropha on Government-owned wastelands or through contract farming with small and medium farmers, the yield was low. Due to the lack of commercial viability, three oil-marketing companies — Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation — shut down the joint ventures they had started for jatropha cultivation to manufacture biodiesel.

This partly explains why India has been missing biofuel blending deadlines ever since the erstwhile Planning Commission in 2003 recommended the launch of a national biodiesel mission to follow the

mandate of 20 per cent blending of biodiesel with diesel by 2017. Now, even the revised target — five per cent blending by 2030 — looks ambitious given the lacklustre progress so far. Biodiesel blend in 2017 was less than 0.12 per cent, mostly due to limited feedstock availability and lack of an integrated and dedicated supply chain. To expand the market by 2022, India needs 6,750 million litres of biodiesel and 4,500 million litres of ethanol per annum. Government data shows ethanol production in 2017-18 was 1,410 million litres.

Given these challenges and debacles already endured, the Government must quickly take charge of the situation and ensure that the jatropha biofuel programme does not attract negative publicity as a failed mission. First, it will have to be treated like any other crop and sufficient nutrients and water must be made available for its prosperous growth. This will ensure sustainable production of sufficient harvest and in turn form

the basis for scalability. As biofuel scalability improves, so will its supply and eventually its use. But for this, the Government must remove all hurdles in the form of availability of suitable land. Currently, people's mindset is that jatropha must be made to grow on wasteland because it is resilient enough to do so. However, this is only partially correct. In order to attain good harvest, jatropha needs, apart from enough water and nutrients, better land as well.

The definition of energy has come to indicate fossil fuels only. This needs to change and biofuels provide the exciting opportunity for the same except that an image makeover and sufficient public awareness are the need of the hour in combination with suitable growing conditions for the jatropha plant. Once the combination is achieved, India will finally accomplish the biofuel scalability that has been so much elusive till now.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



## POLITICAL POWER IS IMPERMANENT

Those who sincerely work for the people will have golden pages in the books of history. The other trial facing mainly political leaders is the desire for cheap popularity. Our religions tell us that when we do something good, we should not let our left hand know what our right hand does. Sadly, most politicians need a television channel to spotlight what they are doing. That's the only reward they get — transient and impermanent. (Daily Mirror editorial)

# Microsoft's M12 to invest in Indian startups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Getting big on the burgeoning Indian startup ecosystem, Microsoft's corporate venture fund, M12, on Wednesday said it would invest in various startups in the country with a funding size of USD 2 million to USD 10 million.

M12, formerly known as Microsoft Ventures, has chosen health-tech startup Innovaccor as its first investment in India.

M12 partner Rashmi Gopinath said the entity would invest in enterprise B2B startups, participating in series A to C rounds with cheque sizes ranging between USD 2-10 million. The company will lead these rounds or co-invest alongside strong local investors, she added. It focuses on areas like big data and analytics, business Software as a Service (SaaS), cloud infrastructure, machine learning and artificial intelligence, productivity and

security. Talking about Innovaccor, Gopinath said the startup was working to solve data interoperability challenges in health-care and helping health systems enhance their clinical and financial outcomes with a data-first approach. Tech investment activity in India is at an all-time high. Venture capitals are estimated to have pumped in over USD 3.09 billion in business-to-business (B2B) startups in 2018 across 415 rounds, which is 28 per cent more than USD 2.41 billion invested in 2017, she said.

Moreover, an increasing number of enterprise B2B startups are being founded in India that cater to a global customer base, most notably in artificial intelligence and machine learning, robotics, SaaS, data analytics and Internet of Things (IoT), she added.

India also offers a unique competitive advantage as it is home to top technical talent, including deep-tech areas such

as computer vision, robotics, blockchain and autonomous driving, she said. "These factors position India favourably to support highly innovative startups that can effectively compete on a global scale," said Gopinath.

India is a market rich with entrepreneurs creating world-class startups that are poised for success on a global scale, said Nagraj Kashyap, global head of M12 and corporate vice-president at Microsoft. "In working with these innovative startups, we believe together we will help disrupt enterprises and industries ripe for digital transformation," he said.

M12 includes experienced venture capitalists and Microsoft veterans with team members on the ground in North America, Europe and Israel. Globally, M12 has invested in over 70 startups in areas ranging from cybersecurity and artificial intelligence to business SaaS and industrial drones.

# Cabinet approves ₹6K-crore capital infusion in Exim Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday approved a capital infusion of ₹6,000 crore in state-owned Exim Bank to expand its business.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also approved an increase in the bank's authorised capital from ₹10,000 crore to ₹20,000 crore. Briefing reporters about the decision, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said it had been decided to issue recapitalisation bonds by the Government of India to the tune of ₹6,000 crore for capital infusion in Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).

"The equity will be infused in two tranches of ₹4,500 crore in 2018-19 and ₹1,500 crore in 2019-20 respectively," he said.

The recapitalisation bonds will be on the lines of those issued to public sector banks, he said, adding that the infu-

sion of capital into Exim Bank would enable it to augment capital adequacy and support Indian exports with enhanced ability.

Exim Bank is the principal export credit agency in India and the infusion will give an impetus to new initiatives such as supporting Indian textile industries, likely changes in the Concessional Finance Scheme, likelihood of new letters of credit in future in view of the country's active foreign policy and strategic intent, he added.

Established by the Government of India in 1982, Exim Bank is the apex financial institution for financing, facilitating and promoting the country's international trade.

The bank primarily lends for exports from India, including supporting overseas buyers and Indian suppliers for export of developmental and infrastructure projects, equipment, goods and services from India.

# SBI plans to sell Essar Steel's NPAs to recover dues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi (PTI): SBI plans to sell over ₹15,000 crore worth bad loans belonging to Essar Steel to recover its dues from the debt-laden steel maker.

"State Bank of India (SBI) invites expression of interest (EoI) from banks/ARCs/NBFCs/FIs for the proposed sale of its non performing financial asset with total dues of ₹15,431.44 crore," the bank said in an advertisement. The lender has put the reserve price for the recovery of bad loans from Essar Steel India at ₹9,587.64 crore.

SBI said the resolution plan for the recovery of non-performing asset (NPA) had been approved and filed in NCLT Ahmedabad, according to which the minimum recovery to the bank was ₹11,313.42 crore. SBI said the reserve price of over ₹9,587 crore was on the basis of net present value (NPV) of minimum recovery discounted at 18 per cent with a time factor of one year.

SBI has asked the interested ARCs/banks/NBFCs/financial institutions (FIs) that they can conduct due diligence of the asset with immediate effect, after submitting EoI and executing a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with the bank. The sale of the NPA account is to happen through e-auction on January 30, as per the bid invite.

# SMEV seeks ₹20K cr to promote electric vehicles

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Electric vehicle (EV) makers' body SMEV on Wednesday sought an allocation of ₹20,000 crore in the next two years for promoting EVs in the country and also urged the government to impose a "notional green cess" on conventional vehicles in the upcoming interim Budget to fund the drive.

Spelling out their budget wish list, the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) also said phase-II of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME) must be announced with a six-year plan and time-bound implementation.

"Electric mobility needs stable and long-term policy support, concentrated dose of customer incentives and massive awareness campaign to reach a target of 30 per cent EVs by 2030," said SMEV director-general Sohinder Gill.

He further said SMEV expects the government to target at least one million EVs in top-10 most-polluted cities across India.

"SMEV recommends a notional green cess on all IC (internal combustion) engine vehicles to create this corpus

'SMEV recommends a notional green cess on all IC (internal combustion) engine vehicles to create this corpus rather than dipping into exchequer'

rather than dipping into exchequer," he added.

Lohia Auto Industries chief executive officer Ayush Lohia went to the extent of seeking extension of the FAME scheme by "a minimum of 10 years, therefore making it long-term".

"In addition, GST (goods and services tax) on all categories of electric vehicles, including batteries, should not exceed 5 per cent with input tax credit availability," he said.

The SMEV said Indian supply chain for critical powertrain components of EVs would come up only if there were enough such vehicles on the road.

"Till then, the current import duty concessions should continue, so that the vehicles do not end up becoming costlier," Gill added.

The EV industry body further said: "The government should give more thrust on e-mobility under the smart city project which is missing, currently."

The interim Budget is expected to be presented on February 1.

# Skoda launches Superb Corporate Edition

New Delhi (PTI): Auto maker Skoda Auto India on Wednesday said it had launched a new variant of its premium sedan Superb priced at ₹23.99 lakh (ex-showroom). The new trim Superb Corporate Edition comes with 1.8 litre petrol engine and features including eight air bags, AFS, 20.32 cm floating touchscreen display, three zone climatic air-conditioning, with clean air function, which enables different temperatures to be set for driver, front and rear passengers.

# M&M hikes stake in Ssangyong Motor

New Delhi (PTI): Homegrown auto major Mahindra & Mahindra on Wednesday said it had increased stake in its South Korean arm Ssangyong Motor Company to

74.65% with subscription of additional shares worth ₹316.5 crore. In response to offer of shares made by Ssangyong Motor Company, the company has agreed to subscribe to 1,18,90,606

equity shares of SYMC. M&M said in a regulatory filing. The subscription has been done at a price of KRW (South Korean won) 4,205 per equity share aggregating KRW 50 billion.

## NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP CHANGE	
NIFTY 50	10899.65	10928.15	10879.90	10890.30	3.50
IBULHSGFIN	808.80	838.00	808.00	830.40	21.55
YESBANK	204.80	209.15	203.50	207.80	4.80
WIPRO	331.80	339.80	329.05	337.00	7.20
INDUSINDBK	1496.00	1532.00	1495.95	1524.90	29.70
BPLCL	345.40	349.00	342.35	347.10	5.40
GRASIM	820.80	841.45	820.80	828.25	12.75
ULTRACEMCO	3843.00	3908.00	3835.20	3884.20	56.55
INFY	729.90	737.80	728.50	735.95	9.35
ADANIAPORTS	385.30	390.70	379.20	389.65	4.50
IOC	135.00	136.00	134.15	135.90	1.35
ONGC	145.20	147.25	145.20	146.40	1.25
DREDDY	2580.00	2627.70	2575.30	2615.15	20.35
NTPC	146.30	148.50	145.70	146.90	1.10
ICICIBANK	372.05	379.75	372.05	375.25	2.50
RELIANCE	1135.00	1145.00	1130.35	1136.50	6.80
EIGHERMOT	20626.00	20783.95	20626.00	20750.00	111.85
GAIL	326.00	331.45	323.55	326.00	1.45
SBIN	303.00	306.65	302.10	303.00	1.35
TCS	1870.00	1875.00	1847.00	1873.95	6.15
AXISBANK	660.70	670.40	660.70	662.75	2.15
TAT	1342.90	1361.50	1336.00	1344.15	3.25
TAMOTORS	186.00	187.35	184.05	186.00	0.25
M&M	727.30	732.50	724.55	726.00	-0.30
SUNPHARMA	451.00	457.40	447.15	452.20	-0.25
TATASTEEL	476.10	479.90	472.70	474.65	-0.40
HINDALCO	209.80	210.50	206.55	208.20	-0.30
HDFCBANK	2120.05	2125.00	2108.25	2117.00	-4.90
COALINDIA	232.80	233.40	231.55	232.10	-0.55
BAJAJ-AUTO	2736.00	2736.00	2706.00	2715.00	-10.85
POWERGRID	192.50	194.15	191.60	191.60	-0.85
HINDPETRO	241.55	244.65	239.20	240.40	-1.15
ITC	296.00	296.55	291.70	294.50	-2.05
MARUTI	7349.50	7384.00	7291.10	7304.05	-51.10
CIPLA	515.00	519.95	509.00	511.30	-3.65
HDFC	1989.00	1994.75	1965.50	1976.90	-15.25
TITAN	965.30	970.40	959.00	960.80	-3.20
TECHM	705.00	705.00	697.00	700.50	-6.30
KOTAKBANK	1215.70	1216.95	1198.00	1201.85	-14.50
BAJAJFINSV	6500.00	6535.00	6440.00	6445.00	-61.70
HINDUNILVR	1790.00	1794.80	1766.80	1771.65	-18.20
INFRATEL	280.00	284.40	274.50	276.85	-2.90
ZEE	467.90	475.75	450.20	451.50	-0.30
HCLTECH	948.00	954.20	936.75	937.40	-10.30
HEROMOTOCO	2099.00	2194.95	2070.00	2077.05	-33.90
VEDL	201.00	202.25	195.70	196.55	-2.35
ASIANPAINT	1410.00	1412.95	1387.70	1388.00	-17.95
UPL	775.95	775.95	752.60	764.85	-11.10
BAJFINANCE	2598.40	2612.15	2562.80	2565.05	-39.15
BHARTIARTL	336.75	345.25	331.40	332.45	-5.30
JSWSTEEL	292.05	293.25	285.35	286.35	-5.75

## BSE 500

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP
RCOM	13.47	14.13	13.41	13.81
JETAIRWAYS	294.00	294.20	266.05	271.00
SUZLON	5.30	5.38	5.27	5.30
GRAPHITE	700.00	799.70	690.00	752.50
YESBANK	204.85	209.15	203.60	208.35
ITI	95.20	113.00	94.65	111.60
HEG	3545.00	3925.00	3545.00	3687.85
KPSSOCIAT	7.30	7.49	7.27	7.36
KPTI	199.00	221.60	198.40	215.05
ZEE	468.00	475.90	448.60	452.10
INFY	729.00	737.65	729.00	736.55
RELIANCE	1134.70	1144.65	1130.25	1134.05
WIPRO	332.30	339.70	329.25	337.50
IBULHSGFIN	809.00	837.50	809.00	829.15
SAIL	51.15	51.40	50.30	50.40
MOTHERSUMI	175.05	176.75	172.00	172.60
EDVELVIL	160.40	164.15	160.15	162.40
RPOWER	29.90	30.95	29.90	30.30
ADANIAPORTS	384.80	390.90	379.35	389.40
COALINDIA	233.95	233.95	231.50	231.95
ALBK	96.40	97.50	96.25	96.50
CANBK	272.05	280.70	272.05	275.50
CANSTROLIND	168.50	168.50	163.90	165.20
BIOCON	643.00	655.00	643.00	650.00
PAGEIND	2390.95	2400.00	2311.10	2336.65
GRANULES	89.55	90.05	87.90	88.55
WCC	512.00	516.00	508.50	510.90
STRTECH	292.05	294.10	285.95	286.80
ADANIPOTRYE	221.00	227.25	218.00	219.00
HONGFC	386.30	389.40	385.55	387.95
AMARAJABAT	146.00	146.85	145.15	146.00
KTBCANK	119.60	121.00	118.60	119.00
WELCORP	135.00	135.00	128.05	130.30
SADHAV	222.00	222.00	215.05	215.85
KRCF	66.55	66.55	65.35	65.60
GODREJCP	149.85	149.85	147.75	147.00
INDHOTEL	1829.80	1843.00	1813.15	1811.00
ADANTRANSP	221.45	227.90	218.00	220.70
JTYRE	101.15	103.00	100.35	100.70
CEATLTD	1225.00	1248.00	1225.00	1231.55
INFRADEL	280.00	284.25	275.20	275.10
BAJAJFINSV	6488.05	6530.00	6440.00	6440.00
MRPL	70.50	71.40	70.05	70.75
IRB	158.45	158.45	154.60	154.75
OBBEROIRTY	455.35	460.00	450.60	453.05
MGL	899.75	906.80	894.00	896.30
IFBIND	924.95	935.40	907.00	923.85
POWERGRID	193.50	194.15	191.90	191.90
VASSTO	545.95	549.80	543.95	545.85
CHOLEXPO	575.95	595.00	575.35	594.50
RAJESHK	1205.00	1208.85	1181.05	1192.70
CHOLAFIN	894.95	907.50	893.60	899.00
RLBANK	580.15	582.00	572.20	573.10
JUBILANT	714.30	724.65	708.05	708.05
NHPC	26.55	26.10	25.40	25.65
ERIS	661.25	745.05	650.00	709.15
INDHOTEL	139.85	141.00	136.25	139.00
HINDCOPPER	49.75	50.80	49.75	50.05
REPCO	434.95	448.95	434.90	438.95
CENTURYPLY	182.45	185.90	180.00	181.65
TEJASNET	215.40	225.30	214.50	222.60
CONSUMER	43.45	44.35	43.05	43.25
FCI	14.80	15.20	14.60	14.95
SWANENERGY	101.25	101.25	98.40	99.45
THOMASCOCOK	232.30	233.50	228.35	230.80
HAVELLS	683.95	688.95	681.70	683.20
SINFERA	36.20	34.20	33.15	33.65
GPPL	90.50	96.50	90.50	91.85
AMBAJACEM	216.50	219.50	215.75	216.50
TATACOFFEE	99.75	100.70	98.	

## Trump: Right to religious freedom is under attack

Washington: US President Donald Trump has said that fundamental human right to religious freedom is under attack and riled that over time, legislative and political attacks on it have given way to actual violence.

Stating that attacks on people of different faith and their worship areas have increased, Trump said that his administration is taking action to protect religious liberty and to seek justice against those who seek to abridge it.

"Unfortunately, the fundamental human right to religious freedom is under attack. Efforts to circumscribe religious freedom — or to separate it from adjoining civil liberties, like property rights or free speech — are on the rise," Trump said on Tuesday in a proclamation on the occasion of the Religious Freedom Day. He said: "Over time, legislative and political attacks on religious freedom have given way to actual violence.

Last October, we witnessed a horrific attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania — the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in our nation's history."

Trump said his administration is working towards protecting religious liberty.

"The Department of Justice is aggressively prosecuting those who use violence or threats to interfere with the religious freedom of their fellow Americans," Trump said.

# UK MPs inflict biggest defeat to PM May over Brexit divorce deal

PTI ■ LONDON

In a humiliating defeat for embattled British Prime Minister Theresa May, her divisive divorce deal with the European Union was overwhelmingly rejected by MPs, triggering a no-confidence motion against her government.

May's bid to get the Withdrawal Agreement, struck between London and Brussels, was rejected by 432 votes to 202 — a majority of 230, the biggest defeat ever suffered by a British premier in modern history.

Within minutes after the defeat of the Brexit deal in the House of Commons,

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said he has tabled a formal motion of confidence in the government, backed by other opposition leaders, which MPs would vote later on Wednesday. Corbyn described Prime Minister May's defeat "catastrophic" and said backing the "botched and damaging" deal would be a "reckless leap in the dark" for the UK.

Britain is set to exit the 28-member European Union, which it joined in 1973, on March 29. With just over two months to go until the scheduled departure on March 29, Britain is still undecided on what to do.

May, 62, has spent two years negotiating the divorce plan aimed at bringing about an orderly Brexit and setting up a 21-month transition period to negotiate a free-trade deal with Brussels. Her deal includ-

ed both the withdrawal agreement on the terms on which the UK leaves the EU and a political declaration for the future relationship.

But it faced opposition across Parliament, from MPs who want either a further referendum, a closer relationship with Europe, to stop Brexit altogether or the UK to leave without a deal. May, who survived a no-confidence vote by her own Conservative Party in December, has told MPs she will return to the Commons with an alternative plan next week, provided she survives the confidence vote.

"The House has spoken and this government will listen," she said on Tuesday night, offering cross-party talks to determine a way forward.

Pro-Brexit Conservative MPs does not like the prime minister's deal to withdraw from the EU, but they really hate the prospect of a Labour government under the hard-left Corbyn. Thus, British media has predicted that Prime Minister May may survive Wednesday's confidence vote.

Hardline Brexiters and Remainers opposed the agreement for different reasons. Many feared that Britain could lock itself into an unfavourable trading relationship with the EU.

Over 100 lawmakers of May's Conservative party — both Brexiters and Remainers — overwhelmingly voted against the deal, leading to the worst parliamentary defeat for a gov-

ernment in recent British history.

The crushing defeat also marks the collapse of her two-year strategy of forging an amicable divorce with close ties to the EU after the March 29 exit.

Following her defeat in the House of Commons, May said that the MPs have established what they are against but not what they are for. "The house has spoken and the government will listen. It is clear that the house does not support this deal but tonight's vote tells us nothing what it does support. "Nothing about how, or even if, it intends to honour the decision the British people took in a referendum Parliament decided to hold," she said. "I ask members on all sides of the house to listen to the British people who want this matter settled and work with the government to do just that," May said.

According to the Britain's parliamentary procedure, when a bill is rejected by the MPs, the prime minister has three sitting days to return to Parliament with a Plan B. It is expected that May would head to Brussels on Wednesday to try and secure further concessions from the EU before coming back to UK Parliament with a new proposal.

This could be put to vote by the MPs. Should this also fail, the Government would have another three weeks to come back with another alternative. If the withdrawal agree-

ment never gets through with Parliament, then in all likelihood the UK will crash out of the EU without a deal on March 29.

This would mean overnight EU laws and customs and the free movement of goods, services and people will cease. European leaders reacted to Tuesday's vote with dismay but gave no indication they were willing to make concessions. Several have warned of increased chances of a no-deal Brexit, which many MPs fear will cause chaos at ports and damage industry.

Michel Barnier, the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, said Brussels "profoundly regrets" how the UK's MPs voted, after two years of negotiation "based on the red lines of the British government".

"It is up to the British authorities today or tomorrow to assess the outcome of this vote and up to the British Government to indicate how we are going to take things forward on March 29 to an orderly withdrawal," he said. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said: "I urge the United Kingdom to clarify its intentions as soon as possible. Time is almost up."

European Council President Donald Tusk has appeared to suggest that the UK should stay in the EU. "If a deal is impossible, and no one wants no deal, then who will finally have the courage to say what the only positive solution is?", he tweeted.



In this image issued by the House of Commons of British Prime Minister Theresa May speaks in the House of Commons in London after losing a vote on her Brexit plan on Tuesday.

## How Europe reacted to Brexit deal defeat

Brussels/Berlin(AFP): The EU and European governments have warned that the British parliament's rejection of a Brexit deal heightens the risk of a disorderly withdrawal from the bloc. Following are some of the key reactions to Tuesday night's huge defeat for British Prime Minister Theresa May.

"I urge the United Kingdom to clarify its intentions as soon as possible. Time is almost up," European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker.

"The Withdrawal Agreement is a fair compromise and the best possible deal. It reduces the damage caused by Brexit for citizens and businesses across Europe. It is the only way to ensure an orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union."

"The risk of a disorderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom has increased with this evening's vote. While we do not want this to happen, the European Commission will continue its contingency work to help ensure the EU is fully prepared."

"If a deal is impossible, and no one wants no deal, then who will finally have the courage to say what the only positive solution is?" EU Council president Donald Tusk, who added the remaining EU27 "will remain united".

"It's now up to the British government to say what the next stage is. The EU will remain united and determined to find a deal," EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier.

"This is a bitter day for Europe. We are well prepared - but a

hard Brexit would be the least attractive choice, for the EU and GB (Great Britain)," Germany said.

"A hard Brexit will be the worst of all options," said German Finance Minister and Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, leader of Chancellor Angela Merkel's centre-right CDU party and her likely successor. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said delaying Brexit beyond March 29 would make no sense. "It would only make sense if there is a path to the goal of a deal between the EU and Great Britain."

"Either way, we will have to negotiate a transition period with them because the British cannot afford to no longer have planes taking off or landing at home, and their supermarkets, as much as 70 percent, are supplied by continental Europe," said President Emmanuel Macron. "Second option, they tell us... 'We'll try to improve what we can get from the Europeans and then hold the vote again.' In that case, we'll look into it. Maybe we'll make improvements on one or two things, but I don't really think so because we've reached the maximum of what we could do with the deal."

France's Europe Minister Nathalie Loiseau said the EU could push back the March 29 deadline if London made such a request. "Legally, technically, it's possible." "Regrettably, the outcome of tonight's vote increases the risk of a disorderly Brexit. Consequently, the government will continue to

intensify preparations for such an outcome," Ireland government said in a statement.

"In any case, there will be no renegotiations on the withdrawal agreement," Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said in a tweet. "Preparations for all scenarios will continue and be intensified, including the inauspicious scenario of a withdrawal without a deal on March 29," said Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. "An unordered exit would be negative for the EU and catastrophic for the UK," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

'Still time to negotiate,' Merkel says after Brexit vote

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Wednesday "we still have time to negotiate" after the British parliament overwhelmingly rejected Prime Minister Theresa May's deal on leaving the European Union. "We still have time to negotiate but we're now waiting on what the prime minister proposes," Merkel said in comments broadcast on news channel NTV. "I very much regret that the British lower house last night rejected the agreement," she said.

"We believe it is up to the British side, as the prime minister has announced, to tell us what happens next. "We want to limit the damage, and there certainly will be damage... as much as possible. "That's why of course we will continue to pursue an orderly solution. But we are also ready in case there is no such orderly solution."

# 'China rapidly building robust lethal force'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

China, seeking "great power status", is rapidly building a robust lethal force with advanced capabilities in the air, at sea, in space and in cyberspace to enable it to impose its will in the region and beyond, according to a top US intelligence official. "The strategic objectives of the Chinese Communist Party include securing China's status as a great power," Dan Taylor, Senior Defense Intelligence Analyst, told reporters at a Pentagon news conference on Tuesday while releasing a Congressionally-mandated report.

He said that Chinese leaders characterised their long-term military modernisation programme as essential to achieving the "great power status". "Indeed, China is



rapidly building a robust lethal force with capabilities spanning the ground, air, maritime, space and information domains, designed to enable Beijing to impose its will in the region and beyond," Taylor said while releasing the report "China: Military power modernising a force to fight and win" by the Department of

Defense.

During the past decade, from counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, to an expanded military presence in the East and South China seas, China has demonstrated a willingness to use the People's Liberation Army (PLA) as an instrument of national power in the execution of what

they call their "historic mission in the new century," Taylor said.

Improvements in the equipment and capabilities that have focused on generating combat power across the PLA services present Beijing with additional response options as China faces increasingly global security concerns.

"Expected future advances in areas such as nuclear deterrence, power projection, cyberspace, space and electromagnetic spectrum operations will continue to be critical components of the PLA's developing capabilities," he said. As a result of "acquiring technology by any means available," China now is at the leading edge on a range of technologies, including with its naval designs, with medium- and intermediate-range missiles, and with hypersonic

weapons — where missiles can fly at many times the speed of sound and dodge missile-defense systems.

"The result of this multifaceted approach to technology acquisition is a PLA on the verge of fielding some of the most modern weapon systems in the world," states the Pentagon. "In some areas, it already leads the world," it said.

China also continues to develop capabilities for what they term "non-war missions," such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, counter-piracy, peacekeeping, things of that nature, Taylor said, adding that in the coming years, the PLA is likely to become even more technologically advanced and proficient with equipment comparable to that of other modern militaries.

## GLOBE TROTTING

### Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik have reportedly broken up again

NEW YORK: "Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik have reportedly called it quits—again. Despite recent speculation that the on-and-off duo is currently on a break, sources told Us Weekly and Entertainment Tonight that the couple actually split. Hadid and Malik have not yet publicly responded to the news. "They're done," a source told Us. "They could get back together, but it's over for now." It's unclear exactly when the breakup happened, but E! News reported yesterday that the couple has been "spending time apart since early November. The reason for their split is also unknown. A source told ET that



Gigi and Zayn didn't breakup because they stopped loving each other, but rather because they "just couldn't make it work." Zayn is working on "personal things," the insider added, and Gigi "has become a comfort blanket for him. A source told Us that Hadid "cut herself off from all her friends" whenever she was with Malik. "She focused all her time and energy on him, but it just got to be too much," the source claimed. Gigi noticeably didn't share any photos with Zayn over the holidays, but she was seen with friends at Taylor Swift's costume party on New Year's Eve, sans Malik. Hadid and Malik previously broke up in March 2018 after two years of dating and announced the news with lengthy statements on social media. "I'm forever grateful for the love, time, and life lessons that Z and I shared," Gigi included in her note. "I want nothing but the best for him and will continue to support him as a friend that I have immense respect and love for." Despite the very public breakup, the couple rekindled their romance months later and were back to posting loved-up pictures together on social media.

### Rihanna sues her father over Fenty name

Los Angeles: Singer Rihanna is suing her father for trying to exploit her name to further his entertainment business. In a federal lawsuit, the pop star alleges that her father, Ronald Fenty, is trading on their surname, Fenty, which she made famous, for financial gain, according to The Hollywood Reporter. The famous singer was born Robyn Rihanna Fenty. In the lawsuit, the 30-year-old singer says that her father and his partner have violated her trademark and falsely suggested that their business, Fenty Entertainment, is affiliated with her. She has used the name for her cosmetics brand, Fenty Beauty, and other businesses, including Savage X Fenty and Fenty PUMA, since 2012. Rihanna has asked the court to bar the firm from using the Fenty name for business. The lawsuit claims Rihanna owns trademarks in the US for the Fenty name and has sent formal "cease and desist" requests. It said that on one instance, Fenty Entertainment accepted a 2017 offer by a third party for Rihanna to perform 15 shows in Latin America for USD 15 million. In another, Fenty Entertainment falsely implied that the singer was involved in a boutique hotels project, it added. Rihanna is suing for false designation of origin, false advertising and invasion of her rights of privacy and



## 'China expanding access to strategic foreign ports'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

China is expanding its access to strategic foreign ports like Pakistan's Gwadar and Sri Lanka's Hambantota to pre-position the logistic framework necessary to support the growing presence of its military in the Indian Ocean and beyond, the Pentagon said.

The People's Liberation Army's efforts to obtain access to commercial ports in Africa, the Middle-East and South Asia would align with its future overseas logistic needs and meet its evolving naval requirements, said the Congressionally-mandated report on the increasing Chinese military power which was released by the US Department of Defence Tuesday.

China in 2015 announced its intention to build military facilities in Djibouti, citing reasons "to help the Navy and Army further participate in UN peacekeeping operations, carry out escort missions in the waters near Somalia and the Gulf of Aden and provide humanitarian assistance".

"China is expanding its access to foreign ports, such as in Gwadar, Pakistan, to pre-position the logistic framework necessary to support the PLA's growing presence abroad, including normalising and sustaining deployments into and beyond the Indian Ocean," the Pentagon said.

The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is likely to use commercial ports and civilian ships to support its international and domestic logistic operations, resupply, replenishment and maintenance, it said. China's territorial claims in the resource-rich South China Sea are driving major



logistic developments in the Spratly and Paracel Islands.

The reclaimed territory in the South China Sea by China is equipped with harbours and berthing areas that are capable of accommodating large naval ships, increasing the PLAN's ability to exercise control of critical SLOCs, it said.

According to the report, China's military strategy reflects its drive to establish a coherent, unified approach to managing national security in a world where Beijing perceives that China's expanding interests have made it more vulnerable at home and abroad.

While it calls for a peer-to-peer cooperative relationship with the United States, Beijing also believes that the presence of the US military and the US-led security architecture in Asia seeks to constrain China's rise and interfere with its sovereignty, particularly in a Taiwan conflict scenario and in the East and South China Seas.

"Since at least the 1990s, Beijing has repeatedly communicated its preference to move away from the US-led regional security system and has pursued its own regional security initiatives in support of what it views as a natural tran-

## Dogs may help diabetics regulate blood sugar

PTI ■ LONDON

Trained dogs have the potential to vastly improve the quality of life of people living with Type 1 diabetes by helping them regulate their blood sugar in a non-invasive way, according to a study.

The research, published in the journal PLOS One, found that on average trained dogs alerted their owners to 83 per cent of hypoglycaemic episodes in over 4,000 hypo- and hyper-glycaemic episodes that were examined.

A hypoglycaemic episode is where blood sugar drops dangerously low and if left untreated, can lead to unconsciousness or even death. The findings by researchers at the University of Bristol in the UK confirm that alert dogs can help Type 1 diabetes patients regulate their blood sugars in a non-invasive way and avoid the risks of hypoglycaemic episodes and hyperglycaemia.

"We already know from previous studies that patients' quality of life is vastly improved by having a medical detection dog," said Nicola Rooney from the University of Bristol. "However, to date, evidence has come from small scale studies. Our study provides the first large-scale evaluation of using medical detection dogs to detect hypoglycaemia," Rooney said.

The researchers assessed the reliability of 27 trained glycaemia alert dogs, whose owners provided six to 12 weeks continual worth of blood records detailing every time the dog was alerted. "Since 2009, the PLA has incrementally expanded its global operations beyond the previously limited port calls and UN peacekeeping missions. The PLAN has expanded the scope and frequency of extended-range naval deployments, military exercises, and engagements," it said.

With their owners, dogs are conditioned to respond with alerting behaviours when their owners' blood sugar levels fall outside a target range.

Encouraged by the alerting behaviour of their pet dog, if such out-of-range (OOR) episodes occur, the patient can take appropriate action, usually by administering insulin or eating to retain the right glucose levels. "Our research shows a dog's effectiveness is affected by the individual dog and its connection with its human partner," Rooney said. "Since the usage of such dogs is growing, it's important that any dogs used for these purposes are professionally trained, matched and monitored by professional organisations like Medical Detection Dogs. "It's also vital that research continues both to assess true efficacy and determine ways to optimise their performance," Rooney said.

"The findings are fantastic news for all those who are living with Type 1 diabetes and other conditions," said Claire Guest, Chief Executive and co-founder of Medical Detection Dogs which collaborated with the University of



# 15 people killed in Kenyan hotel attack

AFP ■ NAIROBI

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said Wednesday that Islamists who stormed an upmarket hotel complex, killing 14 people, had been "eliminated" after an almost 20-hour siege in which hundreds of civilians were rescued. At least one suicide bomber blew himself up and gunmen engaged security forces in numerous shootouts during the assault on the DusitD2 compound, which includes a 101-room hotel, spa, restaurant and office buildings. The attack was claimed by the Al-Qaeda-linked Somali group Al-Shabaab, which has repeatedly targeted Kenya since it sent its army into Somalia in October 2011 to fight the jihadist group.

The sight of armed Islamists and terrified civilians fleeing reminded Kenyans of a 2013 Shabaab attack on the Westgate mall left 67 dead in a siege that stretched out over four days and led to sharp criticism of the security response.

In a televised address, Kenyatta said some 700 civilians had been evacuated throughout the attack at DusitD2, with the swift and effective work from security forces drawing widespread praise in local media.

"I can confirm that... the security operation at Dusit complex is over and all the terrorists eliminated," Kenyatta said in a televised address to the nation.

"As of this moment, we have confirmation that 14 innocent lives were lost to the... terrorists, with others injured." Police sources and a mortuary official had previously reported 15 dead.

It was not immediately clear how many attackers there were in total. CCTV footage broadcast on local media showed four black-clad, heavily armed men entering the complex on Tuesday afternoon. At least one of them blew

himself up at the start of the attack. A police source said two attackers had been shot dead Wednesday morning after a prolonged shootout.

"The two have red bandanas tied around their forehead and bullets strapped around their chest with several magazines each," the senior police officer said. "Each had an AK47 which has been secured" - Briton, American among dead.

The attack began at about 3pm (1200GMT) on Tuesday afternoon, with a loud blast followed by gunfire and rapid calls for help spreading on Twitter.

Kenyan police chief Joseph Boinnet said the attack began with an explosion targeting three cars in the parking lot and a suicide bombing in the foyer of the Dusit hotel. Among the dead was an American citizen, a State Department official said. A mortuary official said there were also 11 Kenyan victims, a British victim, one with no papers as well as an unidentified torso of a male adult. It was a tormented night for families of those trapped as they waited outside the hotel, with sporadic gunfire ringing out, and the rescue of dozens of people at about 3:30am (0030GMT).

Explosions and gunfire intensified from dawn until police managed to secure the complex mid-morning. As the first explosion and gunfire rang out in the leafy Westlands suburb, hundreds of terrified office workers barricaded themselves in the complex while others fled.

Distraught family members arrived at a nearby mortuary on Wednesday, where they said they had not been permitted to view the bodies.

"My sister is not in any of the hospitals and the last time we spoke she was a bit calm but suddenly she started crying and shouting and I could hear gunshots and her phone remained on but she wasn't

speaking," said a woman who gave her name as Njoki.

"We have no doubt her body is here. Let them allow us in," she said, weeping. A number of heavily-armed foreign forces, who appeared to be from embassies based in Nairobi, were at the scene alongside Kenyan security officers.

One survivor rescued from the building told a local television station the attackers were "very confident; they were people who knew what they were doing".

John Maingi said there had been "a flash of lights and a loud bang" at the Secret Garden restaurant where he works. "When I peeped outside I saw a human leg which has been cut off. We hid in the room and then some police officers rescued us," he said.

Reuben Kimani, a barista who was rescued after several hours trapped inside the hotel, said he recognised one of the attackers as a client.

"I knew one of them because he had a big scar on one of his hands," he said. "I saw them. They shot six of my friends, four didn't die but two succumbed." An editorial in the Daily Nation newspaper said the attack was a stark reminder that Kenya's security challenges were far from over.

The last major attack in the country took place in 2015, when Shabaab killed 148 people at the university in Garissa, eastern Kenya. Since then sporadic attacks have targeted security forces mostly in the remote northeastern parts of the country.

"Just when we thought that things were calm, the gangs unleashed mayhem. For Kenyans the chilling reality is that the attacks are not ceasing," read the editorial. In its statement, Shabaab noted the attack came exactly three years after its fighters overran a Kenyan military base in Somalia, killing some 200 soldiers.



Kenya's Interior Minister Fred Matiang'i as he gives a statement at the scene of yesterday's extremist gunmen attack, Wednesday, and (below) Kenya Red Cross personnel helps a woman reacting after learning of a family member killed during a recent terrorist attack Wednesday at the Chiroromo Mortuary, Nairobi, Kenya.

# Indra Nooyi being considered to lead World Bank: Report

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Indra Nooyi is among the candidates being considered by the White House to head the World Bank after the Indian-born former PepsiCo CEO's name was floated by Ivanka Trump, the president's influential daughter, a top American daily reported. Nooyi, 63, stepped down as PepsiCo's chief last August after leading the company for 12 years. She "has been courted as an administration ally by Ivanka Trump, the president's eldest daughter who is playing a role in the selection of a nominee," the New York Times said.

The report, which cited several people familiar with the process, said the decision-making process for the top post at the World Bank is "fluid and in its initial stages and early front-runners and candidates often fall off the radar, or withdraw from consideration, before the president (Donald Trump) makes his ultimate pick".

It is unclear whether Nooyi would accept the nomination if chosen by the Trump administration. The first daughter, who has tweeted that she views Nooyi as a "mentor + inspiration", has floated her name as a potential successor.

World Bank's current president Jim Yong Kim had earlier this month announced that he would step down from his post in February to join a private infrastructure investment firm. His unexpected departure came nearly three years before the end of his term.

The NYT report said that the process of choosing Kim's successor is being overseen by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and Ivanka, whose role in the process was announced by the White House Monday.

Ivanka's "role in the process drew some criticism from ethics watchdogs Monday, which said it could pose a conflict of interest for the president's daughter to be involved in international economic matters when she has not completely divested from her assets," the report said.

The group was expected to begin the interview process Tuesday, in order to present President Trump with recommendations of a nominee. Nooyi joined Trump's business council, which was disbanded after many chief executives quit following the president's comments blaming "many sides" for white supremacist violence in Charlottesville, in August 2017.

The report, however, added that negative comments made by Nooyi after the 2016 election, during which she did not publicly endorse any candidate, are seen as a potential roadblock to her nomination.

Following Trump's win, she said at the NYT's DealBook conference in 2016 that "Our employees are all crying. And



the question that they're asking, especially those who are not white: 'Are we safe?' Women are asking: 'Are we safe?' LGBT people are asking: 'Are we safe?' I never thought I'd have had to answer those questions".

A spokesman for PepsiCo had told Fortune magazine that "Mrs. Nooyi misspoke. She was referring to the reaction of a group of employees she spoke to who were apprehensive about the outcome of the election. She never intended to imply that all employees feel the same way". Other candidates being considered for the position of World Bank head are under secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs David Malpass and president of the Overseas Investment Corporation Ray Washburne.

The US president cannot install the World Bank leader, who must be approved by the bank's board, but has traditionally placed his nominee in the job. Trump has already faced harsh criticism for appointing his daughter as a senior White House advisor.

Ivanka is a successful businesswoman, fashion designer, author and reality television personality. She has her own line of fashion items, including clothes, handbags, shoes, accessories which are available in all major US departmental stores.

The Trump administration is also considering the name of former US envoy to the UN Nikki Haley. The Financial Times reported that Haley, the two-term governor of South Carolina, is in the race to become the World Bank president.

Last week, the World Bank started the process of selecting a successor to Kim, who was close to former secretary of state Hillary Clinton and nominated by former president Barack Obama.

The next World Bank President would be nominated by President Trump because of the large stake that the United States has in the bank. Haley, seen as a potential 2024 presidential candidate, has said that she now intends to go to the private sector for some time.

David Milpitas, the Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs, is another name under consideration, the NYT reported.

# Indian-origin doctor embroiled in healthcare fraud in US

Houston (PTI): A 77-year-old Indian-American doctor, indicted in one of the largest healthcare fraud cases in the US history involving a USD 464 million conspiracy, was freed on a record-setting USD 7 million bond.

Rajendra Bothra, who was awarded Padmashri, India's fourth-highest civilian award,



was indicted along with five other physicians in the alleged USD 464 million healthcare fraud conspiracy, which the federal government said fuelled the opioid epidemic. US District Judge Stephen Murphy granted the bond for him despite the government's concern that the doctor has hidden money that could bankroll an escape to his native India. Bothra, of Bloomfield Hills, who will be released on home confinement and tracked by a GPS tether, must identify all assets under penalty of perjury, The Detroit News reported.

Being the lead defendant in one of the largest healthcare fraud cases in the US history, he must liquidate a USD 8.5 million retirement account to cover the bond, a process that could take three days, it reported. His wife and daughter, who attended the hearing Tuesday, will surrender their passports to alleviate concerns that the family might flee while Bothra awaits trial in July.

Bothra has deep ties to India, including investments and several siblings. He is one of the most high-profile Indian-American Republican Party activists and fundraisers.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, he hosted major fundraisers for former president George H W Bush and other senior Republican lawmakers. Apart from his professional achievements in the field of medicine in the United States, Bothra has been active in working for the poor and sick in India.

# 'Russia ready to work with US to save INF arms treaty'

AFP ■ MOSCOW

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday Moscow was ready to work with Washington to save a key arms control treaty, calling on Europe to help in the talks. Moscow's top diplomat spoke after fresh talks between US and Russian officials in Geneva to salvage the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty (INF) went nowhere.

"We are still ready to work to save the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty," Lavrov told reporters. He called on European nations to help influence Washington, saying they had a major stake in the issue and should not be "at



the tail-end of the US position". Last month Washington said it would withdraw from the INF treaty within 60 days if Russia did not dismantle missiles that the US claims breach the deal.

Russia denies it has violated the treaty, which forbids ground-launched short- and intermediate-range missiles. On Tuesday, US and Russian diplomats blamed each other for pushing the agreement to the brink of collapse.

Russians said Americans had confirmed Washington's intention to exit the treaty from February 2. Lavrov slammed Washington's position, saying the potential for conflict was increasing and expressing the hope that it would be possible to save another key arms control agreement, the New START, which expires in 2021.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has threatened to develop nuclear missiles banned under the INF treaty if it is scrapped. Putin said that if Washington moved to place more missiles in Europe after ditching the deal, Russia would respond "in kind" and that any European countries agreeing to host US missiles would be at risk of a Russian attack.

Signed in 1987 by then US president Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the treaty bans ground-launched missiles with a range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres. The deal resolved a crisis over Soviet nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles targeting Western capitals, but put no restrictions on other major military actors like China.

# Texas Sikh community feeds federal employees affected by govt shutdown

PTI ■ HOUSTON

In a unique gesture, the Sikh community in San Antonio, Texas, offered free meals to fellow American government employees affected by the ongoing shutdown that has left thousands without pay in the US. The partial government shutdown, which entered the fourth week, has left more than 800,000 federal government workers out of work across the key departments.

Trump wants to build a US-Mexico border wall and is seeking USD 5.7 billion in funding for the physical barrier which according to him is a must to



prevent flow of illegal immigrants into the US. The Democrats assert that such a move is a "waste" of taxpayers money. All federal employees, who have been forced to work without pay, or have been furloughed during the partial government shutdown were offered freshly prepared, hot vegetarian meals for three days starting January 11.

The Sikh community workers prepared the gurdwara menu which comprised lentils, vegetables, rice and tortillas. "Workers and families affected by the shutdown are invited to Sikh Centre all weekend for free meals starting today," the Center posted on its Facebook on Friday.

The idea that originated from the community's willingness to offer help during this hour of difficulty for many American families soon drew many volunteers who offered to come and cook to feed everyone who would come to enjoy the meals.

# BeIN slams Saudis with 'reveal all' piracy website

AFP ■ DOHA

Qatar's beIN media group on Wednesday stepped up its war of words against alleged Saudi-backed piracy, launching a website exposing what it says is wide-scale theft of its programmes.

The "reveal all" beoutq.tv website went live with the aim of holding the pirate operation to account, a statement said.

"What started out as a concerted and targeted campaign against beIN has now morphed into the largest commercial theft that's ever been seen in the world of sport and entertainment," Tom Keaveny, beIN's managing director in the Middle East region, said in the statement. "This Saudi-supported plague of piracy repre-



sents an existential threat to the economic model of the industry." The website details programmes being illegally broadcast in more than 20 countries, a timeline of events and points the finger at several prominent Saudi figures under the headline: "The Saudi State-

Supported Piracy of World Sport and Entertainment". beIN has previously alleged that since August 2017 a vast and sophisticated Saudi bootlegging network known as "beoutQ" had been transmitting its stolen programmes via Riyadh-based satellite provider Arabsat. In October, beIN launched a compensation claim worth \$1 billion against the Saudi piracy channel while Qatar filed an action at the World Trade Organization. But no progress has been reported so far. FIFA and the Premier League said they were preparing to take legal action in Saudi Arabia against the pirates.

Saudi Arabi has denied the claims and even said the

piracy was operating out of Cuba. The latest move comes amid a 19-month economic and diplomatic boycott of Qatar by Saudi Arabia and its allies which accuse Doha of backing terrorism and seeking closer ties with rival Iran.

Qatar has refuted the claims. The website was launched on the day the Italian Supercoppa is played in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea city of Jeddah, which beIN has called on to be moved elsewhere because of the piracy issue.

And on Thursday Qatar and Saudi Arabia meet in a politically charged Asian Cup football match in the United Arab Emirates, which backs Riyadh in the diplomatic dispute.

# Fasting may help keep age-related diseases at bay: Study

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Fasting can boost the body's metabolism and help protect against age-related diseases, a study has found. The circadian clock operates within the body and its organs as intrinsic time-keeping machinery to preserve homeostasis in response to the changing environment. While food is known to influence clocks in



peripheral tissues, it was unclear, until now, how the lack of food influences clock function and ultimately

affects the body. "We discovered fasting influences the circadian clock and fasting-driven cellular responses, which together work to achieve fasting-specific temporal gene regulation," said Paolo Sassone-Corsi, a professor at University of California, Irvine in the US.

"Skeletal muscle, for example, appears to be twice as responsive to fasting as the liver," said Sassone-

Corsi. The research, published in the journal Cell Reports, was conducted using mice, which were subjected to 24-hour periods of fasting.

While fasting, researchers noted the mice exhibited a reduction in oxygen consumption (VO2), respiratory exchange ratio (RER), and energy expenditure, all of which were completely abolished by refeed-

ing, which parallels results observed in humans.

"The reorganisation of gene regulation by fasting could prime the genome to a more permissive state to anticipate upcoming food intake and thereby drive a new rhythmic cycle of gene expression," he said.

"In other words, fasting is able to essentially reprogram a variety of cellular responses. Therefore, opti-

mal fasting in a timed manner would be strategic to positively affect cellular functions and ultimately benefiting health and protecting against ageing-associated diseases," said Sassone-Corsi.

The study opens new avenues of investigation that could ultimately lead to the development of nutritional strategies to improve health in humans.

# ORIENT LAUNCHES WORLD'S SLIMMEST SMART FAN

Orient Electric Limited, part of the diversified \$1.8 billion CK Birla Group, has announced its new premium ceiling fan—Aeroslim—which is bringing in revolutionary technology in this segment of consumer products

Aeroslim is an IoT-enabled ceiling fan which can be controlled via the 'Orient Smart' mobile app.

Speaking on the occasion, the company's senior vice president and the business head for fans, Atul Jain said, "Aeroslim sets new standards in the segment with its IoT controls, one-of-a-kind slim cylindrical design and the energy-efficient inverter motor. It's a feature loaded fan, delivering an astounding, 240 CMM air delivery while saving 40 per cent of the energy. With a distinct finish, performance, ease of operation and looks, we are confident that it will surely create an interest amongst the discerned aspirational consumers who are looking for smarter purchases."

Jain believes that Orient Electric has emerged as a dominant player in the premium fans segment in the last two years and with the launch of Aeroslim fan and the recent launch of the Lifestyle series of fans, the company is hopeful of gaining a stronger foothold



in the segment. "We presently have more than 40 per cent of the market share in the premium fans segment and we are hopeful to strengthen our dominance further in this segment."

The IoT-enabled Aeroslim puts comfort and control at the users' fingertips by giving them the freedom to manage the fan speed and modes, reverse rotation and the underlight with dimming options via the Orient Smart mobile app. Jain further explained that the inverter motor fan consumes only 45 watt of electricity thus, ensuring 40 per cent energy saving as compared to the ordinary fans. It features an advanced aerodynamic blade design to

give an impressive air delivery of 240 CMM while ensuring silent operation even at low voltages of up to 140V. It has a telescopic adjustable mounting which complements both the traditional and modern ceilings.

Aeroslim has a sweep of 1200 mm and has 100 per cent rust-free blade which is made of a high-grade glass filled compounded ABS, which provides strength to the blades, thus making it bend-proof, rust-proof and easy to clean. Its slim cylindrical design, integrated underlight and the PU paint with a hydrographic finish, imparts stunning looks to the Aeroslim fan. This fan also comes with a remote for the users.



## Sarvodaya Hospital sets record in brain surgery

In a first for India, a 20-day-old baby weighing just 1.16 kg underwent a successful brain surgery at the Faridabad-based, 300-bed Sarvodaya Hospital and Research Centre. This baby has become the lowest-weighting baby ever to undergo craniotomy which is done by opening the skull and removing a life-threatening blood clot from the brain, which caused a seizure in the neonate. The condition would have proved fatal had it not been treated promptly. The Sarvodaya Hospital has applied for the Limca Book of Records and the Guinness Book of World Records to recognise this unheard-of surgical feat.

The premature baby was one among the twins born preterm at 33 weeks to Deevakar Jha and Deepa Mishra. The baby was referred to the Sarvodaya Hospital for respiratory distress and perinatal asphyxia, where a team of surgeons led by Dr Pankaj Dawar and Dr Mukesh Pandey, took the child under their supervision.

Explaining the case, Dr Dawar, the Senior Consultant, Centre for Brain and Spine, Sarvodaya Hospital and Research Centre, said, "At birth, the baby weighed 1.160 kg, but had perinatal asphyxia and respiratory distress thereafter and thus was immediately admitted to the hospital. He was put on the ventilator for five days. However, on the 19th day since his birth, the baby suffered from a seizure. A MRI scan revealed a large intracranial blood clot inside the skull, probably from a bleeding disorder. For the surgery, his skull was opened to expose the brain (mini-

craniotomy) and then the blood clot (hematoma) was successfully removed. With this, he has become the baby with the lowest weight to ever undergo a brain surgery in India and also probably in the world as well."

According to Dr Pahuja, Consultant, Department of Anaesthesia, Sarvodaya Hospital and Research Centre, brain surgery of a baby with such low weight has not been done before in the country, the doctor explained that this requires very careful consideration and specialised equipment for anaesthesia. Dr Sushil Singla, Senior Consultant and the HOD, Department of Paediatrics, Sarvodaya Hospital and Research Centre, added, "The presence of a blood clot in the brain of a baby of such age and low weight posed a huge challenge for us. If untreated, the condition would have proved fatal. Even if the baby had survived, he would have suffered from neural problems and the brain would not have developed fully. After the successful surgery, the baby is perfectly fine. He is gaining weight and meeting all neural milestones adequately as reported during the last follow up visit."

Sarvodaya Hospital recently expanded its footprint in the national capital by opening a unique standalone daycare centre for cancer patients in South Delhi. It provides full nursing care and support to cancer patients in surrounding areas who need to undergo chemotherapy, immunotherapy or targeted cancer therapy, but do not wish to visit a hospital.

# 2,300 muslim women to perform Haj without mehram

The Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, informed that over 2,300 muslim women from India will go on the Haj pilgrim this year without the mehram (male companion). The Modi government had lifted the ban on women going to Haj without their male companions last year which had resulted in 1,300 women going for Haj without their male companions in 2018.

While inaugurating the new office space of the Haj Division, Minority Affairs Ministry, at RK Puram in New Delhi, Naqvi said, "Like last year, this year too, on the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Minority Affairs Ministry has made arrangements to send these women on Haj



without a lottery system."

He informed that the ministry received over 2,67,000 applications for Haj 2019 out of which 1,64,902 applications were made online. The minister commented, "Making the Haj process digital has helped to make the entire process transparent and pro-pilgrims. A record 1,75,025 muslims from India performed Haj 2018 of which 48 per cent was comprised by women."

Naqvi further elaborated that the GST on Haj pilgrimage has been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent which will ensure that about ₹113 crore will be saved by the Haj pilgrims during 2019. "The reduction in GST will also ensure a significant decrease in air

fares from various embarkation points."

The air fare from Srinagar will be reduced by ₹11377.07, from Ahmedabad it will be reduced by ₹7305.95; from Aurangabad by ₹9373.68; from Delhi by ₹7967.62; from Gaya by ₹11027.85; from Guwahati by ₹13049.63; from Ranchi by ₹11946.84; from Kolkata by ₹9787.22, and from Hyderabad the air fare will be reduced by ₹7204.87 this year.

The minister added, "The Ministry of Minority Affairs, in cooperation with the Saudi Arabia Haj Consulate, Haj Committee of India and other concerned agencies, has completed 2019 Haj preparations three months before the schedule to make this Haj more comfortable for the pilgrims."

## PCRA VANS FOR FUEL CONSERVATION AWARENESS

The annual high intensi-

ty one-month long, people-centric mega campaign—'Saksham'— of the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, has been launched by the ministry's Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser, Rajiv Bansal, in Delhi. Bansal emphasised on the importance of fuel conservation and the need for focussed programmes like Saksham. He also released a comic book developed by PCRA jointly with the NCERT, for children on various tips and day-to-day aspects of fuel conservation, and a short animation film covering the domestic and the transport sector. He also distributed prizes for the 'Saksham' National Competition-2018, for essay and painting competitions which saw a record participation of more than 82 lakh students from schools. Bansal also flagged-off the publicity vans of PCRA, the fuel conservation messengers on wheels which are equipped with audio, video and print displays to attract and spread the conservation awareness, especially amongst the rural masses.



## CORPORATE BRIEFS



### CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF ENTHRALLED BY NCC CADETS

General Bipin Rawat, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, Chief of Army Staff, visited the NCC Republic Day Camp 2019 at the DGNCC Camp yesterday. Lieutenant General PP Malhotra, VSM. A contingent of all the three wings namely Army, Navy and Air Force presented a 'Guard of Honour' to the Chief of Army Staff on his arrival and the NCC cadets thereafter presented a fine band display. The COAS also visited the 'Flag Area', depicting various social awareness themes and cultural activities.

### NIFTEM HOSTS ANVESHAN 2019 FROM JAN 16-17

The prestigious event for research students—Anveshan 2019, is taking place at the National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) on January 16 and 17. This is an initiative of the Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi, which aims to promote the talent in research throughout the country and nurture it through specialised training and education in some of the nationally and internationally reputed premier institutions of higher learning in India. The FSSAI chairperson Rita Teotia, was the chief guest of the inaugural session along with other dignitaries while the vice chancellor of NIFTEM, Dr C Vasudevappa, is presiding over the function.



The Miss Teen Universe India 2019 pageant has been given to Apurva Thakur. The 19 year old Apurva hails from Mumbai and is currently pursuing the Bachelor of Architecture from Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia. After winning this contest, she will be representing India in Panama for the most sought-after title of Miss Teen Universe 2019.

# GO GREEK FOR A YEAR

One of the most beautiful countries in the world—Greece, is a destination to visit at any time and in any season. Each location within the country harbours its age-old secrets and wonderful contrasts. Here is a list of places to visit every month in Greece for an unforgettable holiday:

### JANUARY - VISIT KASTORIA

This famous 'fur-makers town' will steal your heart with its nobleness and serene atmosphere. Take a romantic stroll along the narrow street by the lake shore, wander in the uptown neighborhoods, discover precious byzantine treasures, enjoy a panoramic view of the town by boat and take part in the popular ragoutsaria event.

### FEBRUARY - VISIT PATRAS

The biggest town in the Peloponnese is home to the most popular of all Greek town carnivals. On Shrove Sunday (the last Sunday of the Carnival period before Lent) a great festive procession takes place with dozens of impressive carnival floats adorned with flowers or satirical figures parade on the streets of a festive Patras.

### MARCH - VISIT KONITSA

Built in the traditional Epirus style, Konitsa is surrounded by an impressive terrain. This area figures at the top of the list for lovers of alternative

activities and mountain sports.

### APRIL - VISIT CORFU

Homer's island of the Phaeacians welcomes springtime and Easter. The Corfiot's age-old Easter customs are a mosaic of various traditions connected directly to the island's history and multicultural character. The orthodox Christian faith, the traditions of the catholic community, the Venetian influence and the locals' cheerful temperament have contributed to the creation of special customary practices that are absolutely worth witnessing.

### MAY - VISIT MT PELION

The eastern side of the mountain is wild, rough and blessed with luxuriant vegetation that covers the slopes all the way down to the Aegean Sea. The side facing the Pagasetic Gulf is calm and dotted with beaches. The villages are scattered on the mountain amid lush forests and exploring them is a fine way to have a memorable holiday.

### JUNE - VISIT RHODES

Also known as the sun island, Rhodes has more sunny days and milder temperatures throughout the year than any other location in Greece. It is one of the

country's easternmost places and among the first to welcome summer on its beaches.

### JULY - VISIT CRETE

Want to understand why Chania, Herakleion, Agios Nikolaos, Rethymno are famous places the world over then head to Crete this summer.

### AUGUST - VISIT PAROS

In mid-August, this Cyclades island prepares for the celebration of the religious feast of the Dormition of Theotokos that takes place on August 15 every year. The festival's focal point is the Early Christian church of Panagia Ekatonpiliiani (Our Lady Ekatonpiliiani), one of the most impressive churches in the Aegean. In Paroikia, the island capital, the religious festival is concluded with a procession headed by the icon of the Dormition of Theotokos (Mother of God).

### SEPTEMBER - VISIT SPETSES

Spetses has a glorious past which can be explored as you take a stroll around or choose a horse-drawn carriage ride that are lined by the harbour. Every year on the second weekend of September, it

is customary to have a reconstruction of the Naval Battle of 1822 and to have the Turkish flagship blown up in effigy amid a swirl of fireworks and flares.

### OCTOBER - VISIT THESSALONIKI

In October, Thessaloniki is on a festive mood. The most important celebrations are Dimitria and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival. Theatre performances, concerts, visual arts, dancing, photography and new cinema releases with participation of world renowned artists will lead you into the magical realm of arts.

### NOVEMBER - VISIT ATHENS

This time of the year, local mild temperatures will be your ally as you visit the archaeological sites, monuments and art masterpieces. The popular Athens Marathon takes place every year in November, which is historically privileged to take place along the original Olympic Marathon Route.

### DECEMBER - VISIT TRIKALA

During Christmas and New Year's holidays, Trikala town is literally transformed into a huge amusement park for young and old. The Mill of Elves hosts the most mischievous team and promises to offer unforgettable moments. The huge fairytale park, the Pirate Ship, the Chocolate Factory, Santa Claus' House and much more guarantees the best of entertainment options.



Trend Blazer

Bhumi isolated herself for a film

Actress **BHUMI PEDNEKAR**, for her role as a woman from 1970s' Chambal, living and surviving the badlands amidst bloody-thirsty dacoits, says she cut off from the world at large.

Bhumi said, "Acting for me is a process of metamorphosis. It's about forgetting who I'm and becoming someone entirely new. Every character requires a different approach and for *Son Chirya*, I required isolation. I took to a single-minded approach that saw me cut off from the world at large and be with my character."



'I always take up interesting and inspiring work. In a way, it's like an investigative work because we get to explore so many things in our life while acting so, I really like being on the sets of films.'

—Radhika Apte



Actress **FATIMA SANA SHAIKH** is a huge fan of Anurag Basu's *Life in a Metro*.

A source said, "Fatima is a

huge fan of Anurag Basu's films, however, out of all his films, *Life in a Metro* is her favourite one. Fatima feels that the film had its own charm and quintessential narrative with different stories that captivated masses showcasing the struggles faced by the people in a metropolitan city. The actress, who has been a part of chatter-driven films essaying realistic roles, is very excited to be a part of a film which is an apt portrayal of characters of the people living a metro lifestyle.

Sheeran quits smoking weed

Singer **ED SHEERAN** has quit smoking marijuana because he prefers to be "alert."

The singer, who wrote the song *Sweet Mary Jane* about his love of the drug in 2015, said that he has given up his smoking sessions as he found that the psychoactive substance clouded his creativity. Sheeran added, "I've stopped smoking weed. I found myself just sitting at home watching films. I like to be alert." He went on to explain that he has also decided to ditch alcohol until his live concerts are over. "We don't have booze in the venue until after the gig. I love embracing chaos, but only when the job is done. I

worked really hard to get into this position - and I'm going to continue working hard to maintain that position and grow," he said.



A pair of spectacles dangles at the end of the V-neck of the grey sweater and a blue muffler is casually thrown across Prakash Jha's shoulders. The ensemble is paired with dark trousers. He looks relaxed and at the same time proud as his daughter Disha is producing her first film *Fraud Saiyaan*. "She came with the script and said that she had set up this production company and wanted me to back it up. She told me to read the script. And when I did, I could not stop laughing," he says.

And he elaborates why by describing what the film is about. "The beauty of the film is that it is a heartland story. It is inspired by fraud characters that exist. It is about native intelligence and the *jugaadu* manner in which Bhola (played by Arshad Warsi) negotiates his affairs and wives hilariously," says Jha sitting adjacent to a glass window on the 20th floor of a hotel in the capital.

It is not Jha's first foray in comedy, even though he is identified with socially-relevant cinema. "I did direct the popular serial, *Mungerilal ke Haseen Sapne* and produced *Dil Dosti, Etc* (2007) and *Crazy Cukkad Family* (2015). It is not as if I have not supported comedies. The films that I make usually have dark humour because they have a heavy political influence."

Jha chooses his words carefully. If one says that his films are politically relevant, he points out that it's a huge word to define them. "They can be called reflective of the polity," he says and elaborates further, "Every cinema, if it is true to social behaviour, is politics. Even in a love story, where a boy and a girl can't meet because of caste or class is political."

When one ventures into the domain of the increasing politicisation of films, Jha immediately takes the discussion ahead. "I have not seen *The Accidental PM* but no matter what you do, a film has to stand on its own. And if it has some substance, people will like it irrespective of the politics. It has to have a logic and be engaging to work. I have no problem with what it says as long as it is coherent," says the director who made his debut with *Hip Hip Hurray* in 1984. Next came *Damul* (1984) for which he received huge recognition. The film went on to win the National Film Award for Best Feature Film and the Filmfare Critics Award for Best Movie in 1985. He goes on to point out that, "Political ideology is now available in public domain. If you are falling for the rhetoric, you will use your rationale to justify that."

When you prod him further about the political divisions within the Bollywood, which are coming to the fore, he says that the industry was always split down from the middle. "We have cinema and then there is the world outside cinema where secularism, democracy, fanaticism, everything is very active. And that holds true for the entire world."



AN OBSERVER OF POLITICS

Director-producer PRAKASH JHA's new venture *Fraud Saiyaan* is a comedy set in the heartland, says SAIMI SATTAR

Majoritarianism holds sway whether it is America, Britain, France, Turkey, China or Russia. These ideas are being debated because democracy all over the world has shrunk into the concept of electoral politics and its redefinition is essential," says Jha who sees a *manthan* (churning) happening all over the world. Though he is not sure he will live to see the change which began in 2010, he says, "As an observer I am alive to everything that happens every day and in my own way I try to capture it," and goes on to give the example of some of his landmark films like *Damul*, *Mrityudand*, *Apharan* and more, which were reflective of social realities whether it was mandalisation, open marketing or saturation of caste politics. He tried to tap in the advent of new ideas of the current youth with *Satyagrah*.

Coming to the larger picture of the state of affairs in the film industry where content is now coming to the forefront, he says that it was already there. "It is about acceptance as people are more

receptive to it. The multiplexes ensure that even smaller films are screened. The audience is willing to take a chance and pay for it," he says.

While he is heartened by the reception to better content, the state of affairs in education draws flak from him. "We have taken a very terrible direction as far as education is concerned and faulted for almost two generations. We took humanities out of the system and focussed on science and management. This led to the creation of a new kind of world which is smart and efficient but not rooted in culture or philosophy. This generation does not know anything about it," he says adding that it is only now when people, especially parents, have seen that engineering and management colleges are going bust and there are no jobs in the field that they have opened up to the idea of taking up literature or history.

Another change that has been witnessed is the shift from the so-called parallel cinema and the use of 'star power'

by Jha. He defends the move. "I changed from pure parallel cinema like *Damul* as I had a choice to either become competitive or not survive. There was a wave of parallel cinema by Ketan (Mehta), Kundan (Shah), Saeed (Mirza) in the 1980s and suddenly with the open market, the cost of making films went up and new technology came in. I wrote *Mrityudand* and brought in Madhuri Dixit. The dialogues, script and the scenes were like that of a commercial film. And I would like to point out that *Gupt* an out-and-out commercial film also released around the same time and both of them had their space," he says.

Looking ahead, he is also working on the OTT platforms as he finds it "a very interesting space and way of dealing with subjects that we couldn't deal with in films." He is working on three subjects in this platform. "It takes a lot of time as one season is like five or six films," he says.

Jha also works in the social sector with his organisation Anubhooti. "I



would like to do a lot more but I do not have a team. I mostly help financially in health, education and disaster management," he says.

There is one phase of his life which he is not keen on revisiting — that of being part of active politics. He had contested and lost the election to the Lok Sabha from his native Champaran in 2004 and again in 2009 as Lok Janashakti Party candidate from West Champaran. He again contested in the 2014 elections as a JD(U) candidate from Paschim Champaran and lost. And there is a reason, he says. "I am enjoying my life as a producer, actor, writer while helping young people find their feet. I also love to watch the world go by."

Jha has finished shooting a film "but I didn't want things to overlap. I didn't want to announce it as my daughter deserves her place in sun. But we will meet soon," and moves on to other interviews with that promise.

(The film releases on January 18.) Photo: Pankaj Kumar

The unsung warrior

Actress ANKITA LOKHANDE tells CHAHAK MITTAL that the Indian film industry is increasingly accepting women as real heroes

Her green saree with a yellow border shimmers more than the golden sun. Her *bindi* adorns her forehead. Her jewellery is minimal yet subtly signifies her womanhood. Her eyes reflect the irrefutable, unstoppable spirit like that of a warrior.

Actress Ankita Lokhande's first look as the Jhalkari Bai from the film *Manikarnika* looks believable and much like the unsung hero.

The actress, who has been a part of many TV shows, makes her Bollywood debut with the film. She talks about how she loved the role at the first narration itself. "I felt so good about it. It was something which I really wanted to do when I heard of it. I wanted to tell people that this is also a woman who has made a big contribution to our freedom struggle. I grabbed it and now I am here," says Ankita. She tells us that there were a lot of preparations that went into the making of every character in the film, including a rigorous training. "We had a 40-day training with action director Nick Powell from Hollywood. We learnt and practised sword fighting, gun shooting, horse riding, and many other things," she says adding that no matter how hard and strict, it was the "best part" about being in the film.

She says, "It was very interesting and in your debut, you never plan or think of such things. I thoroughly enjoyed playing Jhalkari. I just agreed to play the role because I also wanted people to know about this unsung warrior. There are so many people who have done great things, but have died unheard and unknown. No names and no marks. The only thought was that if I am getting this opportunity, I should portray her in the best way possible."

The actress believes that a woman best understands another woman. And after hearing about who and how Jhalkari was, she tried to present the character in her own way. "I understood her as



someone about whom people do not know much, so I had to create my own version of her. I played around with the character, developed it in my head first before bringing it to life. I understood her description in some way and about how brave she was. I learnt the role of a fighter and a warrior. I put it in my way and created her. Also I never felt that I was playing someone else while playing Jhalkari. I just felt that it's me."

The actress who had led the TV show, *Pavitra Rishta*, as Archana, for six years tells us that she likes strong, powerful and women-centric characters. "It's a way to celebrate womanhood. Even Archana was a very powerful woman and a human being. She was fierce in her life approaches," she says.

She adds that she can relate herself to Archana as both of them had a similar approach. And today, after playing Jhalkari, she says, "I can relate her and Ankita as well but on very different levels."

A transition from TV to films is a huge one for an actor. So how has the journey been for Ankita? She says that there hasn't been a major transition since both the media are different in their own ways. "After working for many years in television, I feel that I had given all of myself to it. But films have always been a dream. Any actor, who wishes to act, always thinks of being a part of a film. And so did I. I would say that I am



living my dream right now. I couldn't have been anything else but this." Ankita says that she believes in giving the audience a storyline to remember. "For me, a story should be the one that people would recall even when they go back to their homes," she says.

For her, everything is challenging if it needs hard work. And since she has tried out the two media — TV and films — she feels that both are equally demanding, only the "cameras and their perspectives had changed. In fact, in TV, there is no time. It goes on for days that seem like forever."

the heroes who don't need a man to survive or even make a film superhit. A hero is larger than life, someone who is always battling, moving ahead and fighting everything and that definition includes a woman. One can see it in the performances, be it of any actress like Deepika (Padukone) or Kangana (Ranaut). I think I am on the right path today where people don't want to look at beautiful faces anymore, they want good artists, characters and performance-based films." She adds that not just in the film industry, but in real life too, women are always the first heroes, and then follow the men. "The biggest examples are our mothers."

Ankita believes that a film like *Manikarnika*... is important today because "people are forgetting about India's history and the country's freedom struggle." She says that just like any other common citizen, earlier she had not been overtly patriotic whether it was wars or the soldiers' struggles. But "after being part of this film, I realised what situations our soldiers' would put themselves just to protect the nation. I feel that a film like this will make people realise what freedom means and what it symbolised for the people who lived during the colonial era."

She adds, "It's the most important for kids and the youth as they are the future and they need to develop this fighter spirit in them." (The film releases on January 25.) Photo: Pankaj Kumar



Vigil on wheels

Nobel Laureate KAILASH SATYARTHI has launched the *Mukti Caravan* at the Kumbh Mela 2019, a campaign to free children from exploitation and abuse. By TEAM VIVA

It might be happening in the city you live in. Maybe, it's happening in your neighbourhood right now. It might even be happening to someone you know — child-trafficking and abuse or child labour.

With the aim of making Kumbh a child-friendly Mela, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (KSCF) founded by the Nobel Peace Laureate and the Mayor of Prayagraj has made a commitment to launch the *Mukti Caravan*, a grassroots campaign on wheels to free children from all forms of exploitation.

The campaign is part of the nationwide movement of the foundation and aims to generate awareness among masses on issues of child trafficking, child abuse and child labour.

The *Mukti Caravan* campaign which had a great impact in Bihar and Jharkhand, will be replicated in Prayagraj along with the support of the district administration. It will act as a safety net for the children and will keep a tab on incidents of inter-state trafficking.

"The campaign will mobilise people on issues of child trafficking and child labour. The aim of *Mukti Caravan* is to make the religious gathering a child friendly Kumbh (*Bal Mitra Kumbh*)," said Bidhan Chandra Singh, executive director, KSCF.

"It was first launched in 1997 in many Indian states and has been re-launched with the aim of making people aware

about the preventive measures already in place to fight child trafficking, child labour and child abuse," he added.

As per news reports, in the 2013 Kumbh Mela, nearly three lakh people, including thousands of children had gone missing.

The volunteers associated with KSCF will be running a campaign in the *mela* premises with the help of wall posters, banners, folk songs and camps to spread awareness. The awareness campaigns will ensure that people are extra cautious of the exploitative forces that pose a threat to children and be proactive in reporting any such suspicious activities.

Abhilasha Gupta, Mayor of Prayagraj said, "Due to such a large number of people attending the Kumbh Mela, there are chances of thousands of children getting separated from their parents and they could end up in the hands of traffickers. *Mukti Caravan* will be extending a security cover to such vulnerable children. It will also curb inter-state trafficking of children."

Abhilasha flagged off the *Mukti Caravan* and said, "Children are the future of our country and they will take this country and society to new heights with their sheer talent. We need to simply groom them accordingly. *Mukti Caravan* has been doing a great service for the cause of children and this campaign reunites the lost children with their parents."

# CRICKETING GREATS LAUD DHONI'S PERFORMANCE

## Tendulkar expects Dhoni to control the game from one end now

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni from now on will be more like an anchor, who would "control the game till the end", reckons legendary Sachin Tendulkar.

Dhoni showed his much-acclaimed finishing prowess during the second ODI against Australia and Tendulkar attributed it to a change in his thought process.

"Yesterday's (Tuesday) contribution was good. In the first match, I felt he was a little rusty, he was not being able to hit the ball where he wanted to and that can happen to anyone. He walked out in the second match thinking differently and from ball one, he looked a different player," Tendulkar said on his app 100MB.

Dhoni of the old was both an anchor as well as a finisher but Tendulkar is happy to see him as someone who will be able to control the game till the end.

"He (Dhoni) is someone who loves to play a few dot balls, understand the wicket, how the bowlers are bowling



and likes to take the game till the end. That is exactly what he did. He is someone who is going to control the game from one end," the highest run-getter in international cricket observed.

He also praised Dinesh Karthik for his role as a "finisher" and complementing Dhoni's experience during final overs.

"And yesterday along with Dhoni, I felt that Dinesh Karthik played rather well as he came and finished the game. It was a fantastic contribution from Dinesh also. Dhoni stayed till the end and his experience mattered."

With both Dhoni and Karthik performing, Tendulkar cited the practical difficulties in having Rishabh Pant in the

World Cup bound side.

"It's a nice thought (to have Pant in) but we have already got Dhoni and Karthik playing as a batter, we have two wicket-keepers, who have contributed in our success yesterday. They have had a crucial partnership which won us the match."

"So if you are looking to have Pant in the team that

means you have to remove a proper batter or one bowler, and I don't think we can afford to remove a bowler. So if he replaces a proper batter who doesn't bowl, then its okay but if he is going to replace an all-rounder then that's going to cost us," Tendulkar opined.

Tendulkar also urged fans to show patience with rookie pacers Mohammed Siraj and Khaleel Ahmed, both of whom struggled against the Australian batsmen.

"It will be too harsh to judge them (Khaleel or Siraj) based on one game. I am very happy that bench strength is playing and understanding that if there are injuries then, these are the guys who will replace the seniors. So we better have them ready and give them exposure at the right time."

"So let's not put too much pressure on them so that they only think about not giving runs rather than thinking about winning matches for India. It's okay to have one or two bad games here and there. It's fine, it's normal. So I would just say that go out and support these guys,"

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"Please leave the gentleman alone," former India captain Sunil Gavaskar said of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, insisting that the veteran's value to the team cannot be calculated despite the lack of consistency.

Dhoni turned back the clock with a match-winning half century against Australia in the second one-dayer in Adelaide, even hitting one of those trademark last-over sixes. The well-timed knock eased the pressure he has been under due to inconsistent form.

"My prayer is to please leave the gentleman alone and he will continue to do well. He is also not getting younger. So the consistency you might have at a younger age will obviously not be there and you have to bear with that," Gavaskar told 'India Today'.

The 37-year-old two-time World Cup winning former captain's future is one of the most debated topics in Indian cricket right now but Gavaskar feels he deserves better.

"Bear with that little inconsistency. But he's still tremendous value to the team... That value you cannot calculate at all," the batting great said.

Elaborating on what he thought makes Dhoni a crucial cog, Gavaskar said the veteran stumper's reading of the game and match situations is impeccable from behind the stumps.

"He keeps telling the bowlers to bowl a particular delivery, what a batsman is planning to do. He has a sense of what a batsman is thinking...What the batsman is looking to do now...Is he looking to get out of jail kind of shot?" he said.

"These are the kind of things where Dhoni helps the bowlers and of course with the field



Mahendra Singh Dhoni hits six during second ODI ICC

placing because Virat is so important in the deep (as he fields outside 30-yard circle) in the final overs when he saves those two runs diving around, takes magnificent catches in the deep," he added.

Gavaskar also spoke about the trust that current skipper Virat Kohli has Dhoni's assessment of situations.

"...It's not possible for Virat to maybe have a conversation with the bowlers or to make adjustments to the square fielders. That is where Virat has complete faith and trust in Dhoni to make those little bit of adjustments for him," Gavaskar said.

## 'Dhoni knows how to play according to situation'

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Mahendra Singh Dhoni knows how to pace his innings according to varied match situations which still makes him an asset for India, said former Australia fast bowler Jason Gillespie.

Dhoni has started the year in style, scoring two half-centuries in successive ODIs as he rolled back time to finish the Adelaide ODI to level the three-match series 1-1.

"India have benefitted from Dhoni's finishing ability for more than a decade. They are still benefitting from it. They benefitted from his experience when they were down at 4-3 in Sydney as well. He was a bit slow in Sydney but you have to understand why. He played the situation," Gillespie said.

"And it is tough to keep coming down the order and playing as per different situations. In Adelaide, he had a completely different situation, so he played differently (in the second ODI). He has played over 300 ODIs so he knows how to play these different situations," he added.

India chased down 299 riding on skipper Virat Kohli's 39th ODI hundred.

Gillespie termed Kohli's hundred as an "absolute masterclass" and rated the Indian captain as someone who is a notch above his peers.

"It was an absolute masterclass from Kohli. He is a class player and a different batsman to everyone else. Numbers speak for themselves and you genuinely don't need to add anything to it. Thirty nine hundreds and 10,000 plus runs in ODI cricket in 50 fewer innings than Tendulkar."

"And we all knew how good a player Tendulkar was. It is simply incredible what Kohli is doing. He is the best in world cricket at the moment, simple," Gillespie was at loss of words to praise the legend in the making.

But the Sussex and Adelaide Strikers' coach said that India was too dependent on Kohli, albeit he refused to label the middle



order "shaky".

The likes of Dhoni and Ambati Rayudu last played cricket in November, as also did opener Shikhar Dhawan, and their rustiness has shown in the first two ODIs of the year.

Gillespie said that it helps to play as much cricket as possible, but players today do need to find a play-rest balance.

"I wouldn't say that the Indian middle-order is looking shaky. They have a lot of good batting talent, and a couple of them were coming from rest or injury. They have a well-balanced side and enough batting firepower, even if they do rely on Kohli a lot," Gillespie observed.

"Ideally, (players) would be like to play more, no doubt. But you have to find that balance between rest and playing constantly, so they can recover physically as well as mentally. You have to balance it so they get enough batting preparation and that only happens when you are playing games as opposed to batting in the nets," Gillespie replied with regards to Rayudu's rustiness.

"These batsmen would have done plenty of net training but spending time in the middle is vital. Judging how to play an innings in different conditions are things you can only learn in the middle. It is best to get as much batting practice as you can," he said.

## Son sparks Koreans to Asian Cup win over China

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

An effervescent Son Heung-min inspired title-chasing South Korea to a comfortable 2-0 victory over China on Wednesday to finish top of their Asian Cup group.

Hwang Ui-jo and Kim Min-jae were on target as the Koreans, boosted by the arrival of their talisman, ran China ragged in Abu Dhabi.

Talisman Son won the penalty converted by Hwang and fizzed in the assist for Kim to spark South Korea, who finished top of Group C with a perfect nine points as they look to end 59 years of Asian Cup hurt.

Marcello Lippi's Chinese side finished as group runners-up having likewise already sealed their place in the last 16 by winning their first two matches.

Korean captain Son surprisingly started — and completed 87 minutes — despite a punishing run of 13 games for Tottenham since the start of December.

The mercurial Spurs forward, who played in the London club's 1-0 defeat by Manchester United three days ago, showed quick feet to tempt China defender Shi Ke into a rash challenge 12 minutes.

Hwang calmly tucked away the spot-kick to send thousands of



Korean "Red Devils" fans wild at the compact Al Nahyan Stadium.

South Korea, who beat Asian Cup first-timers Philippines and Kyrgyzstan 1-0 in their opening two games, went for the jugular.

A Hwang Hee-chan rocket forced China goalkeeper Yan Junling into a fingertip save before Hwang Ui-jo curled an effort against the post. The Koreans, joint title favourites with Iran, doubled their lead six minutes after the break when Son's corner was met by Kim's thumping header.

South Korea, who famously reached the World Cup semi-finals in 2002, have failed to win the Asian Cup since winning back-to-back titles in 1956 and 1960.

They have been finalists on four subsequent occasions, including in 2015 when they were beaten in extra time by hosts Australia. But Son's inclusion has clearly energised the Taeguk Warriors, who suddenly look a very different proposition.

China, Asian Cup runners-up in 1984 and 2004, began the competition by edging Kyrgyzstan 2-1 and overpowering the Philippines 3-0. But they were no match for South Korea and were lucky not to concede further goals in a lop-sided game.

Elsewhere in Group C, a Vitalij Lux hat-trick sent Sven-Goran Eriksson's Philippines crashing out and gave Kyrgyzstan hope of progressing as one of the best third-placed teams in a 3-1 victory.

German-based Lux struck once in the first half and twice in the second in Dubai before the Philippines grabbed a consolation goal through Stephan Schrock with 10 minutes to go.

## Swimmer Nataraj makes splash at Khelo

PTI ■ PUNE

Budding Karnataka swimmer Srihari Nataraj had a 100 per cent record at the Khelo India Youth Games, winning Gold in each of the seven events he took part in the competition here.

At last year's Khelo India School Games, Nataraj had won six Gold medals and this time bettered his show.

Another Karnataka swimmer who caught the eye was Likith SP, who ended his campaign at the Games with six medals, including five Gold, a media release said on Wednesday.

When asked about their friendship, the Karnataka boys, Likith and Srihari, said they always help each other improve as swimmers.

"I see great potential in Srihari and I am sure he will achieve big things in the



time to come," said Likith.

Having already represented India at the Youth Olympics and the Asian Games in 2018, Srihari will now turn his focus towards the World Championships to be held in South Korea later this year as he hopes to bring laurels to the country.

## Virat asks youngsters to focus more on challenges of Test cricket

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Virat Kohli has no peers in ODIs but he has a priceless message for youngsters — sole focus on limited overs formats shouldn't be an "excuse" for not being able to cope with the challenges of Test cricket.

World's No 1 batsman with 25 Test hundreds warned that youngsters will have mental problems if they don't embrace the pristine form of five-day cricket.

"If we focus too much on shorter formats - yes, they're important - but if we solely focus and look at them as an escape or an excuse to not be in the kind of situations that Test cricket presents to you, then I think there will start being a mental problem with the cricketers coming up," Kohli was quoted as saying by Star Sports.

The Indian skipper, who has played a few defining knocks against world class bowlers like Jimmy Anderson, Stuart Broad and Mitchell Starc during the past year spoke about the hardwork that goes into making of a quality Test player.

"As long as you're willing to wake up every morning for five days and do the hard yards and go do the dirty work - if you're willing to bat for two hours and not score a run for the team - I think that is what people should prepare (youngsters) (for)." Kohli said the current batch of Indian Test cricketers are trying to set an example for the younger generation.

"That (vision) will require the team to lay out a certain things that needs to be done and for the next lot to keep following. So (when) the next lot that comes in, they have to maintain that vision and then the people coming in will follow."

Virat Kohli has reaffirmed his commitment towards Test cricket, saying he wants India to become a superpower in the game's longest format.

Number-one ranked India



**WORLD'S NO 1 BATSMAN WITH 25 TEST HUNDREDS WARNED THAT YOUNGSTERS WILL HAVE MENTAL PROBLEMS IF THEY DON'T EMBRACE THE PRISTINE FORM OF FIVE-DAY CRICKET**

recently won their maiden Test series in Australia under Kohli's leadership.

"I wouldn't say goal but I would rather speak of a vision, which is for India to be a superpower in Test cricket or

a very, very strong side in Test cricket in the years to come."

"I think if Indian cricket respects Test cricket, and Indian players respect Test cricket, then Test cricket will stay at the top because of the fan base that we have all over the world."

Kohli was made India captain for the first time in the middle of the 2014-15 Test series in Australia with MS Dhoni announcing a shock retirement.

He credited coach Ravi Shastri for making his job easier.

"Ever since 2014, I think he's (Shastri) one person who's given me honest feedback whenever things required to be altered."

"I remember we sat down (last year). I'd scored a Test century and a fifty in the same game in England, so he called me and he said, as far as batting is concerned, I'm not going to discuss anything with you now because you've done some something which I am proud of and everyone is proud of."

"But as a captain, I need to start thinking how to get the best out of this team and how to tactically hit me because I felt like, you know, there's so much more to captaincy than you sometimes think."

Before departing for the Australia tour, Kohli had dismissed the perception that Shastri was "yes-man" to him. He explained again what Shastri brings to the table.

"He one person, because he's done so much commentary, and he's seen the game so much and has played so much himself - just watching the game - he knows where the game is heading."

"So just get getting feedback from him constantly has been the biggest help for me, in terms of moulding my own personality into captaincy. He's someone who has never tried to change me just to be able to fit into the captaincy mode," Kohli added.

## Bowling attack makes India WC favourites: Gillespie

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Former Australia fast bowler Jason Gillespie feels the current Indian bowling attack led by Jasprit Bumrah makes the team one of the favourites for the upcoming ICC World Cup, alongside hosts England.

"I think the Indian attack is well balanced. Bumrah has been rested for obvious reason but their attack is still quite good," Gillespie said.

"Everyone offers different things, and you add Bumrah to it, so they are well placed to mount a challenge for the World Cup. I think England is the obvious favourites, but India won't be far behind," he insisted.

Gillespie singled out Bumrah for special praise and said the young right-arm pacer's unorthodox action makes him a different bowler from others.

"I enjoy watching Bumrah bowl. He just ambles in but when he gets to the crease, he almost has a slingshot action. He bowls at good pace, hurries the batsmen up, and he can also change his pace a lot. He is a very fine bowler," the 43-year-old former pacer said.

"His action does stand out. It is a braced front leg, delayed bowling arm action. It gets you to the crease quickly, and delivers that sling shot. It is what generates his pace."

"But you need to be strong to be able to do that. Bumrah is robust and fit to bowl long spells



in Test cricket. He keeps his pace up throughout a Test and this is what makes him an exciting bowler," Gillespie said.

India and Australia are tied at 1-1 in the ongoing three-match ODI series with the decider scheduled to be played at Melbourne on Friday.

The Australian team, which is currently going through a rebuilding phase, are eyeing its first ODI series win since January 2017 and Gillespie said it is the best for opportunity for youngsters to stake a claim in the World Cup-bound team.

"Obviously they are missing a couple key personnel from both batting and bowling perspectives. But the team will look very different in the World Cup. So it is a wonderful opportunity for these players and selectors to look at different options in pressure situations," said the Adelaide Strikers' coach.

# FEDEX, RAFA STAY ON TRACK

Defending champion Federer wins in straight sets to enter third round for record 20th straight year

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Roger Federer ground out a tough three-set win to make the Australian Open third round for an incredible 20th straight year on Wednesday, with long-time rival Rafael Nadal also safely through in his drive towards an 18th Grand Slam title.

Women's defending champion Caroline Wozniacki also progressed to set up a mouth-watering clash next with in-form former world number one Maria Sharapova.

But it was curtains for South African Kevin Anderson, who slumped out to young American Frances Tiafoe and became the highest seed, at five, to be sent packing so far.

On an overcast day at Melbourne Park, second seed Angelique Kerber, the 2016 winner, and former US Open champion Sloane Stephens joined the big guns in round three, but the women's side also saw a top 10 player crash.

Ninth seed Kiki Bertens, who raced through the rankings last year after winning three titles, was whipped in three sets by Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

Federer might be 37 but he's not showing his age, with British qualifier Dan Evans the latest to fall under his spell as he works towards a third successive Australian crown and 21st major victory.

He defeated Evans at Wimbledon last year with the loss of just eight games, but it was a much harder assignment this time, winning 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 on Rod Laver Arena.

"I think if I could have pulled away earlier in the match it might have been easier," said the third seed. "I think he played very well, it was hard to pull away to his credit."

The Swiss star's Australian achievements so far put him on a par with other six-time winners Novak Djokovic and Roy Emerson — although the Australian great's victories all came before the Open era.



Roger Federer reacts after winning the first set against Daniel Evans in their second round match

AP

He next plays American Taylor Fritz. If he goes on to win the tournament, he will become the first man ever to claim seven or more titles at two Grand Slams, having already won eight Wimbledon.

Nadal had an easier route to round three, outclassing local hope Matthew Ebden 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

The Spaniard is bidding for his own

slice of history by becoming the first man in the Open era, and only the third in history along with Emerson and Rod Laver, to win each Grand Slam on two or more occasions.

"I played a solid match, I was happy with the way I served. I did a few things very well," said Nadal, who next plays Australian Alex de Minaur. "It is an hon-



N Djokovic vs J Tsonga  
Live from 3:00pm IST  
SONY SIX & TEN 2 NETWORK



our to play here. Was a great atmosphere." Anderson, beaten by Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon final last year, was sent home by Tiafoe 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 7-5.

The fifth seed struggled with an elbow injury early in the clash and couldn't cope with the 20-year-old's power and finesse.

## COLLISION COURSE

Sixth seed Marin Cilic, who lost in the final to Federer last year, had no such dramas, grinding past American Mackenzie McDonald in four sets and next plays Spanish 26th seed Fernando Verdasco.

Dane Wozniacki, who is battling rheumatoid arthritis, steamrolled Sweden's Johanna Larsson 6-1, 6-3 as she bids to become the first woman to defend the title since Victoria Azarenka

in 2013.

It set up a tough clash with five-time Grand Slam champion Sharapova, who blitzed past Sweden's Rebecca Peterson 6-2, 6-1. The Russian is in scintillating form and has dropped just three games in her opening two matches.

"I'm really happy with the way I performed," said Sharapova, adding that she was looking forward to the Wozniacki showdown.

"It's a tough third round but I have set up the challenge and I'm ready to go out there and take it."

Meanwhile, three-time Grand Slam champion Kerber dominated Brazilian qualifier Beatriz Haddad Maia 6-2, 6-3 to stay on a collision course with Stephens in the quarter-finals.

Stephens, who endured a horror run at Melbourne Park since reaching the semi-final in 2013, exiting in the first round in 2015, 2016 and 2018, swatted aside former doubles partner Tímea Babos 6-3, 6-1.

## Sharapova sets up Wozniacki clash

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Five-time Grand Slam champion Maria Sharapova's scintillating return to form continued on Wednesday as she powered into the Australian Open third round to set up a mouth-watering clash with defending champion Caroline Wozniacki.

Sharapova, who is seeded 30th at the tournament and seeking to recapture former glories after coming back from a drugs ban in 2017, brushed aside Rebecca Peterson 6-2, 6-1.

The 31-year-old has only conceded three games en route to round three at Melbourne



Park, where she won the title in 2008 and has reached the final a further three times.

"I'm really happy the way I performed today and obviously it's always great to be back on this court," she said.

"Overall, I thought I played a really solid match." The pair emerged on Rod Laver Arena late in the night due to a long-running men's match, meaning only a smattering of fans were there to cheer on the former world number one.

While Sharapova served a 6-0, 6-0 "double bagel" to her first-round opponent Harriet Dart, Peterson initially promised more of a fight as she rallied against the Russian from the baseline.

Her aggressive approach was not enough to prevent the veteran going up a break in the third game, while offering the Swede nothing on her own serve.

The gulf in experience began to tell as the match stretched into early Thursday, with Sharapova breaking Peterson again to take an iron grip on the first set, which she wrapped up after 34 minutes.

Sharapova's blistering returns proved too much for world number 64 Peterson and the Russian soon ran away with the second set.

Sharapova and third seed Wozniacki have met 10 times, with the record 6-4 in the Russian's favour.

But their most recent clash was in 2015, when Sharapova was still at her peak and the Dane was yet to win her coveted maiden Slam, which she has credited with boosting her confidence. There is no love lost between the pair.

Wozniacki questioned the way the WTA handled Sharapova's return from her drugs ban in 2017 and was furious when she was bumped from the show court in favour of the Russian at that year's US Open.

It prompted a withering response from Sharapova after Wozniacki's elimination:

"I'm in the fourth round. I don't know where she is." Their meeting promises to be the standout match in the first week of the women's draw. "It's a tough third round but I've set up the challenge and I'm willing to take it," Sharapova said.

## SINGLES

### PANTSULAIA WINS DELHI INT'L CHESS

**NEW DELHI:** Third seed Georgian Grandmaster Levan Pantsulaia won the 17th Delhi International Chess tournament after settling for a quick draw with Grandmaster SL Narayanan in the 10th and final round, on Wednesday. It was a seven-way tie at the top between Pantsulaia (Georgia), Mosaddeghpour Masoud (Iran), Stupak Kirill (Belarus), Amanatov Farrukh (Tajikistan), Dipayan Ghosh, Abhijeet Gupta, and Narayanan on eight points apiece in the event but Levan was declared the winner based on his better tie-break. There were norms galore at the tournament. International Masters Gukesh D and Visakh NR secured GM norms while Aditya Mittal, Saurabh Anand, Bharat Kumar Reddy and Neelash Saha scored IM Norms respectively.

### INDIAN EVES TO PLAY FOUR FRIENDLIES

**NEW DELHI:** In a bid to qualify for the 2020 Olympics, the Indian women's football team will play two matches each against Hong Kong and Indonesia. The 25-member squad will leave Indian shores on Saturday to travel to Hong Kong to play back-to-back friendlies on January 21 and 23. The team will then travel to Indonesia to play matches on January 27 and January 30. "In our quest to qualify for the Round 2, we have to play against tough teams and both Hong Kong and Indonesia will provide us with challenges of their own and help in our development," Head Coach Maymol Rocky said. "The Olympic qualifiers will be a test and a challenge for all of us and we are preparing to script history and make the nation proud," he added.

### NEWCASTLE SURVIVE BLACKBURN SCARE

**NEW DELHI:** Newcastle survived an FA Cup scare at Blackburn as they blew a two-goal lead before hitting back to win 4-2 after extra time in the third-round replay. The stand-ins made a fast start on Tuesday when Sean Longstaff scored his first goal for Newcastle. Callum Roberts then doubled their lead in the 22nd minute with his first goal for the club. But Blackburn pulled a goal back 12 minutes before half-time through Adam Armstrong. And then Darragh Lenihan equalised for Blackburn with a header in first-half stoppage time. It took extra time to settle the tie, with Blackburn's Bradley Dack missing a golden chance before Joselu pounced to slot home in the 105th minute after Rovers goalkeeper David Raya spilled Fabian Schar's drive.

### HARYANA LIFT VIJAY MERCHANT TROPHY

**MULAPADU:** Haryana lifted the Vijay Merchant Trophy after beating Jharkhand in the final on the basis of first innings lead, riding on lion-hearted effort from new ball bowlers Vivek Kumar and Anuj Thakral. In the final of the National U-16 Cricket tournament, Haryana scored 247 in their first innings with Ahan Poddar top-scoring with 57, hitting 10 boundaries. Jharkhand's Abhishek took six wickets for 48 runs but Haryana seamers Vivek (5/59) and Anuj (5/53) bowled the opposition out for 186 in 66.1 overs. The 61-run first innings lead proved to be decisive in the end as Haryana batted Jharkhand out of the contest, scoring a mammoth 502 for 9 before declaring.

### CHESS TOURNEY

**LUCKNOW:** Lucknow District Chess Sports Association is organising the 18th Shivani Cup Sunday Open Prizemoney Chess Tournament at Shivani Public School on January 20. Interested may contact on 7459899385 or send in their entries on shivanichessacademy@gmail.com

### HANDBALL TRIALS

**LUCKNOW:** Regional Sports Office and District Handball Association are organising district-level junior boy's handball trials at Chowk Stadium on January 28. Interested may reach the venue along with their age-proofs at the venue.

### KABADDI

**LUCKNOW:** A state-level senior kabaddi championship will be organised from January 22 to 24. The women's event will be held at Chowk Stadium whereas KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium will host the men's category event.

# SAINA, SRIKANTH START WITH WIN

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Olympic medallist Saina Nehwal, Parupalli Kashyap and Kidambi Srikanth entered the second round to mark a fine day for Indian shuttlers at the Malaysia Masters here on Wednesday.

Seeded seventh, Saina had to toil hard and came back from a game down to quell the challenge of Hong Kong's Joy Xuan Deng 14-21 21-18 21-18 in a women's singles first round encounter that lasted one hour and five minutes.

Saina, the only Indian in women's singles event, will next play another unseeded shuttler from Hong Kong, Pui Yin Yip in the second round.

Like Saina, Kashyap too had a tough outing, against Denmark's Rasmus Gemke. He had to dig deep to get the



better of his opponent 19-21 21-19 21-10 in his men's singles first round match.

But it was a relatively walk in the park for another

Indian men's singles shuttler Kidambi Srikanth, seeded seventh, as he took just 30 minutes to beat Angus Ka Long NG of Hong Kong 21-17 21-11 in the first round.

While Kashyap has a tough second round encounter against sixth seed Anthony Sinisuka Ginting of Indonesia, Srikanth will be up against Hong Kong's Vincent Wing Ki Wong.

Women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy to overcome their first hurdle with a hard-fought 21-16 22-20 win over Hong Kong's Tsz Yau NG and Sin Ying Yuen.

The Indian duo will next play Indonesian combine of Ni Ketut Mahadewi Istarani and Rizki Amelia Pradipta.

But it was curtains for Indian mixed doubles pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and Sikki Reddy as they lost 19-21 17-21 against Netherlands' Robin Tabeling and Selena Piek.

## India's challenge ends in single day

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Country's challenge at the Australian Open came crashing down in a single day with three pairs featuring Indians suffered first round defeats on Wednesday.

The 15th seeded Indian team of Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, who began their partnership with a bang in Pune, lost 1-6, 6-4, 5-7 to the unseeded Spanish pair of Pablo Carreno Busta and Guillermo Garcia-Lopez.

It is second straight first round defeat for the new Indian team on the tour after their triumph at the Tata Open Maharsahtra. Last week, they had lost the round of 16 at the Sydney International.

Competing in his 24th Australian Open, veteran Leander Paes and his partner Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela saved a few match points but eventually fell 5-7, 6-7(4) to American-Kiwi combo of



Divij Sharan and Rohan Bopanna in action during doubles match

PTI

Austin Krajicek and Artem Sitak.

Also making the first round exit was Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and his partner Nicholas Monroe, who lost 6-4, 6-7(8), 5-7 to Kevin Krawietz and Nikola Mektic after fighting hard for two hours and 20 minutes.

Prajnesh Gunneswaran had also made a first round exit after coming through the Qualifiers while Ramkumar Ramanathan, Ankita Raina and Karman Thandi could not make it to the singles main draw.

# Pacers give Uttar Pradesh control over Saurashtra

**LUCKNOW:** Led by Shivam Mavi, Uttar Pradesh pacers wrecked Saurashtra batting line-up to reduce the visitors to 170 for seven on day two of the Ranji Trophy quarterfinal at Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana International Stadium on Wednesday. Shivam claimed three wickets, which includes the prized scalp of Team India's dependable Cheteshwar Pujara (11). Rajpoot struck off successive balls to reduce the opposition to 35 for two, before Mavi removed Pujara. Earlier, Uttar Pradesh, resuming day two at 340 for seven, went on to make 385 all out in 103.3 overs with Saurashtra skipper Jaydev Unadkat taking a five-wicket haul.

Opener Harvik Desai (84) and Prerak Mankad (42) were the only notable batting performers for Saurashtra, as they trail Uttar Pradesh by 215 runs going into day three.

**VIDARBHA TAKE CHARGE**  
**NAGPUR:** Veteran Wasim Jaffer and opener Sanjay Ramaswamy struck unbeaten centuries as Vidarbha took command against Uttarakhand on the second day of their Ranji Trophy quarter-final match on Wednesday.

At close of play, Vidarbha reached 260/1 in the first innings, in response to Uttarakhand's 355, with Ramaswamy (112 not out) and Jaffer (111 not out) holding forth.



Shivam Mavi celebrating the wicket of Cheteshwar Pujara with teammates

on the city's outskirts.

But the day clearly belonged to Ramaswamy and Jaffer, who conjured an unbeaten 215-run stand for the second wicket after a rare failure by skipper Faiz Fazal (29) who perished early.

Fazal was dismissed by right-arm medium pacer Deepak Dhapola.

Jaffer in the process struck his fourth ton of this Ranji season, having already hit hundreds in the league stage against Mumbai, Gujarat and Baroda.

In his 153-ball stay at the crease so far, the 40-year-old batsman has hammered 13 boundaries, while his partner Ramaswamy hit 16 fours in his 212-ball

innings so far as the duo took an inexperienced Uttarakhand bowlers to task.

Earlier, resuming the day on 293 for six, Uttarakhand added 62 runs to their overnight score before bundling out for a respectable 355, with Saurabh Rawat top-scoring with 108.

Yadav, who played the Test match at Perth against Australia late last year, was the pick of the bowlers for the hosts as he returned with figures of 4-90.

### HAT-TRICK FOR KALARIA

**WAYANAD:** Left-arm fast bowler Roosh Kalaria starred with a hat-trick leaving Gujarat needing 195 runs to beat Kerala and seal semifinal berth.

Gujarat hit back to restrict the host to 171 in the second innings after conceding the first innings lead.

A disciplined bowling effort helped Gujarat bowl out Kerala for 171 in 59 overs with Kalaria (3 for 36) and Axar Patel (3 for 40) sharing the spoils.

Earlier, resuming at 97 for 4, Gujarat quickly slipped to 107 for 7 before some aggressive batting by Kalaria (36, 5X4, 1X6) enabled the team make 162 in reply to the home side's first innings score of 185.

Sandeep Warriar (4 for 42) was Kerala's best bowler and he was well supported by M D Nideesh (3 for 38) and Basil Thampi (3 for 61).

Skipper Parthiv Patel was the top-scorer for Gujarat with 43.

In Kerala's second innings, opener Mohammed Azharudeen fell for a duck in the second over and the team lost

wickets at regular intervals before Sijomon Joseph (56) and the experienced Jalaj Saxena (44 not out) put on a 53 runs for the sixth wicket.

### VINAY, MORE RESCUE

**BENGALURU:** Former captain Vinay Kumar hit an unbeaten 83 and shared a crucial 97-run stand for the last wicket Ronit More (10) to help Karnataka take a 39-run first innings lead against Rajasthan.

The rearguard action steered Karnataka to 263, forcing Rajasthan to concede lead for first time this season. The hosts were struggling at 166 for nine at one stage but Vinay and More rescued the team from the troubled waters.

Vinay smashed 10 fours and two sixes in his 144 balls knock while More (10) played out 59 balls to support the former.

Rajasthan had scored 224 on the opening day with the help of skipper Mahipal Lomrov (50) and Rajesh Bishnoi (79).

When stumps were drawn on second day, Rajasthan were trailing by 28 runs, with Amit Kumar Gautam and Chetan Bist at the crease as the team reached 11 for no loss in three overs. Leggie Rahul Chahar was the standout bowler for Rajasthan as he finished with figures of five for 93 runs. Left-arm fast medium TM ul-Haq and right arm medium Deepak Chahar, bagged three and two wickets each respectively.